

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Brenchley and Matfield Church of England Primary School			
Address	Market Heath, Brenchley, Tonbridge, Kent, TN12 7NY		
Date of inspection	05/02/2019	Status of school	Academy - Voluntary Aided Tenax Schools Trust
Diocese	Rochester	URN	142698
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 Judgements	The impact of collective worship	Grade	Excellent
	The effectiveness of religious education (RE)	Grade	Good

School context

Brenchley and Matfield Primary School has 179 pupils on roll. There is a low level of religious and cultural diversity and very few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils considered to be disadvantaged is below national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is above the national averages. The religious background of most pupils is Christian. There are more boys than girls on roll. It converted to an academy in May 2016 when it became part of the Tenax Schools Trust. There have been significant changes in staffing in the past few years.

The school's Christian vision

Love each other as I have loved you'. John 15.12

Inspired in all things by Christ's love for all people demonstrated through his life and teaching, his truth and love. Our school is a place where all are loved and valued as we learn and grow together in community, joyfully living in his light that we might both be blessed and be a blessing to all.

Key findings

- Leaders, including those on the local governing body, confidently articulate the school's inclusive Christian foundation. Its Christian vision expresses a deep understanding of Christian education in which all are loved and cared for, closely reflecting the teaching of Jesus. This vision, and its associated values, are known and appreciated by staff and by pupils and their parents, irrespective of the personal faith or beliefs of individuals.
- The partnership with its parish churches is exemplary being deeply rooted and practical, effectively supporting the spiritual, religious and moral development of its pupils.
- Its partnership with the Tenax Schools Trust positively supports and extends the school's Christian vision and associated values.
- The quality of pastoral care across the school community is very strong and clearly conveys its Christian vision, showing the love of Jesus being expressed in positive and inclusive ways.
- The worship programme and religious education (RE) are given high priority and effectively support the school's Christian vision and its service to all its pupils.

Areas for development

- Refine RE teaching and learning by ensuring all targeted tasks and activities are used effectively to challenge and extend higher attaining pupils appropriately.

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

Drawing on the inspiration of Jesus' love, as expressed confidently by its Christian vision, this small school is a welcoming, happy and caring place. This is shown, for example, in attendance that is consistently above national averages, and in effective and individualised pastoral care for all, including for the most vulnerable. Relationships are very strong and mutually supportive, showing concern for each other, within the context of its explicitly Christian and inclusive ethos. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very positive and their behaviour commendable. Forgiveness and reconciliation are at the heart of the school's behaviour policy and very well practised by pupils and adults. The school's vision is strongly evident and lived out through its deeply rooted associated Christian values of grace, compassion, forgiveness, integrity and humility. These draw overtly on biblical teaching and are connected positively with the example and love of Jesus. Pupils and adults link these directly with behaviour and choices. Thus, they strongly shape the character development of pupils. Consequently, pupils flourish. Parents validate this as they see the impact of the school's vision and associated values in their children's attitudes and behaviour at home.

The school effectively supports pupils in growing, living and learning together. This is expressly based on the love of Jesus, which successfully encourages the academic and personal development of pupils, alongside the professional development of staff. Most pupils make expected, with some making accelerated, progress from their various starting points. The means that the majority reach age-related expectations. It leads to attainment and progress that is consistently at or slightly above local and national averages. The school's Christian vision impacts on decisions about the curriculum, which is broad and balanced. It is well matched to the varying learning needs of pupils. Approaches are actively taken which enable pupils to reflect on and explore the spiritual and moral dimensions of learning, applying these to everyday life very well. The school's vision and associated values likewise permeate curriculum opportunities.

Senior leaders, including members of the local governing body, regularly monitor and evaluate the impact of the school's vision and associated values. This leads to detailed self-evaluation and ensures that its Christian distinctiveness is a driving force for continued school improvement. The spiritual development working party is very well focused. Members of this group have a prayerful oversight and input into developments as a Church school serving its local community. The school's emphasis on the wellbeing of pupils, their families and staff reflect practical care and concern, based on the love of Jesus for all.

