

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Reculver Church of England Primary School			
Address	Hillborough, Herne Bay, Kent CT6 6TA		
Date of inspection	16 January 2020	Status of school	Academy inspected as VC Aquila Diocese of Canterbury Academies Trust
Diocese	Canterbury	URN	141216

<b>Overall Judgement</b>	How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
<b>Additional Judgement</b>	The impact of collective worship	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Good</b>

### School context

Reculver is a primary school with 473 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is in line with national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above national averages. The school became an academy and a member of Aquila, The Diocese of Canterbury Academies Trust in 2015. A new headteacher was appointed in 2016 and new governing body established. Ofsted judged the school as outstanding in 2018.

### The school's Christian vision

Our values, interwoven through all aspects of school life, spring from a faith in Jesus, the person and His stories. Following His example, everyone is loved and encouraged as individuals in an inclusive, stimulating environment, empowering us all to become compassionate citizens and resilient lifelong learners who reach their potential.

### Key findings

- The school's vision and values are deeply rooted in biblical teaching around the story of the Good Samaritan. This drives every aspect of the work and purpose of the school, overcoming challenges and reaching out to include pupils of all abilities and backgrounds, transforming lives, and enabling all to flourish. The school is recognised as a centre of support where pupils are given and take second chances.
- The curriculum is tailored to help pupils to reach their full potential, with the result that academic progress is high, including for vulnerable pupils. Occasions to consider spiritual and ethical dimensions are creatively employed across all subjects and the many extra-curricular activities on offer.
- The school helps all pupils to expand their horizons, raising aspiration by providing innovative opportunities to engage with people and institutions beyond the immediate environment. Consequently, pupils are aware, show compassion and act as advocates for change in local, national and, increasingly, global concerns.
- Religious education (RE) is strong with leaders helping to develop good practice in assessment across local networks of schools. RE makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development.
- Pupils are increasingly involved in the leadership of worship and feedback to staff, bringing about improved pupil engagement. There are strong, supportive links with the parish church.

### Areas for development

- Expand work with other schools to develop invitational and inspirational resources for collective worship to improve pupil engagement and opportunities for leadership.
- Extend global links with children around the world in order to deepen pupils' understanding of difference and diversity and to give additional opportunities for courageous advocacy for change.

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**

The vision and associated values, developed with input from all stakeholders, encapsulate the ambition of the school and are deeply rooted in biblical teaching. Leadership is very strong, bringing determined and rapid progress across all areas of school life with outstanding outcomes. Members of the senior team are frequently deployed to assist and lead other church and local authority schools. The story of the Good Samaritan is used to focus on truly helping others, facing up to challenges and overcoming prejudice. As a result, the school admits pupils with a very wide range of needs. It is recognised as a successful centre where pupils are given and take second chances. The school is in active partnership with a number of networks, including the diocese and other church schools. This provides useful, relevant support for different areas of school life. Staff receive ongoing support in their understanding of the school as a church school. Governors' regular monitoring visits include a focus on Christian distinctiveness, ensuring that the Christian ethos is continually strengthened. In a close relationship with the parish church, the vicar visits the school every week, leading worship and providing exceptional pastoral support. The school's response to its previous denominational report has brought about significant ongoing improvements.

In line with the vision, leaders create a wonderfully inclusive, stimulating environment. A key Bible verse, 'We show love and compassion for others by truly helping them, and not merely talking about it.'- 1 John 3:18, is referred to constantly. A specialist unit provides tailored support for pupils with additional educational needs whilst allowing integration with the rest of the school and enabling access to all the opportunities on offer. The school provides an impressive, on-going schedule of interventions before and during the school day. These are well-matched to pupils' needs, helping them to 'catch up and keep up'. Consequently, pupils, including those from vulnerable groups, consistently make excellent progress from their starting points, helping them to reach their full potential. The enquiry-based curriculum is well-planned. It encourages curiosity and provides frequent opportunities to consider spiritual and ethical issues across a wide range of subjects through a 'windows, mirrors, doors' approach to thinking. Teachers take time to discuss pupils' ideas as they arise naturally. As a result, pupils think deeply about issues and the world around them, contributing to their spiritual development. Extensive extra-curricular provision, including a 'Jesus and me' club run by church members, gives broad, rich experiences. This expands pupils' horizons, enhancing their life chances and supporting their holistic development in exceptional ways in this particular context.

