

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

### Charlton Church of England Primary School

#### Vision

Transforming lives through God's embrace.

Charlton is a school of sanctuary. Our diversity is embraced in all its forms, thus enabling children to thrive spiritually in their own unique way through Worship, prayer and our enriched curriculum. As Jesus taught, we love, support and celebrate our whole community. Our mission to widen horizons, nurture and challenge enables our children to become global citizens, who strive to make a positive impact on our world.

"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you" John 13:34.

Charlton 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 deeply embedded Christian vision has been developed through a secure understanding of the pupils and their community. As a result, pupils, staff and families enjoy coming to a school where they feel valued, appreciated and consequently thrive.
- Through the vision, pupils, families and staff are lovingly nurtured and reassuringly supported through challenging times. They are shown unyielding compassion and understanding. In turn they feel safe and empowered to flourish.
- The school has developed a strong, shared understanding of spirituality. Pupils are supported in reflecting on their lives, leading to increased resilience, empathy and sense of self-worth.
- Pupils have an absolute understanding of the vision and see it as a source of inspiration. This motivates them to treat others well and embrace differences.
- Inclusive and inspirational collective worship holds a central role within school life. Pupils are empowered to be reflective and consider how they can have a positive impact on others.

#### Development Points

- Strengthen pupil's personal appreciation for social action in the world in which they live. This is to further empower them to explore their views of fairness and justice both within their local environment and beyond.
- Enhance opportunities for experiential learning within religious education (RE). This is to develop a stronger understanding and deeper connection with the impact of religion on people's lives.



## Inspection Findings

Charlton Church of England Primary School is a 'school of sanctuary'. Its distinct Christian vision has been formed through the deep understanding of the community it serves. The vision is the guiding force behind actions and choices. It ensures that pupils from all backgrounds feel valued and supported. School leaders make decisions with this vision in mind, ensuring that it shapes the culture and practices of the school. Teachers understand and embody the vision, using it to guide both their teaching and interactions with pupils. Through a deeply nurturing approach, the staff have fostered an environment where pupils can thrive spiritually, academically, and emotionally. Pupils are encouraged to grow in their own unique way through purposeful reflection and an enriched curriculum. The vision resonates deeply with parents, who rightly view the school as a safe and welcoming extension of their own family. Pupils eagerly look forward to coming to school, knowing they are part of a supportive, loving community. Charlton works closely with the Aquila Trust, which embraces and empowers the school to follow its vision. Trust-wide training and collaborative working has resulted in staff feeling supported and looked after. School governors offer a healthy balance of challenge and encouragement. They share a clear understanding of the vision and the impact this has on the school community. Through this unified focus, Charlton is a sanctuary where individuals can flourish.

The leadership team has thoughtfully designed a curriculum that reflects the school's Christian vision and the needs of the pupils. It is rooted in nurture while empowering pupils to develop confidence and independence in a safe and calm environment. Leaders have introduced initiatives to improve pupil focus and engagement. These have also supported teacher workload and, by extension, their wellbeing. Pupils are inspired through a research-based curriculum, such as the dinosaur topic in Year 1. Carefully planned lessons enable teachers to focus on adaptive teaching and curriculum enrichment. As a result, pupils feel supported and enjoy learning. School leaders ensure staff are well placed to support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They are provided with bespoke training opportunities, and clear guidance on school wide inclusive language. As a result, they feel confident in supporting pupils with additional needs. Consequently, pupils are nurtured to succeed in an environment where differences are accepted and celebrated. Enrichment experiences, including educational trips, science days and music workshops, provide real-world learning that compliments academic, spiritual, and personal development. A strength of the school is the use of reflection time at the beginning of the day. This fosters calmness, readiness to learn, and supports pupils' spiritual and personal development. Pupils are given the opportunity to reflect on 'big questions' and encouraged to explore life's 'wows and ows'. Spiritual development within the curriculum is becoming well embedded. Pupils are able to identify 'wow moments' within their learning and reflect on their responses.