Since the previous denominational inspection, the school has become an academy by joining the Tenax Schools Trust. This partnership with a Christian Trust has a constructive impact on its work. It provides focused support, enabling it to draw on the strengths and insights of other Trust schools, as well as to share their own effective practice Trust-wide. The school draws satisfactorily on the Diocese through a 'service level agreement' and through the subject leader for RE attending training and updates from diocesan staff.

The established partnership with its two parish churches is exemplary. For example, the parish of Brenchley assigns its youth worker as the school's part-time chaplain. This provides caring support for the spiritual and religious development of the school community, alongside enhancing its effective pastoral care. The chaplain leads a Christian group in the school and other activities which support pupils both within and outside of the school. Practical and prayerful assistance for pupils and families in hardship is given. A worship café at Matfield is well supported by school families. The vicar from Brenchley parish is a regular and welcomed visitor, leading worship as well as being an active and effective member of the local governing body.

The school's associated Christian values are conduits through which Christian love and service are practised, for example, through a wide range of charitable giving. 'We should help others because Jesus was kind and generous to us. Giving to others in needs shows compassion but also humility because you are showing that you are grateful to God for what you have'. Pupils have been involved in contributing to a Parish Plan for local developments. Through this involvement, they have experience of how they can make a difference and be agents of change locally and further afield.

The recognition that everyone can be blessed and be a blessing to others is at the heart of how the school encourages all to be treated with dignity and respect. This includes those with SEND or from different religious or cultural backgrounds. Barriers to learning for those with SEND are significantly reduced through the extremely strong pastoral support they receive. This impacts positively on learning and means that, even when their attainment is below that of their peers, their progress is good. The school recognises that in its relatively mono-cultural context, it is important for pupils to have a wider vision of the world. They support this effectively through

addressing news items regularly, through the curriculum, in worship and especially through RE. An effective relationships and sex education policy is in place and awaiting revision, based on pending national developments.

Worship is very well planned and rightly valued by adults and pupils as vital to school life. It meets statutory requirements and impacts strongly on the spiritual and religious development of the school community. Biblical teaching, understanding of the concept of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit and the significance of Jesus for Christians are thoroughly and deeply explored. Worship provides clear opportunities for spiritual growth by regularly considering how Jesus' love can be expressed by Christians today. This includes consideration of various charities and how individuals can make a difference and improve the world. Pupils respond very well. For example, by reflecting on their attitudes and behaviours during worship. They link these closely to the school's associated Christian values. Thus, they show that they appreciate how core Christian beliefs are linked to life in the world today. Pupils and staff are attentive and engage thoughtfully in worship. It is valued because, 'it brings us together' and 'it helps us worship God'. Prayer and reflection are central to the programme and are excellently extended through reflection areas and prayer opportunities around the school and at other times of the day. Prayer expressly underpins the school's life and work. Its longstanding school prayer is well known and closely reflects its revised Christian vision. Worship is enriched through regular visits to the nearest parish church. Christian festivals and practices are celebrated which lead to pupils having a detailed appreciation of, for example, the Christian calendar and the key beliefs and practices associated with them. Pupils and staff help to lead, plan and evaluate worship. This involvement enhances the experience of worship significantly.

RE is well led. The introduction of a resource called Understanding Christianity has been well implemented, with appropriate staff support. The approaches developed are deepening pupils' skills and appreciation of key Christian concepts. Provision meets statutory requirements and fully reflects the Church of England Statement of Entitlement for RE.



The effectiveness of RE is Good

Pupils enjoy RE, finding it interesting and enjoyable. Drawing on diocesan guidelines, the RE curriculum has a suitable balance of content and approaches. These focus on Christianity, other world faiths and moral and ethical issues, within the context of the significance of faith in the world today. Teachers work effectively to create a respectful and inclusive learning environment which supports the school's vision and associated values well. This leads to pupils discussing their own thoughts confidently and to them suitably addressing 'big questions' related to the subject area. Applying learning to pupils' own thoughts and ideas is well supported by teachers. Tasks for some higher attaining pupils do not always offer enough challenge. Assessment in RE enables pupils to know what they do well and what they need to do to improve.

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