School leaders create a dynamic culture of aspiration and perseverance to achieve ambitious goals. Challenges are acknowledged and tackled head-on. This approach is modelled by staff and 'caught' by pupils. Independence and resilience are promoted by occasional exposure to difficult and uncomfortable learning experiences, helping to develop strategies for dealing with challenges. Pupils become passionate citizens, learning about disadvantage and deprivation, through fund-raising for a wide range of charities. They initiate their own actions to make a difference. Pupils campaigned to improve the environment by writing to the school meals provider to reduce single-use plastic. Curriculum topics provide further scope. For example, Year 6 pupils wrote manifestos for issues on the Galapagos Islands. The headteacher is a 'teacher ambassador' for the UK parliament, giving excellent opportunities for pupils to visit Westminster, meet members of parliament and explore how to act as agents of change in the world.

Teachers and leaders warmly welcome families at the gate each day, giving a highly accessible presence in which relationships are built up and barriers overcome. Mental health has a high priority with allocated staffing and involvement in an innovative project placing National Health Service professionals in school. Leaders take the view that there are reasons behind any behavioural issues and work in exemplary ways to find solutions. Exclusions are very rare and, when necessary, have been taken as a constructive opportunity to restructure resources to support pupils. Counselling, nurture groups and the provision of a quiet space at lunch times contribute to the embedded and exceptional culture of support. The academy trust provides helpful supervision and support for staff mental health. Consequently, pupils and adults flourish. The school is very inclusive, aware and sensitive to individual needs. This is reflected in the appreciative, positive attitudes of parents and pupils towards all members of the community. The achievements of vulnerable pupils are celebrated with joy. The curriculum offers frequent exposure to difference and diversity through RE and the engaging choice of topics and literature. A link with an ethnically diverse church school in London also takes pupils beyond their particular context in creative ways.

Worship takes place daily in a variety of settings, with themes chosen for their relevance and support of the vision. In keeping with Anglican tradition, pupils join in with sentences such as, 'The Lord be with you – and also with you'. Candles are lit to aid pupil's understanding of Christian beliefs in God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Bible readings illustrate the values. For example, 'I can do all things through him who strengthens me' – Philippians 4 v13, roots pupils' understanding of perseverance in the Bible. Pupil leadership is developed through gathering and reading the prayers of other pupils and awarding certificates to pupils who exhibit the values. Their feedback about worship has led to improvements such as songs being better matched to the theme. Pupils acquire a good knowledge of Jesus and his teaching. All teaching staff lead worship and are supported by relevant training. Pupil leadership, a regular feature of class and key stage worship, is less developed in the whole school setting. Parents enjoy attending special annual services. Families attend 'Messy Church', an informal church activity that meets in the school.

The RE scheme of work enables pupils to explore a range of faiths and beliefs. They consider extracts of religious texts and use subject-specific vocabulary. They learn about different expressions of Christianity around the world. Leaders keep up to date and are pro-active in trialling new ideas for teaching and learning. Excellent practice is developed and shared with other schools. Assessment is rigorous, informing systematic monitoring. Leaders craft staff training to bring about further improvements. The school is pioneering adaptations to the curriculum to address the complex cognitive needs of some learners. RE provides a safe space in which pupils consider 'I wonder' questions that promote deeper thinking. They learn to express their views and listen to those of others with sensitivity and respect. Statutory obligations for RE and collective worship are met.

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