The inclusive nature of collective worship enables pupils and adults of different religions and beliefs to engage through the teachings of the Bible. It supports spiritual development by offering reflective experiences that help pupils explore questions about life and personal values. Pupils actively prepare and lead worship, guided by staff who ask open-ended questions to encourage thoughtful reflection. This builds confidence and helps pupils connect spiritual responses to their everyday actions and decisions. Pupils fully engaged with the story of Jesus healing the paralysed man. As a result, they are able to reflect on how they lead their own lives. For example, how they can be generous to others beyond giving money. Collective worship links smoothly with morning reflection time. As a result, pupils have space to revisit themes and consider them more deeply. This often leads to them being more thoughtful and accepting, both at school and home. Worship is led by staff, pupils, and the local reverend, creating



a rich and varied spiritual experience. Joyful singing and the opportunity for prayer support spiritual and personal development.

Charlton's Bible story of the Good Samaritan is deeply embedded and well understood by the pupils. It is a guiding principle for how they treat, support and include each other. Behaviour in the school is welcoming and joyful. Pupils are taught to solve problems and manage challenges effectively. As a result, break times are filled with co-operative play and mutual respect. Pupils believe in helping anyone in need, and this shapes their daily interactions. Those in key stage 1 understand being at Charlton means "we all help others." The values are equally strong in key stage 2. Pupils explain, "If you see someone who needs help, you should help them. Even if you don't think you can do much, a smile might make their day." Consequently, they are welcoming to visitors and caring of their peers. The supportive nature of the pupils is a direct reflection of the inclusive and nurturing environment school leaders have established. Pupils are empowered to flourish, even during difficult times. If required, they are provided with additional support and strategies to ensure they are included. The wellbeing of pupils and staff is a priority for school leaders and is encompassed through the vision. Staff and pupils feel happy and supported. As a result, they enjoy being in an environment where they "value and love each other as a school."

Pupils are actively nurtured to understand justice and responsibility through values-led education, bespoke learning opportunities and periods of reflection. They understand their own rights and the rights of others. This has helped foster a culture of respect and empathy which is evident in response to issues, such as homelessness. This led them to reflect deeply, with some translating empathy into action by requesting to buy food for those in need. Inspired by the charity's presence in their local community, pupils in key stage 2 recently organised a fundraiser for the British Heart Foundation. Pupils have developed a deeper awareness of local societal challenges. These actions reflect a growing commitment to social justice and a desire to make a positive impact. However, they are less confident in discussing issues beyond their local community and in the natural world.

RE at Charlton is effective in fostering both engagement and empathy among pupils. Lessons promote a sense of respect and understanding across different faiths. One pupil reflected this sentiment, saying, "Even though we are from different religions, RE teaches me we are equal and shouldn't judge others." The curriculum revisits key concepts which enables pupils to build on prior learning and deepen their understanding over time. The teaching of Christianity, world religions and world views is well balanced. While pupils enjoy RE, there are limited opportunities for experiential learning within the subject. The RE lead has rightly identified the need to explore further ways to bring learning to life. This is so pupils can develop a deeper understanding of the impact of beliefs on everyday life.

Pupils are well taught and make progress in RE. The leadership team ensure there is a robust system of monitoring and support as a result of effective assessment. Training, delivered in collaboration with the trust and diocese, ensures teachers are well equipped in delivering the subject. As a result, they have a greater confidence in ensuring pupils make progress and can adapt their teaching to meet various needs. Transition meetings between staff help maintain continuity and ensure that progress is sustained as pupils move through year groups.

## Information

Address	Barton Road, Dover, CT16 2LX		
Date	11 June 2025	URN	141659
Type of school	Academy	No. of pupils	209
Diocese	Canterbury		
MAT/Federation	Aquila		
Headteacher	Sally-Anne Pettersen		
Chair of Governors	Sue Vick		
Inspector	Simon Krafft		