

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Harrietsham Church of England VC Primary School	
Address	West Street, Harrietsham, Maidstone, ME17 1JZ
School vision	
<p style="text-align: center;">Nurtured we flourish</p> <p>We are a warm, welcoming and inclusive school rooted in our rural community. Like the mustard seed we grew from tiny beginnings and our branches are now spread wide –providing support and taking our values beyond the school gates. All those in our community feel safe and nurtured - able to flourish and grow academically, spiritually, emotionally and physically to achieve their full God-given potential.</p>	
School strengths	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Christian vision, and supporting biblical story, has united all around a common purpose and ambition for this school. This has inspired the current growth and development of Harrietsham as a Church school. • There is a strong sense of fellowship impacting on loving and supportive relationships within the school unit. This has secured Harrietsham through a time of change and created firm roots for its recent journey. • Collective worship, both as a whole school community and within each class, promotes times of deep reflection. This fosters the spiritual growth of each one. At the same time, it drives a happy and supportive environment focused on the values of love, fellowship and forgiveness. • An engaging curriculum, relevant to the context of the school has been established. This enables all to engage and enjoy learning, supporting them to achieve their God-given potential. • Effective use of big questions within religious education (RE) enables pupils to reflect. This includes on the impact of Christianity and worldviews on themselves and others. 	
Areas for development	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure that there are opportunities mapped across the curriculum to enable pupils to explore their own spirituality in greater depth. • Broaden opportunities for pupils to engage in social action and to actively challenge injustice. • Sustain the current good practice in RE. This is to build on the existing opportunities for pupils to apply their skills and knowledge through enquiry-based learning. 	
Inspection findings	
<p>Following a period of changes in leadership Harrietsham has been on a journey of school development. This has resulted in transformative actions across the school that have impacted positively on progress in all areas. Everyone has been drawn together around a renewed vision and linked biblical story, the parable of the mustard seed. This focus on a common and shared purpose is driving the school towards the best and broadest outcomes for pupils. A deep understanding of the local context of the school has set pupils at the heart of decision making and leadership thinking.</p>	

The promotion of strong relationships throughout the school has secured firm roots from which the school has grown. Governors have worked closely with the school leadership to ensure that the vision is a living reality. At times this has meant challenging financial commitments to ensure that all thrive. The school plan is centred around the vision. It is monitored and evaluated rigorously by governors securing the development of Harrietsham as a Church school. A strong sense of collaboration has ensured supportive working partnerships with other local schools. This has enabled good practice to be shared and provided opportunities to work together, thus producing extra momentum for school progress.

The intentions of the Christian vision foster bold decisions that impact upon the curriculum. This has created an engaging learning programme and is enabling all to fulfil their God-given potential. Pupils enjoy a wide range of experiences focused on the practical application of themes. This might be through role play, artistic interpretations of ideas or outdoor learning. Topics are developed through pupil interests so that they are absorbed and involved in their learning. Close links with the local area inspire further curriculum developments, such as an exploration of local history. Pupil enthusiasm and a curiosity in their world has been ignited through individual weeks, such as a science week. Specific programmes and activities for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) ensures the growth of each one. A widening range of after school clubs including music, sport and creative activities excite pupils beyond the classroom. The school is beginning to explore spirituality within individual subjects. However, at present there are no planned opportunities for spirituality across the curriculum.

Collective worship is a time when the school community gathers, generating a deep sense of belonging. Engaging and interactive worship, both with the whole school and in class, is led with enthusiasm. Its regular focus on Bible teaching and the school values helps foster a shared understanding of individual and collective worth. This inspires a caring and loving environment, where there is a strong sense of fellowship and commitment to each other. Pupils and adults are effectively supported in their spiritual growth through worship. The use of big questions challenge pupil thinking, enabling them to ponder more deeply on the themes. Times of reflection create moments of stillness and calm, as well as fostering a sense of gratitude. Reflection areas through the school also enable individual pupils to develop their ideas. Spurred on by the parable of the mustard seed all are encouraged to be seed carriers. In this way they take love, fellowship and forgiveness into the class and playground. This is enabling all to have a clear understanding of the impact of their actions in creating a happy school. A partnership with the local church, who also lead worship, adds variety and richness to worship for all.

The image of the mustard seed growing into a strong tree marks the close link between nurture and flourishing at Harrietsham. All are welcomed, especially newcomers, who are readily included within the classroom environment. This creates a deep sense of belonging where great value is placed on mutual care for each other. Staff equally recognise the quality of their relationships within the team. Their shared support plays a significant part in their ability to embrace change within the school. This generates a school that works together and is empowered to enable the growth of all academically and personally. Pupils are gaining a growing sense of personal value and an understanding of how they can manage their own feelings and emotions. For example, they talk with confidence about developing perseverance, one stating, 'If I keep going, it will be good in the end'. All speak with great positivity about the value of reciprocal support to enable them to rise above difficulties or challenges.

Everyone works together to create a harmonious environment. Older pupils take great pride in their roles of responsibility, modelling good behaviour to younger pupils. This inspires pupils to routinely perform little acts of kindness for each other. Pupils relish their part within the School Action Squad. This group eagerly shares ideas about how to make the school a better place by fund raising. Pupils

also articulate that if they take part in charitable activities, they are helping the lives of those less fortunate. This in turn makes them feel better. They regularly reach out to the local community, visiting local care homes and making donations to the local foodbank, for example. Pupils speak of their concern for parts of the world marred by war, which generates compassion for those areas. However, at present pupil understanding about injustice and linked social action is underdeveloped.

RE is well led by an enthusiastic subject leader. Close work with the diocese has developed the RE curriculum, giving the school confidence to introduce new units of work. This has ensured that the needs of pupils are met effectively. Pupils respond eagerly to big questions and enquiry-based learning. Within the safe classroom environment, they are happy to discuss and share ideas with each other. They reflect deeply on a range of religions and worldviews, able to apply themes to their own lives. As a result, they demonstrate a great awareness of, and respect for, difference and diversity in the world. Pupils are encouraged to respond to learning in imaginative ways, including through art and drama. Experienced teachers actively support staff in developing subject expertise. This is supporting the development of increasingly confident and knowledgeable RE teaching.

Harrietsham is a school where the Christian vision and accompanying parable of the mustard seed is inspiring its journey. Everyone is being nurtured to grow and meet their God-given potential within the values of love, fellowship and forgiveness.

The inspection findings indicate that Harrietsham Church of England Primary School is living up to its foundation as a Church school.

Information			
Inspection date	16 January 2024	URN	118622
VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary controlled	Pupils on roll	369
Diocese	Canterbury		
MAT/Federation			
Interim executive headteacher	Tara Deevoy		
Chair	Jo Greasley		
Inspector	Elizabeth Pettersen	No.	557