

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Nicholas Church of England Primary Academy, New Romney	
Address	Fairfield Road, New Romney, TN28 8BP
School vision	
<p>Learning, loving and encouraging through Christ</p> <p>St. Nicholas provides a welcoming inclusive and aspirational learning environment at the heart of its community. We nurture, encourage and support all children, adults and their families to be the best as God intended. Following God's example of love and trust, we develop resilience and creativity in all we do.</p>	
School strengths	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St Nicholas academy is a place where the deeply embedded Christian vision has transformational impact on the whole community. Leaders at all levels embody the example of St Barnabas, encouraging and empowering those in their care. • Leaders have ensured that intentional spiritual development is woven through all aspects of school life. Collective worship has a deep and sustained impact on those who experience it at the school. This makes a profound difference to the lives of individuals across the community. • Leaders have implemented an effective and bespoke religious education (RE) curriculum that meets the needs of all pupils, including those with special education needs and disabilities (SEND). It effectively challenges and broadens pupils' understanding of the world around them. • Exceptionally strong partnerships, driven by the Christian vision, support pupils, staff and families, along with members of the wider community. This impacts positively on people's lives producing lasting change. • There is a tangible culture of encouragement and dignity for all, ensuring life changing impact across the community. The strong pastoral support provided across the school community has created a culture where all are included without judgement. 	
Areas for development	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driven by the Christian vision, further the opportunities for all pupils to be active agents of change as part of a global community. 	
Inspection findings	
<p>Servant-hearted and inspirational leadership ensures the deeply embedded Christian vision drives everything that happens at St Nicholas. The story of St Barnabas, the encourager, ties the school's purpose to the strong desire for all to be inspired and encouraged. This intensely held Christian vision is aspirational, changes lives and equips people to be the best they can. Leaders understand the role of their school in the community ensuring that all they do reflects the needs of New Romney's coastal context. This is whilst also ensuring that pupils develop an understanding of</p>	

diversity in wider British society. School values of ambition, community, friendship, perseverance, respect and trust are intrinsically woven through the vision. Pupils rightly explain how these values support all to thrive. Everyone in the school aspires to 'be a Barnabas', creating a culture of kindness and support.

There is carefully planned monitoring of school improvement actions and day to day aspects of school life. This provides leaders and governors with evidence of impact and areas for development. The vision of Aquila, the multi-academy trust (MAT) of which the school is part, speaks of the passage from Isaiah of 'all soaring on wings like eagles'. This resonates with the school's vision of aspiration and encouragement enhancing the work at St Nicholas. Professional development from the trust, the diocese and directly in school, along with a supportive culture, empowers staff in all roles. This is particularly meaningful for those who speak of negative prior experiences before joining St Nicholas.

The vision shapes a bespoke curriculum that is exciting, fun and imaginative, linking in with local history and issues. Leaders ensure that the wide and varying needs of the pupils are met through the broad and rich learning on offer. Pupils are inspired by what they learn, leading to them taking direct action on local and global issues that matter. An example of this involved the pupils requesting a ban on laminating in school following learning about climate change. Pupils also worked together to set up a permanent community food cupboard within school. This was after recognising that food poverty was an ongoing concern not limited to the season of harvest. Staff have worked together to develop an approach to spiritual development that weaves it into all aspects of the curriculum. Pupils understand the language created by the school around spiritual development. This provides them with meaningful opportunities to reflect on 'wow' moments, ponder their own thoughts and look at actions they can take. Extra-curricular opportunities include a wide range of sports, arts and crafts and British Sign Language classes. The wider curriculum offer ensures all pupils have the chance to represent the school in a sporting activity, while also experiencing new sports such as skiing and paddleboarding.

Collective worship at the school is a vibrant part of daily life producing moments of joy. Exceptionally strong partnerships between the school and the local church provide opportunities for all members of the two communities to worship together. A request from pupils to learn more about the Eucharist has led to annual confirmation services being held for growing numbers of the school community. Planning for collective worship is adapted effectively which ensures the vision is lived out through the themes delivered each week. Great care is shown to those with SEND to enable them to participate. Pupils take an active role throughout the school in leading moments of reflection within worship. Older pupils work confidently with younger pupils to develop the skills to take on these roles. This demonstrates to all pupils that spiritual reflection does not purely happen when lead by adults.

Pupils understand the importance of stillness and reflection, valuing the numerous opportunities within the school day. Both staff and pupils speak positively of collective worship being a spiritual time, giving them moments of reflection. They recognise that this positively impacts their actions in daily life. Support for the school from the trust including training and networking opportunities for leaders is valued. This is also reciprocated with the school sharing aspects of their best practice with other schools within the MAT.

The time spent by staff building trusting relationships, means the school is exceptionally well regarded in the community. Parents recognise and value the support offered by the school. Leaders make strategic decisions driven by the vision and values following their accurate evaluation of the school. One example is the recruitment of a strong inclusion team empowered to assist all pupils especially those who are vulnerable, disadvantaged or with SEND. The Christian vision is a constant

thread through systems and policies, creating a culture of encouragement and aspiration. Staff skilfully support the pupils in their care both in mainstream classes and in the specialist resource provision (The Hive). There is carefully thought out bespoke support including nurture groups, therapy and work with the learning mentor. This enables all pupils to thrive regardless of need. Staff also work beyond their roles and responsibilities to support families and older pupils including those from the New Romney resource centre. Courses and work experience provide practical opportunities to improve educational and work life chances.

Pupils, inspired by the story of St Barnabas, eagerly look for opportunities to make a difference in the world around them. Writing to the prime minister, the older pupils showed a mature understanding of the plight of child refugees arriving on boats. The culture of support and aspiration encourages pupils to develop and lead on work both locally and further afield. Local projects include Caring Altogether on Romney Marsh (CARM). In addition this year worship leaders have selected to support a charity further afield, the Mission Aviation Fellowship. The opportunities for greater numbers of pupils to become directly involved is less well developed.

Leaders have ensured that RE has a high profile across the school and is a priority. It is valued by staff and pupils alike. The carefully planned RE curriculum is well sequenced and well balanced. It has been adapted to suit the needs of all the pupils including those with SEND. Pupils enjoy being creative and having opportunities for drama and discussion in lessons. They readily express the importance of being able to reflect on their own opinions and listen to others. They enjoy RE lessons and learning about Christianity as a global religion along with other worldviews. The highly experienced subject leader provides detailed and effective support for staff. Subsequently, teachers have a good subject knowledge. This leadership extends to supporting other schools in the MAT.

High aspirations for all encourage everyone involved with St Nicholas to believe deeply that they matter. A culture of dignity is the hallmark of the school. Pupils and adults flourish here.

The inspection findings indicate that St Nicholas Church of England Primary Academy is living up to its foundation as a Church school.

Information			
Inspection date	30 November 2023	URN	142814
VC/VA/Academy	Academy	Pupils on roll	404
Diocese	Canterbury		
MAT/Federation	Aquila The Diocese of Canterbury Academies Trust		
Headteacher	Christopher Dale		
Chair	Lyn Edwards		
Inspector	Sarah Alexander	No.	2108