

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Sedley's Church of England Primary School (VA)	
Address	Church Street, Southfleet, Gravesend DA13 9NR

School vision

Love to Learn, Learn to Love is at the heart of all we do at Sedley's C of E Primary School.

This is underpinned by the belief that God loves everyone as an individual, so we should love others and ourselves just as God loves us. Like the branches of the vine (John 15), we are all members of one family who grow in different directions, yet our roots remain as one. Using the words of Jesus, 'Love each other as I have loved you', individuals are empowered to flourish and grow as part of a strong inclusive community, just as the vine and the branches grow ripe fruit. As they leave Sedley's they have the feeling that they are unique, special and loved and are prepared for an ever changing world.

School strengths

- The school vision underpins loving and trusting relationships across the school community. Pupils and staff are welcomed and nurtured.
- A strong and supportive partnership with other schools within the trust is enabling the school to make effective strategic plans. This allows pupils and staff to thrive.
- The Christian vision of 'love to learn and learn to love' inspires and enables pupils to be the best that they can be. In this way it prepares them for the next stage of their education.
- Collective worship provides a time to bond the school around the vision and values. Times of stillness and reflection allow pupils and staff to know that they are unique, special and loved.
- Collaborative working in religious education (RE) enables pupils to explore a range of religions and worldviews. They confidently express their own ideas in discussion.

Areas for development

- Enhance the schools shared understating of spirituality in establishing planned opportunities across the curriculum. This will enable pupils and adults to explore their own spirituality in depth.
- Continue to utilise the strong support from other schools in the trust to nurture the development of deeper thinking in RE.
- Broaden opportunities for pupils to engage in social action and to actively challenge injustice. This is so that they are inspired to make a difference in the world in which they live.

Inspection findings

Sedley's lives out its Christian vision enabling pupils to 'love to learn and learn to love'. Rooted in biblical teaching of John 15, staff and pupils know that their roots are strong wherever their branches take them. Pupils, staff, parents and governors consistently talk about how the shared roots of the vision strengthen them. Pupils refer to themselves as 'Sedley's' and that they, as fruit, use the values to grow emotionally and spiritually. As a result, staff and pupils are recognised as unique and free to be themselves. School leaders, supported by the trust and governors, have created a warm and inviting culture allowing pupils to thrive. Governors and the trust monitor and visit the school, ensuring that pupil and staff voices are heard and are acted upon. The trust has encouraged the unique identity of Sedley's giving hope, direction and support. The school has Christian values at the heart of all they do. They are consistently referenced and underpin attitudes and behaviour. Parents say that they know their children understand the vision and the values as this permeates homelife. While thinking about love as a value a child expressed on a post it 'love helps us to communicate and care for each other. Love is a thing that joins us and makes us who we are'. This is central to the vision of Sedley's and how it is lived out.

The curriculum is driven by the school's vision and the three drivers of community, diversity and creativity. It is challenging pupils to develop their ability to think more deeply. Studying significant people from a range of other countries enables pupils to acquire an appreciation of the diverse world in which they live. All pupils can access and experience a range of extra-curricular opportunities and trips. This encourages pupils to celebrate their uniqueness. Collaborative working with other schools in the trust has extended the range of experiences available to pupils. There is much sporting success, which builds confidence and aspiration. Sedley's is a school where all are known as individuals. Support for those with special educational needs and those from disadvantaged backgrounds is personalised and targeted. A close relationship with other trust schools is supporting the development of teaching and learning. Best practise teams of subject leaders facilitate planning. Together with shared training this creates a sense of being part of a team, as well as giving opportunities for staff professional development. Spirituality blossoms through the purposeful relationships evident across the school. Pupils and adults share the same language of 'ows' and 'wows'. This familiarity of approach provides a strong structure to embrace spirituality. Although there are some spontaneous opportunities to develop spirituality, there are few planned occasions. Consequently, some spiritual expression is limited.

The palpable awareness of being part of a loving community permeates everyday life. The school's four Christian values of love, forgiveness, sharing and caring and honesty are clearly and consistently displayed and used. This helps create a community unified around inclusion and nurture. Pupils and staff support one another celebrating others' successes. Pupils know that they are loved at Sedley's. They recognise that all staff are approachable, and that they will always be heard. Staff express how the school nurtures and cares for them. At the same time, within this small school they-all support each other. Senior leaders are mindful of workload and wellbeing. There is a deep sense of 'team' and that everyone cares for each other in all roles. Partnerships with parents are driven by the vision. This ensures that the pupils' interests are considered, and thoughtful provision put in place. The consistent care shown to parents creates a welcoming environment. They are treated with warmth and dignity and are clear that they can ask for assistance when they need it.

Throughout Sedley's there is a positive feeling of a shared responsibility towards each other. Pupils have opportunities to take leadership roles such as house captains, leading lights and senior prefects. They thrive in these roles and gain confidence from them. Older pupils 'buddy' younger ones, acting as positive role models. These relationships go beyond the life of the school and are lived out in the community, even when pupils have left Sedley's. Pupils are articulate about being the best person they can be and how they are encouraged to think about others. They speak about how writing letters to companies about the use of Palm Oil gave them a feeling of empowerment. However, these opportunities are limited so that the pupils are not actively looking at social injustice in the wider world.

Collective worship is integral to the life of the school. Coming together is important to the pupils and staff and gives a deep sense of community. Pupils speak of how collective worship ‘activates hope’ and that love is ‘inside hope’. This reinforces their sense of belonging. They enjoy the pauses to think and take inspiration from the time together. Class worship gives time for further reflection, continuing the themes of whole school worship and the use of ‘big questions’. In this way their spirituality is effectively fostered within worship. Pupils contribute prayers to worship. They share their thoughts and ideas based on the Bible stories they have heard. Pupils accept and respect each other’s opinions and views because of the embedded vision. This generates a caring environment. Parents enjoy attending class collective worship and services at the church. Relationships with the church are growing and twice a year, pupils lead and contribute to a Sunday service. This brings the school to the heart of the community.

A close relationship with Stone St Mary Church of England Primary and other trust schools is supporting the development of RE teaching. Training and shared best practice are helping to strengthen teaching and embed teacher knowledge. Learning is thoughtfully sequenced, so that it builds on prior learning. An understanding about other faiths, has been enhanced by utilising the school’s own class experts. This was shown by a Year 4 pupil who read some of the Koran to the Year 5/6 class as part of their study of Islam. The pupils commented that it made a world faith real to them. Collaborative learning in class enables pupils to share ideas and articulate what they have learnt from each other. They are enthusiastic about the opportunities to express themselves creatively, through dance, drama and poetry. For example, pupils described their Diwali dance and how it helped them remember what Diwali means. Contributions to an art installation run by the trust has had a significant impact both on pupils’ self-belief and on the ownership of their learning. Assessment of RE is supporting the monitoring of pupils’ progress. Pupils respond to ‘green for growth’ questions posed, but opportunities for deeper thinking are not fully explored.

The inspection findings indicate that Sedley’s Church of England Primary School is living up to its foundation as a Church school.

Information

Inspection date	09 July 2024	URN	149123
VA/VC/Academy	VA Academy	Pupils on roll	103
Diocese	Rochester		
MAT/Federation	Aletheia Academies Trust		
Headteacher	Jane Rolfe Executive Head, Tina Handley Head of School		
Chair	Sarah Humphreys		
Inspector	Sara Sanbrook-Davies	No.	C23/24