

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Laurence in Thanet CofE Junior Academy

Address Newington Road, Newington, Ramsgate, Kent, United Kingdom, CT11 0QX

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**

The effectiveness of religious education (RE) **Good**

School's vision

"Believe, achieve, aspire!" Our school offers a supportive, inclusive, nurturing and inspiring learning environment, where each member is known by God; loved and empowered to reach their full potential. Children are encouraged through an aspirational and engaging curriculum to develop their knowledge, skills and character so that they can truly flourish, both now and into the future. "With God, all things are possible" (Matthew 19:26)

Key findings

- The Christian vision of "Believe, Achieve, Aspire!" is well established across the day-to-day life of the school. The distinctively biblical roots of the vision and the understanding of how this drives policy and procedures are less well known amongst the wider school community.
- The rich and vibrant curriculum provides pupils with extensive opportunities for wider learning experiences. Planning for spiritual and character development are at an early stage with opportunities occurring spontaneously rather than by design.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning are good. The focus on restorative approaches to support pupils has enabled all to flourish regardless of need. Strong pastoral strategies and procedures are in place to support and improve pupil wellbeing and attendance with notable effect. This was particularly exemplified during the recent pandemic.
- Collective worship positively impacts on all members of the school community with the local church closely involved in the planning and delivery. Pupils talk about how worship influences their decision-making. The school is beginning to develop the work of the pupil worship leaders in planning and leading worship.
- The recently appointed religious education (RE) subject leader has reinvigorated the subject, having a positive impact on pupils' achievements and progress. Teacher subject knowledge is developing through support from the subject leader, the Diocese of Canterbury and Aquila multi academy trust.

Areas for development

- Ensure all stakeholders explicitly know and understand the biblical roots of the school's Christian vision in driving policies, procedures and improvement.
- Embed planned opportunities for spiritual and character development within the curriculum.
- Further improve the quality of planning and effective assessment in RE to enable all pupils to flourish in their learning.

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

Since their appointment in September 2021, the headteacher, together with the senior leadership team, have re-energized the school's vision of "Believe, Achieve, Aspire!" The Bible story of the lost sheep provides the foundations for the school's nurturing approach, ensuring pupil potential is not limited. Staff are passionate in supporting pupils to overcome challenges and be able to flourish in all aspects of their lives. They are less confident in articulating the biblical roots that drive the vision. The pupils' ability to see themselves as part of the story of the lost sheep enables them to understand the Christian vision. They speak happily of being part of a flock, supported by staff who never give up on them, whatever happens.

The trust and diocese provide high quality professional development for all staff inspiring them to improve their skills and knowledge. Strong relationships between governors and the school ensure a balance between support and challenge which drives improvement. This empowers leaders at all levels. Regular monitoring supports the embedding and evaluation of developments across the school. Active partnerships with the church and the multi academy trust provide effective support for school leadership at all levels, having a direct and positive impact on pupil achievement and flourishing. Relationships across the school community reflect the vision of aspiration and nurture for all. Staff members feel valued and nurtured, speaking positively of how they are listened to and well supported by senior leaders. Small practical actions alongside recognition and management of workload for staff enhances the supportive professional community at St Laurence.

During the pandemic, the provision of both online and paper-based home learning with daily check-ins, together with practical support including food parcels, laptops, Wi-Fi adapters and stationery, showed the Christian vision in action. Relationships between families and the school strengthened during this period. Together with input from external agencies, this impacted positively on pupils.

An enquiry themed curriculum, developed collaboratively, provides pupils with engaging and relevant learning. Big questions at the start of each topic along with specific learning questions, linked to subjects during the term, inspire and engage pupils. Identification of pupils' academic attainment and social and emotional development when they join this junior school, leads to effective support for all pupils enabling them to flourish and make progress in their learning.


