

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

## Penshurst Church of England Primary School

### Vision

At Penshurst CE Primary School we support our pupils to be 'Good Samaritans' who walk in the shoes of others; our Christian Values promote living life in its fullness. We prioritise the well-being of our school community and encourage our pupils to feel comfortable with who they are. Our local community is important to us; we care for both the people and the environment. We also think about how our actions touch the lives of those in the wider world. Our rich and ambitious curriculum inspires our school community to have a love of life-long learning and to strive for excellence in all we do. We support every pupil enabling them to flourish and to always aim high in whatever they do.

Penshurst 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 school is rooted in its strong Christian vision. Its thorough implementation allows pupils and adults to flourish confidently.
- Carefully planned collective worship enhances other spiritual development within the school providing opportunities for reflection. Worship is purposefully designed to be relatable to everyday lives. The school is prayerful and pupils share their prayers spontaneously.
- Living well together is a school strength. Pupils and adults take guidance from the school vision to enable them to understand how it feels to 'walk in the shoes of others'. They are supportive of each other. Good mental health and well-being are a priority.
- Penshurst is a highly inclusive school. Leaders and staff know their pupils well and support them strongly. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those that are vulnerable are provided with extra help which enhances their growth.
- The partnerships with the local community, including the church, are exceptionally strong. Penshurst School is an intrinsic part of the village.

### Development Points

- Ensure there is a deeper understanding of the meaning of spirituality within the curriculum. This is so that pupils' spiritual development can be fostered further.
- Embed the new religious education (RE) curriculum. This is so pupils gain a greater understanding of non-religious worldviews and Christianity as a worldwide faith.
- Governors to develop a more systematic monitoring of RE. This is so they are better able to support the school in the development of this subject.



## Inspection Findings

The Christian vision at Penshurst stems from the Bible passage of the Good Samaritan. Leaders exhibit determination that pupils and adults are supported to flourish. The accessible phrase of 'walking in the shoes of others' drives the vision so it is a living reality. A visual representation of feet takes centre stage in the hall as a poignant reminder to all. The vision is understood and lived by the school community and pupils think of others. The vision, and its associated values, drive policies, procedures, and the daily life of the school. Leaders, including governors, possess a profound comprehension of the school's context and culture. The impact of this is evident through the decisions they make such as keeping policies under review to ensure they meet the vision and needs of the community. The wider community has a deep understanding of school life and actively supports it with enthusiasm. This impacts the school positively.

Leaders have underpinned the curriculum with its Christian vision. This is conveyed through values that are integrated into the daily teaching and learning experiences. Additional provisions such as 'relax kids' and counselling have a notable impact on pupils. The planned curriculum experiences support the needs of pupils, including those who have SEND. Such provision allows these pupils a seamless integration into daily school life. Additionally, opportunities such as forest church and extra-curricular activities are used to support pupils to reflect and develop curiosity. Curriculum design has been carefully considered to promote spiritual development for pupils. However, a lack of a shared understanding of spirituality hinders this aspect of school life.

Collective worship at Penshurst binds the school community together. Carefully planned collective worship enhances the spiritual development of pupils and adults. It is relevant and relatable to their lives and pupils value the time given to think and reflect. This allows them to make personal connections with the messages they are hearing. Pupils share how these impact upon them and often continue discussions throughout the day. For example, deliberating on the different ways they show forgiveness. Pupils' engagement in prayer is heart-warming. They confidently share their prayers spontaneously which demonstrates spiritual flourishing at its best. Pupils strive to become worship leaders recognising the important status it has within the school. The strong partnership with the local church enriches the school's vision. This is notable in the connection the school and the church have through services such as the Harvest Festival, Remembrance and Easter.

Living well together is a strength. Through the lens of their vision, the school have implemented effective strategies to equip pupils with the skills needed for self-care. This is enhanced by the 'Penshurst suitcase'. Staff refer pupils to the suitcase to give them the essential skills they need for life. Pupils find this valuable and gain a sense of justice about racism, anti-bullying and being data safe. It provides essential qualities for pupils to nurture effective positive actions. Pupils gain a sense of themselves and others as well as building skills which sustain positive life-long learning. Adults feel listened to and supported by leaders and talk positively about work life balance. The school provides opportunities for them to develop professionally and personally. This makes sure, in line with the vision, they are encouraged to aim high in whatever they do. The partnership with the community is mutually beneficial where joint ventures advantage both parties. This is showcased through the school tapestry work produced by the village 'knit and natter' group. The school's relationship within the wider community is impressive. They are active members of the village fete and local fundraising initiatives such as the Tonbridge walking marathon. This strong relationship creates unity among the different parties. Pupils are welcomed to the community as they receive a locally donated book based on Jesus' stories from the Bible. Year 6 are then forever rooted to the school and the church as they receive their Bibles upon leaving the school.



Penshurst uses its Christian school vision to create an active culture of justice and responsibility across the school. Pupils know what is and is not fair in the world and share their thoughts freely. Pupils take the time to consider how others feel by seeing things from another's perspective. The rector recognises this and talks about how you can 'taste the kindness'. Pupils think about ethical choices around sustainability and the environment. They do this through their curriculum-based work and by actively advocating change. Litter picking and paper recycling are two of the community initiatives they engage in to impact positively and reciprocally on people's lives. Pupils work closely with the local foodbank, leading a service at the church to raise awareness of the need to support families. The school are a local collection point for the 'bag2school' fundraising scheme. They collect no longer needed clothes and shoes so they can be used by others purposefully.

There is a strong commitment to the teaching of RE. Leaders have made changes to the curriculum to raise its profile across the school. They have a well-sequenced, challenging, relevant curriculum in place where core concepts and questions are explored. Staff subject knowledge is sustained through ongoing continuous professional development and the school utilise curriculum support through local diocese training opportunities. Monitoring and assessment are at the early stages of development. Ongoing formative assessment is used to inform teaching and learning and the impact of this can be seen in the pupils' work. However, monitoring of RE by the governors is less developed.

Pupils find their lessons engaging. They enjoy learning about a range of religions. This is evident in the pupils' ability to talk about their prior learning. They confidently discuss which aspects they like and why. Pupils understand how what they learn in RE has a positive impact on themselves. They recognise difference and individuality. They share their opinions through role play, questioning and textual learning. Their work shows they are able to draw on their knowledge to support their own ideas. Most pupils are keen to talk about their learning and make reference to the Bible stories they have studied. However, pupils demonstrate a less secure understanding of non-religious worldviews and Christianity as a worldwide faith.

## Information

Address	Penshurst Church of England Primary School, High Street, Penshurst, Kent, TN11 8BX		
Date	14 November 2024	URN	118720
Type of school	Voluntary aided	No. of pupils	86
Diocese	Rochester		
Headteacher	Sue Elliott		
Chair of Governors	Lisa Cornell		
Inspector	Samantha Killick		