

# Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

## Selsted Church of England VC Primary School

**Address** Stockham Lane, Selsted, Dover, United Kingdom, CT15 7HH

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

**Overall grade** **Good**

**The impact of collective worship** **Good**

### School’s vision

Here at Selsted, in our unique rural setting, we provide a happy, safe, stimulating environment where children develop their love of learning. Through mutual respect and trust children are given a voice and responsibility. We are brave, resilient and committed to making the impossible possible through God’s loving care.

### Key findings

- The involvement of all staff and pupils in school leadership roles has created a unified team who enable everyone to flourish academically, socially and emotionally within the school community.
- Shaped by the school’s vision, a creative curriculum provides rich learning opportunities for all. Spiritual experiences within the curriculum are at an early stage of development.
- Selsted is committed to the wellbeing of everyone in the school community. There is a strong focus on positive mental health.
- Worship plays a key part in pupils’ understanding of the school’s Christian values and their relevance in pupils’ lives. Pupils are actively involved within planning and leading worship.
- Religious education (RE) offers a safe place for thinking and reflecting on the big questions in life. Pupils enjoy their learning within RE. The school has a clear action plan in place to sustain recent developments in RE.

### Areas for development

- Make reference to the Christian vision and values more explicit in all relevant policies and in the school development plan to demonstrate how the vision is clearly driving all aspects of school improvement.
- Develop a shared understanding of spirituality, so that the spiritual development is reflected across the curriculum.
- Embed the development plans that have been initiated within RE. This is to sustain challenge for all, a range of opportunities to interpret the themes creatively and to ensure that assessment strategies are secure.

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

Within its unique rural setting, Selsted sets itself at the heart of a community that draws pupils from a wide area around the school. The quality of relationships across the school affirms to pupils and adults that they are valued and loved. All develop a love of learning focused on mutual respect and trust. The school's Christian vision is clearly at the centre of school development, but it is not explicit within the school development plan and policies, so it is not clear how it is driving school improvement.

School development is strengthened by a range of partnerships. A local hub of schools and the Diocese fosters ongoing school development. The hub provides both inspiration and challenge in the provision of activities as well as monitoring of the curriculum. Within the school community strong bonds with parents and businesses in the local area have supported the school in making brave funding decisions about the school environment. These include the purchase of two minibuses and a field, with an Astro turf track to facilitate the pupils' daily mile. This has given the school community a voice in school development and demonstrates their part in the provision of a happy and safe environment for all.

The school's chosen theological narrative within Jeremiah reflects the importance of nurture and care of each individual in providing firm roots for growth. This manifests itself in pupils who have a love of learning and are strong and confident individuals who can withstand every challenge. Equally staff feel valued and nurtured by the school leadership, including governors. The importance of creating a happy and safe environment was particularly demonstrated during the pandemic. Staff, pupils and families were supported very effectively with learning at home as well as their emotional needs. Care for staff wellbeing extends to their involvement in decisions about their professional development. This enables them to be brave in choices about what is best for pupils and also resilient within their specific roles. Respect for their personal wellbeing in turn has created a loyal staff team who are prepared to go the extra mile for the pupils and each other. All staff constantly model, through dialogue and actions, kindness, respect and forgiveness. This impacts positively on pupil behaviour, which bears testimony to the happy school environment. They play well together and show kindness to pupils of all ages, as well as those who are new to the school. When conflicts do occur, pupils are secure in the knowledge that they can resolve problems themselves or can seek support from adults in the school. This helps create a happy and safe environment which demonstrates God's loving care for each one.

Pupils are given a strong voice and a range of responsibilities within the school. These include the school council, the eco council, worship leaders, the sports crew and care of the school dog. These in turn support positive pupil wellbeing and the creation of a happy and safe environment. For example, the sports crew arrange playground activities and the school council set lunchtime challenges. This involvement by pupils in the wellbeing of each other creates a joyful and unified community. Pupil responsibilities extend to making choices about charitable fund raising, based on a recognition of the need for social justice as well as seeking justice for issues within their local area. This provides pupils with high levels of confidence and a strong sense of their self-worth.

