

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Helen's Church of England Primary School

Vision

'Love to learn, learning to love, all different, all equal' Matthew 22:34-40

We provide an inclusive, nurturing and ambitious curriculum to enable all pupils to feel valued and loved whatever their background, gifts, skills and abilities in a compassionate learning environment. Following the example in Matthew 22:34-40 we ensure all members of our community are loved, able to flourish and able to make a positive contribution to society.

St Helen's 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 Christian vision, focussed on the words of Matthew 22: 34-40, provides a central and shared purpose to the work of the school. It sits at the heart of school life and shapes the strategic direction of St Helen's.
- Relationships are based on love and respect for pupils and adults. This fosters a strong sense of belonging in an environment where individual worth is a high priority. Personal and collective wellbeing and care for each other, form a firm foundation for academic success.
- The school's vision inspires a love of learning. Curiosity and the joy of discovery are at the heart of the curriculum. It engages and enthuses pupils, widening their horizons.
- Pupils and adults have a secure understanding of spirituality. This provides individuals with a deep awareness of who they are and their role in moulding the school community.
- Collective worship makes a significant contribution to pupils' understanding of the vision and values. As a result, worship has a profound impact on life at St Helen's.

Development Points

- Governors to reflect on the impact of the vision on daily life at St Helen's. This is in order for the information gathered to accurately guide future Church school development.
- Deepen opportunities for evaluative and reflective thinking in religious education (RE). This is so that pupils can express personal responses to ethical and theological questions and themes.
- Enhance pupil understanding of how to challenge injustice. This is to deepen their understanding of how to make a positive difference independently as well as collectively.



Inspection Findings

The Christian vision, rooted in the words of the 'great commandment' (Matthew 22:34-40), is central to the work of St Helen's. It guides and underpins relationships with and between pupils and adults, extending to positive and supportive dialogue with parents. This creates a loving community that recognises and celebrates differences that are accepted and commended. The Christian values are clearly in evidence in the work of the school. They gird St Helen's with strength and cohesion, providing a framework for interactions, empowering pupils and staff to collaborate. The strategic direction of the school is focused on enabling pupils and adults to be the best version of themselves. As a result, they thrive academically, emotionally and spiritually. Partnerships with the diocese and local schools effectively strengthen St Helen's progress with training and professional support. Governors take a positive interest in the work of the school and how it meets the needs of pupils and adults. Some monitoring takes place, but governors do not review the impact of the vision within their work. This limits development of the school as a Church school.

A 'love of learning', places curiosity and the joy of discovery at the centre of the school's ambitious curriculum. Inspiring learning activities, focused on themes linked to literature, enthuse pupils. They are engaged in a wide range of tasks that support the development of skills and abilities. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are fully supported through bespoke provision. This enables them to thrive. Alongside a variety of extra-curricular activities pupils experience many opportunities to widen their horizons. Special themed days, trips, visitors and time outside absorb pupils more deeply in their learning. This ensures that pupils, whatever their background, make progress. St Helen's has embraced a deep understanding of spirituality. Pupils experience a significant sense of awe and wonder in their environment which fosters a connection with creation. Through spontaneous moments and planned activities, pupils develop a clear awareness of identity, purpose and belonging. This enables them to confidently express their thoughts, beliefs and questions about life's deeper meanings.

Inspired by the vision and values, collective worship is a time when the school comes together as a united community. Love and recognition for individuals pervades worship. This is clearly seen within celebration worship and in the sharing of ideas with talk partners and the whole school. Stories of Jesus, especially those where he helped people, encourage pupils to act with kindness to each other. This has a profound impact on behaviour. Pupils of all ages play together well, and they willingly support each other with learning. Worship led by clergy and other visitors engages pupils and enriches the provision. The spiritual growth of pupils and adults is effectively developed through times of stillness and reflection. For some this is through prayer. This enables them to be thankful or to release their worries and anxieties to God. Reflection areas, inside and outside, ensure that pupils and adults have access to places to seek inner peace and calm. In turn this strengthens them to form strong and stable relationships with others, generating a harmonious and supportive school environment. Singing is heartfelt and enthusiastic. It enables individuals to express their emotions, with words providing an awareness of hope for the future.

St Helen's is a community that loves individuals and lives well together. This is reflected in positive and compassionate relationships between pupils, adults and families. Parents are confident that they will be supported with any matter linked to their child's education and for them as individuals. The provision of a second-hand uniform store exemplifies the care extended to all families. Pupils are made to feel valued and nurtured whatever their background. This helps them to be secure in their personal identity and grow in self-worth. In response to this they offer a warm welcome to newcomers who are readily accepted into friendship groups. When behaviours have gone astray, unconditional love, acceptance and forgiveness are at the centre of restoring and reconciling good relationships. As a result, pupils thrive in the learning environment. Staff equally feel loved and accepted. They recognise that their personal needs will be supported, as much as their professional development, by the school's leadership and each other. This nurtures a cohesive and aspirational team that personifies the vision.

A culture of shared responsibility enables pupils to gain confidence as they partner the staff in leading and developing St Helen's. Thus, they actively practice and internalise the school's core values in tangible ways. Some



roles are assigned, such as house captains, worship leaders and play leaders. At other times pupils eagerly volunteer and suggest avenues in which they can embrace responsibility. They know that they are trusted and are encouraged to use their own initiative and ideas to help mould a happy school. This is exemplified in their part in the 'pupil parliament'. The group is empowered to make significant decisions for the benefit of the whole school. For example, a discussion about the introduction of a school tuck shop. This is resulting in the organisation of a daily healthy snack on the playground. Pupils know that charitable giving supports those less fortunate than themselves and understand about injustice through the curriculum. They work together as a school to raise funds for national charities. Individual pupils have also undertaken inspiring fundraising tasks in their own time. However, opportunities for pupils to independently challenge injustice within the curriculum are limited.

RE is led with enthusiasm to create a curriculum that is clearly constructed and regularly reviewed. As a result, RE is enabling pupils to develop a deeper understanding of the diverse community and world in which they live. A well-sequenced enquiry-based approach allows pupils to build their knowledge and make connections between different world faiths and beliefs. Pupils feel comfortable to share their opinions and ask relevant questions within the classroom environment. When discussing RE they engage positively and are respectful of the views of their peers. Pupils are engaged in and stimulated by a wide range of activities within RE, including drama, art and outdoor learning. Visits to the local church and other places of worship further enrich learning. However, opportunities for pupils to consider the impact of religions and worldviews on their own beliefs and lives are underdeveloped. Monitoring and evaluation of the subject ensures that provision is consistent and has impact. Good links with the diocese mean that support for RE is accessed regularly through training and networking. RE reflects and reinforces the school's vision to 'love to learn, learning to love, all different, all equal'.

Information

Address	Church Street, Cliffe, Rochester, Kent ME3 7PU		
Date	24 June 2025	URN	118641
Type of school	Voluntary Controlled	No. of pupils	191
Diocese	Rochester		
Headteacher	Amanda Kember		
Chair of Governors	Ian Chappell		
Inspector	Elizabeth Pettersen		