

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Margaret's Church of England Junior School			
Address	Orchard Street, Rainham, Kent ME8 9AE		
Date of inspection	22 November 2019	Status of school	Academy inspected as VC Medway Anglican Schools' Trust
Diocese	Rochester	URN	142160

Overall Judgement	How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?	Grade	Good
Additional Judgement	The impact of collective worship	Grade	Good

School context

St Margaret's is a junior school with 363 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged in line with national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above national averages. The school is located on the same site as an infant school which is part of a different trust and is not a Church school.

The school's Christian vision

Our Christian vision states that we are 'Growing and Achieving in God's love.' It is based on the parable of the sower (Matthew 13:1-23) meaning that we are always trying to grow in all that we do.

Key findings

- Leaders have established a clear and shared Christian vision which shapes the work of the school. The considerable impact of the vision is not always clear in policies, on the website or in the school environment.
- There is wide-ranging and effective support for pupils and for their families. This enables them to grow, to achieve and to flourish. Pupils develop well spiritually, but this is sometimes hampered by the lack of easy access to reflection areas.
- There are very effective opportunities for staff at all levels to progress in their careers and in their understanding of working in a Church school.
- The effective leadership of religious education, (called understanding religion by the school), enables pupils to feel safe to express their own views. Pupils reflect on the views and beliefs of others so that they grow and achieve.
- Collective worship offers increasing opportunities for pupils to lead worship. Pupils would like these to be extended to include more pupils more often.

Areas for development

- Ensure that the impact of the vision is clear in policies, in school literature, on the website and in the school environment. Ensure that these coherently reflect that the vision is a driving force behind the work of the school so that everyone understands this.
- Increase opportunities for pupils to plan and to lead collective worship, so that they have greater ownership of this.
- Widen the access arrangements to the quiet, reflective areas so that pupils can visit these when they feel that they need or want to do so.

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How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?

Inspection findings

Adults and children at the school have a clear understanding that the Christian vision of 'grow and achieve' is firmly rooted in the parable of the sower. Pupils explain eloquently that they are the seeds and that everyone at the school is helping them to grow. Many pupils can also explain that, because God loves them all, he wants them all to grow and to achieve. This understanding is aided by the practice of reflecting on their learning across the curriculum. Pupils reflect on how they have grown and achieved and they record this in their books. The vision is used by all members of the school community to address the varying needs of the diverse pupil population. This ensures that all pupils are helped to flourish. The headteacher has established positive relations with the adjoining infant school. She ensures that parents understand that their children are joining a Church school when they come to the juniors. However, the efficacy of the vision is not clear in school literature, in policies, or on the school's website. The impact of the vision on the whole curriculum is not obvious from displays around the school. This means that visitors and people who are new to the school do not understand the centrality and importance of the Christian vision.

The headteacher has restructured staffing so as to enable teachers to grow into effective Church school leaders. Adults are very well supported with a wide range of training opportunities, including appropriate diocesan training. This means that they too can grow and achieve. Teachers and leaders work closely with other schools in the trust and locally to broaden their experience. Leaders have offered very effective support to another of the trust's schools. This resulted in the previous deputy head of St Margaret's being appointed headteacher at this school. Therefore, teachers are genuinely growing into future Church school leaders. This is a strength of the school.

St Margaret's offers pupils a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities. Leaders believe that pupils should be helped to grow and to achieve in all aspects of their lives. Pupils are encouraged to develop their own unique talents. Leaders ensure that all pupils, including the disadvantaged, can access opportunities such as, for example, visits and music lessons. Leaders work hard to raise pupils' aspirations so that all pupils can grow and achieve to the best of their ability. This means that all pupils are helped to flourish. Pupils' books show clear progress but this is not evident in historical reported data. Leaders are taking appropriate actions to ensure that outcomes better reflect the progress that pupils make at the school. There is a highly effective team dedicated to removing barriers to learning, including addressing mental health. The school offers a wide range of support for pupils and their families and this has helped to secure good attendance. Adults enable pupils to reflect carefully on their own behaviour and on the impact that this has on others. As a result, behaviour is good and pupils are generally polite and calm. This means that pupils live well together and that there are good relationships at all levels within the school. The emphasis on reflection across all aspects of school life has a positive impact on pupils' spiritual development. Pupils think deeply and take time to consider their own views. Effective use is made of the reflection areas in classrooms. Access to larger communal reflection and prayer areas, however, is limited. This sometimes prevents pupils from being able to be quiet and to pray at times when they most need this.

Pupils have a very good understanding of social diversity and they treat each other with dignity and with respect. They are pro-active in their desire to help others and this extends to children in other parts of the world. The well-established link with a school in Malawi is impressive. This goes beyond being another charity that the school supports. Teachers regularly visit this school and St Margaret's welcomes representatives from Malawi. The St Margaret's community offers practical and financial help to this school. More importantly, however, they also learn from this school set in another culture. Pupils talk about the link with enthusiasm, understanding and with respect.

The headteacher has deepened and strengthened the relationship with the local church. This is now highly effective. Clergy from the church lead school worship every week and provide good support for understanding religion lessons. There is a range of joint church and school activities so that the relationship is mutually beneficial. The variety of approaches in collective worship helps both pupils and adults to grow spiritually. Pupils enjoy their diverse experience of collective worship and they all feel included, whatever their own beliefs. A very small number of pupils from another world faith are withdrawn from worship. These pupils' beliefs are respected and they are made to feel an integral part of the school community. As a pupil commented, 'God loves everyone

equally and so we should too'. Collective worship is monitored effectively by a range of stakeholders, including by governors. This results in improvements such as allowing pupils more input into, for example, church services. Pupils would like wider opportunities for more of them to plan and to lead school worship. Pupils are articulate in expressing their wishes and they have already suggested practical ways that this could be accomplished.

Understanding religion lessons allow pupils to grow in their knowledge and understanding of the beliefs of Christians and of other major world religions. The provision reflects the Church of England statement of entitlement. Pupils feel safe to formulate and to express their own opinions and beliefs. They know that these will be treated with respect. Understanding religion is led well. This means that the curriculum is planned carefully to include varying and exciting approaches to learning. As a result, pupils enjoy these lessons and they can grow and flourish.

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