

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Ditton Church of England Junior School	
Address	New Road, Ditton, ME20 6AE
School vision	
<p>Aspire, Believe, Care</p> <p>We aspire for ourselves and others; We believe in ourselves, others and in God; We care for ourselves, our community and the wider world.</p> <p>We link this vision and our values to the bible story of Zacchaeus. Luke 19: 1-10</p>	
School strengths	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Christian vision has transformed the life of the school after a significantly difficult and challenging past. Although recently formed, it has given pupils and adults hope and is helping them to flourish. • The curriculum is underpinned by the vision. Pupils of all abilities are given a wide range of learning opportunities and are supported and challenged effectively. • Collective worship unifies the school community. Pupils and adults value times of stillness and reflection throughout the school day. • Pupils are nurtured at the school. They are valued, cared for and known very well. • RE is a strong subject at the school. Pupils appreciate learning about world faiths and sharing their own opinions and beliefs in a respectful way. 	
Areas for development	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a shared language and understanding of spirituality throughout the school's curriculum and collective worship. This will ensure that adults and pupils are able to flourish spiritually. • Extend the opportunities for pupils to lead on raising awareness of community and global causes that they are passionate about. This will ensure that the impact of the vision is strengthened further. • Enhance the variety and consistency of worship opportunities so that the vision can be lived out in a meaningful way. 	
Inspection findings	
<p>The Christian vision, although relatively new, is firmly established and is enabling pupils to flourish. It is showing signs of inspirational impact. The school and Aletheia Academies Trust leaders have worked tirelessly and strategically in creating a positive culture flowing from the vision. The school's associated values are understood and well matched to the biblical story which underpins the vision. Like the character of Zacchaeus in the Bible, through the school's Christian vision, pupils are shown compassion and love. They are not left on the periphery; they are brought into the centre. Pupils and</p>	

adults are celebrated. They are affirmed as unique individuals who can flourish with God-given talents and gifts. They are cared for by each other. Pupils are ambassadors of the vision and see their conduct as integral to the school growing in number. They therefore see themselves as responsible for their school and the wider community. Pupils are encouraged to aspire, believe and care. When developing the vision, leaders listened keenly to ensure the vision resonated with and represented the school community at large. It is therefore a united vision and the voices of the community, pupils, staff, governors and parents, are all valued and included. The vision is ultimately what is driving the changes at the school. The vision is for the community, by the community. Parents are genuine partners who feel that the vision helps their children to feel proud of their school. The school is on a strong journey of recovery through the vision. Joining the Trust is giving the school a renewed energy and has helped the school sharpen their vision. The vision is still being embedded, however it is on a positive trajectory. Adults are also flourishing as part of the vision. They are equipped through continuous professional development. Their programme of training under this new leadership is now fit for purpose and is aligned to the vision. There is a strong sense of belonging.

The curriculum helps pupils to aspire and develop in their learning. Pupils develop well academically. Through high expectations and robust planning and monitoring systems, the curriculum is helping pupils to flourish. The vision that is now shaping and driving the curriculum. The curriculum now offers pupils challenge, support and fosters their curiosity. There are meaningful opportunities for discussion. Pupils are reflective and their voice is included in the shape and development of the curriculum. They enjoy a variety of extra-curricular activities with performing arts and sports being particularly popular. Along with extended, residential trips, these activities help pupils to live out the vision. Through the curriculum, pupils are given the tools to become global citizens. They actively engage with multi-cultural histories and celebrate the diversity of their school community with special culture days. Pupils have opportunities to ask and answer 'big questions'. A planned approach to develop pupils and adults spiritually is in its embryonic stages. Leaders do, however, understand its importance.

Pupils and adults value the time spent collectively worshipping together as it affirms the school vision. Worship is inclusive and creates a basis for spiritual reflection. The school community benefit from a meaningful relationship with the local church which has scope for even more collaboration. The vicar leads worship once a week and helps the school understand and commemorate all of the main Christian festivals. Pupils engage with a 'big question' each week and whole-school and class worship times build on this question. Messages in worship that combat prejudice and racism, underpinned by the example and love of Christ inspire pupils to action. Pupils particularly enjoy celebration worship times. The extent to which pupils are involved in leading worship is developing. Prayer and reflection are now more staple features of pupils' worship experiences. However, there is inconsistency in the wider planning of themes and how different worship opportunities link during the week.

The school is a united community through its Christian vision. Against the backdrop of historic challenges with morale, pupils and adults now feel valued, loved and cared for. Adults feel part of a team and flourish. Pupils have a desire to care for others and do so well through meaningful charity work and campaigns. They understand their role as stewards, underpinned by the Christian vision, in taking care of the environment. Consequently, pupils raise money and awareness for local charities such as the RSPCA and the Heart of Kent hospice appeal. Pupil and adult well-being is now at the heart of the vision. Pupils are known here. There are nurture programmes for more vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs/and or disabilities (SEND). The culture of compassion and responsibility in this school help pupils to stand up for causes they are passionate about. Pupils have strong views about issues of injustice in the world. They respond to current wars and conflicts with awareness, sympathy and empathy. However, the ways in which pupils lead and drive this work is

however limited.

RE is of a high quality at this school. Pupils really enjoy RE as a result of a creative and ambitious curriculum which enables them to flourish. Leaders are aware that RE is integral to spiritual development and are exploring new ways of developing this. They see the subject as an expression of pupils' unique talents, gifts and abilities. In RE pupils can freely share what they believe. They express their opinions with respect and sensitivity. Pupils can access the learning due to teachers adapting their teaching effectively for pupils of all abilities, including those who are more vulnerable or have SEND. Pupils' knowledge and skills develop and deepen as they progress through the school. Lessons are well planned and foster curiosity and enthusiasm in pupils. The subject is well led. Effective monitoring takes place to ensure teaching is of a consistently high standard. Teachers are given effective training with specialist knowledge of different world faiths and worldviews. This aids pupils' understanding and respect of world faiths. Teachers give effective feedback to students, both written and verbal. This helps to inform teachers' planning for pupils. Pupils make good progress in RE. Pupils engage with analytical and evaluative questions with increasing philosophical and theological thought. This is a result of the strong teaching in RE.

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

Information			
Inspection date	23 November 2023	URN	118854
VC/VA/Academy	Academy	Pupils on roll	205
Diocese	Rochester		
MAT/Federation	Aletheia Academies Trust		
Headteacher	Graham Ward		
Chair	Mark Till		
Inspector	Andrew Wignal	No.	2118