School leaders have made bold and brave decisions about recent curriculum developments. In this way the specific learning needs of all pupils are met effectively. This has resulted in a curriculum that develops a love of learning. Pupil understanding of diversity, conflict and also world issues, such as climate change and pollution have been developed through engaging learning themes within the curriculum. The impact of this is that pupils readily transfer their understanding beyond the school. Some parents indicate that their children have become passionate about recycling within the home environment, for example. Further brave decisions have been made to meet the needs of all, including those with special education needs and disabilities (SEND). For example, a former art store was converted into a space for small group work and a member of staff employed to work with specific pupils. As a result, all pupils flourish.

The respect and trust placed in pupils is demonstrated in their partnership in the creation of an exciting curriculum. They have a voice in the development of regular enrichment weeks. Recent themes have

included a multi-cultural week, a health and wellbeing week and an enterprise week. As a result, pupils recognise that they are treated with dignity and respect. This in turn enables each person to gain their own sense of worth and identity.

The unique rural setting of the school provides further opportunities to develop a love of learning. The forest school enables pupils to work collaboratively to solve problems as well as appreciating the natural world. Pupils value the opportunities to be still and self-regulate their emotions whilst at forest school and within the reflection spaces, inside and outside the school. Together with times when pupils consider 'Ow' and 'Wow' moments pupils and staff are beginning to foster spiritual development. However, there is not a highly developed understanding of spiritual development by staff or governors and the way that this might be secured across the curriculum.

The bond between the church ministry team and school is close. Inspirational acts of worship teach the stories of Jesus. These motivate all to reflect on the school values and to be kind and respectful to others. Worship based on the school's chosen theological narrative from Jeremiah, strengthens understanding of the importance of having firm roots in life so that each one can grow into strong individuals. The enthusiastic singing is a strength of the worship. As one pupil said, 'It gets your heart going!' Pupils take an active role in worship leadership. Working with a member of staff they plan a weekly session of worship. The pupils embrace this role with enthusiasm and excitement, noting that it makes them have a 'warm feeling' as they lead the younger pupils. Celebration worship plays an important part in bringing the school community together. Within the celebration staff prize their part in enabling the 'little acorns' to be growing into 'mighty oaks' as they progress through the school. Pupils are excited about how the worship recognises their good work and how they uphold the values of the school. Times of stillness and reflection within worship enable all to develop a greater self-awareness. Some pupils are happy to pray spontaneously within worship, whilst other pupils see prayer as a time to draw closer to God, as well as a time to bring their requests and desires to him.

The RE lead has embraced her role with enthusiasm. She has participated in Diocesan training to develop her role and has carried out staff training. A range of monitoring activities, including book scrutiny and lesson observation, have helped in the formation of an action plan to support the development of the subject. As a result, the staff have strong subject knowledge and deliver the topics with enthusiasm. 'Big questions' stimulate thinking and discussion within lesson. Pupils acknowledge that RE enables them to have a better understanding of each other and they take pride in the art and drama activities undertaken. The school is working towards introducing greater creativity within the tasks set. It is also ensuring that there is sufficient challenge to meet the needs of the range of abilities. Marking and assessment procedures are developing within RE. Where there is best practice, the outdoor environment has been included in learning. For example, one group have created a bug hotel on the playground to support their learning of the Mohammed and the ant. This demonstrates how practical experiences beyond the classroom nurture a love of learning.

### Contextual information about the school

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| Date of inspection  | 28 June 2022                  | URN | 118683 |
| Date of previous inspection   | 21 May 2015                   |     |        |
| School status   | VC                            | NOR | 102    |
| Diocese or Methodist Circuit  | Canterbury                    |     |        |
| Headteacher   | Angela Woodgate               |     |        |
| Proportion of pupils deemed to be disadvantaged                         | Below National Average        |     |        |
| Proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities | In Line with National Average |     |        |
| Inspector's name  | Elizabeth Pettersen           | No. | 0557   |