Driven by the vision, covid recovery funding is providing pupils with a wide range of cultural, outdoor and sporting experiences. Pupils enjoy opportunities to broaden their horizons including visits to the Houses of Parliament, maths escape rooms, canoeing, Tudor workshops and beach trips. The provision of these experiences ensures pupil potential is not limited. Inspired by the broad and exciting curriculum, pupils enjoy their learning. Although spiritual experiences take place, a shared understanding of spiritual development and intentionally planned opportunities for pupils is at an early stage. Led by both the school council and the eco warrior team, pupils have opportunities to take part in social action projects including tree planting and charity events. Although at an early stage of development, this allows pupils to have a growing understanding of courageous advocacy.

The restorative justice approach underpins the school's behaviour policy. Pupils talk about how they can learn from their mistakes, be forgiven and try again. Significant work by all staff in supporting pupils using this approach has had a notable impact on pupil behaviour and attendance. Reflecting the schools' vision, the nurture of pupils, families and staff is at the heart of the school's practice. The pastoral team including the Family Liaison Officer (FLO) and special education needs and disability co-ordinator (SENDCo) play a leading part in supporting pupils. Considered and individualised support for families has a positive impact on pupil wellbeing and attendance. The team have put in place effective programmes, including a two-year project with Nurture UK, in order to support all pupils, demonstrating that each child is known to God.

Collective worship is an integral part of the school day valued by pupils and staff. There is time for sung worship, discussion, reflection and stillness. Pupils from across the school regularly write prayers for use in

worship. The school's vision and values are lived out in worship through inspiring and relevant themes created in partnership by the headteacher and the local church. Worship leaders from Year 4 enjoy their responsibilities, managing the IT equipment and acting out Bible stories. Pupils from across the school share examples of how they are inspired to change their thoughts or actions in response to their experience of collective worship. The school community values weekly worship led by the ministry team from the local church and ACTS, a Christian charity. Termly visits to the church by each class allow pupils to experience a broader range of church services and liturgy which are different to school based collective worship. Staff demonstrate how they actively embed the messages and themes from worship into all areas of daily school life. Communal and classroom prayer spaces are valued by pupils with many areas reflecting the school's story of the lost sheep. Monitoring and evaluation of collective worship by pupils, staff and governors allows leaders to improve and develop this aspect of school life.

Staff, led effectively by the subject leader, have worked hard to develop and adapt the RE curriculum to support the needs of all pupils, particularly taking into account the starting points of their youngest learners in Year 3. The locally agreed syllabus is combined with the effective use of the 'Understanding Christianity' resource and modified to include memorable experiences. The exciting RE curriculum provides pupils with broad opportunities for discussion and development of their critical thinking skills. Pupils enjoy their learning and show good understanding of Christianity and a range of world religions reflecting positively on differences between faiths. Pupils proudly share their work and explain ways in which RE allows them to develop their own personal worldviews and perspectives. High quality staff development in all aspects of RE has positively impacted on the effectiveness of teaching and learning across the school.

	The effectiveness of RE is	Good
	<p>Good practice is evident in RE with pupils developing a proficient level of religious literacy and vocabulary by the time they leave St Laurence. All pupils are making good progress from their starting points. Assessment webs completed by pupils allow the teachers to assess understanding of key skills. The current use of the formal assessment system is being evaluated and modified by the subject leader in order to further improve the quality of data collected.</p>	

Contextual information about the school

Date of inspection	28 June 2022	URN	138592
Date of previous inspection	28 April 2015		
School status	VA	NOR	206
Name of Multi Academy Trust or Federation	Diocese of Canterbury and Aquila MAT		
Diocese or Methodist Circuit	Canterbury		
Headteacher	Sarah Graham		
Proportion of pupils deemed to be disadvantaged	Above National Average		
Proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	Above National Average		
Additional significant information (if needed)	The school became part of the Aquila multi-academy trust on 1st May 2022.		
Inspector's name	Sarah Alexander	No.	2108