

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Guston Church of England Primary School

Vision

We are a diverse, vibrant learning community where everyone is welcomed, valued and encouraged. Loving relationships, rooted in the teachings of Jesus, allow children and adults to flourish together, creating wise, compassionate, respectful individuals who are ready to confidently take a productive place in an ever changing world.

Guston Church of England Primary School is living up to its foundation as a Church school and is enabling pupils and adults to flourish. It has the following notable strengths.

Strengths

- The leadership team, alongside governors, has developed the school's Christian vision through a deep understanding of the community it serves. The vision is well embedded, resulting in pupils and families that feel valued.
- The school warmly welcomes families from around the world and understands the pupils as individuals. This promotes trust and allows pupils to thrive.
- Through the Christian vision, the school has established a sense of belonging. Consequently, pupils strive to make positive choices and treat those around them with respect.
- Pupils and their families are nurtured through difficult times. Subsequently, pupils show compassion and understanding.
- Religious education (RE) is taught through a sequential and thought-provoking curriculum. Pupils reflect and enjoy learning about world religions, resulting in a culture that respects and celebrates differences.

Development Points

- Develop a clear understanding of spirituality which can be shared and understood by pupils, families and staff. This will allow a more secure and personalised approach to spiritual development.
- Provide further opportunities and guidance for reflection in collective worship. This will support and inspire pupils and adults to consider the impact on their everyday lives.
- Extend opportunities for pupils to develop their personal appreciation for social action. This will empower pupils to explore their views of fairness and justice in the local community and beyond.



Inspection Findings

Guston Church of England Primary School is a welcoming school which strives to prepare pupils for life in the wider world. Leaders and governors have carefully crafted a clear vision. This is rooted in a secure knowledge of the diverse and highly mobile community they serve. Through living the vision, pupils from different backgrounds are given a warm welcome and are made to feel at home. This is extended to their families, who see their children enjoying education, having 'fallen in love with the school.' Staff are empowered to provide an individualised approach to school life and are proud to be part of the community. Consequently, families justifiably feel that their children are 'stretched and supported academically' and that 'pupils from Guston have integrity.' Leaders invest in carefully considered professional development so staff can adapt to the changing needs of a highly mobile population. Governors work closely with senior leaders and have a secure understanding of school life. This enables them to monitor and challenge, while offering support to the leadership team.

The vision has inspired a curriculum which provides pupils with learning opportunities that promote awe and wonder. Pupils see knowledge brought to life through trips to castles, theatres and farms. Resources within the school grounds, such as the science garden and forest school, provide daily inspiration. Subsequently, pupils enjoy learning and gain a greater appreciation for the world they live in. The school has developed partnerships with local organisations to form lasting links. This means pupils have access to a range of carefully created workshops. These include science, history and art, as well as outdoor survival skills. These experiential opportunities provide pupils with a chance to explore a range of learning styles and to broaden their horizons. The school works with external agencies to ensure staff feel supported in dealing with the challenges high mobility can present. As a result, staff feel confident in quickly establishing baselines so pupils progress. They are also assured in working with pupils with English as an additional language. The inclusive nature of the school is exemplified with 'The Blue Room.' This individualised and nurturing provision allows pupils to learn and succeed in a way that is tailored to their needs.

Collective worship is a valued time of togetherness. The leadership team and clergy deliver memorable moments which inspire pupils and promote discussion throughout the day. As a result, pupils feel confident to share stories with their peers and families. This further strengthens the bond between home and school and is leading to increased participation. Pupils often play an active role in collective worship, although personalised opportunities for reflection are undeveloped. Some pupils leave worship with a deep understanding and reflect upon their own lives. One pupil explained how Jesus resisting temptation in the desert was inspiration to eat healthily and avoid too much chocolate. However, there is not a clear understanding of reflection for those who need guidance. As a result, the depth of reflection for most pupils and adults is currently limited.

Within the school day, there are moments of spiritual growth and reflection. Pupils and staff welcome these opportunities and express the calming influence they have. Forest school 'sit spots' allow pupils the time to close their eyes, think and feel the natural environment around them. However, many pupils and adults currently lack the confidence to recognise and reflect upon these occasions. As a result, the impact is restricted and spontaneous moments of spiritual development are often missed. There is not a clear understanding from which personal exploration can grow.

Pupils take great pride in being a part of the school. There is a tangible sense of belonging and they see the whole school as a team. They are acutely aware of the global nature of the school and value the opportunity to work and play together. One pupil said, 'Everyone has a place in our school and our world.' As a result, the pupils care for each other and understand everyone has different needs and ways to be supported. The school have launched



personal wellbeing initiatives. Through these initiatives, and the general caring nature of the school, pupils can recognise emotional needs in themselves and others. This has nurtured a sense of empathy in the pupils who remind each other of calming strategies. Families value buddy and mentor systems which give pupils the power to endure difficult times.

Through the vision, the school nurtures a sense of justice and responsibility to the wider world. This sets roots in early years. Staff in reception class skilfully turned an issue about playing fairly into a reflective conversation about feelings of loneliness. From this the school developed a partnership with a local residential care home. Reception pupils now create and send cards and pictures to let the residents know they are being thought about. From early in their school career, pupils are learning to be citizens of the world who acknowledge their responsibility. Some pupils are inspired to pick up litter in the local area as a result of spending time in the forest school and science garden. Others describe how they donate toys to local charities as the school has given them a great love for animals. The school teaches pupils about the work of charities and organises a variety of fundraising events. However, these initiatives are often school led. Many pupils are not empowered to reflect on these experiences and consider their own views on fairness and justice.

RE is a subject that is highly valued within the multicultural context of the school. Pupils express how the knowledge acquired in lessons is important for life and has empowered them to be inquisitive yet respectful. RE is taught through a sequential scheme that builds on prior learning. As a result, pupils have a good understanding of similarities and differences between religions. They particularly enjoy 'I wonder' questions which provoke deeper thinking and conversation. Consequently, pupils embrace learning about world faiths. Through exploring different beliefs, they develop their understanding and respect for other people.

Information

Address	Burgoyne Heights, Dover, Kent, CT15 5LR		
Date	06 March 2025	URN	118687
Type of school	Voluntary Controlled	No. of pupils	151
Diocese	Canterbury		
Headteacher	Deby Day		
Chair of Governors	Sheila Wilding		
Inspector	Simon Krafft		