

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Rusthall St Paul's Church of England VA Primary School

Vision

'From the smallest of beginnings, every individual can grow, flourish and offer shelter.'

Our vision is based on Jesus' parable of the mustard seed, where the smallest seed grows into a mighty tree. We believe our school is like the tree, a home for children, parents, staff and community members to grow and flourish.

We are committed to nurturing growth in all, inspiring a passion for learning, fostering intellectual curiosity and personal development. Through an inspiring curriculum, innovative teaching practices, meaningful relationships, and a culture of continuous improvement, everyone is empowered to become lifelong learners making a positive impact on the world. Matthew 13: 31-32

Rusthall St Paul's Church of England VA 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.

Notable Strengths

- The school's Christian vision is central to school life. It inspires the actions of leaders and staff, sustaining a environment where people are known and nurtured as unique individuals.
- This is a happy, harmonious learning community that ensures pupils and adults are nurtured. Leaders and staff are highly ambitious for pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). This gives them the opportunity to thrive.
- Collective worship is central to the daily life of the school. It offers rich and purposeful opportunities to engage with, reflect on and deepen understanding of the school's Christian vision and associated values.
- The religious education (RE) curriculum is well planned, creative and engaging. It equips pupils with a secure knowledge of Christianity and a range of world faiths and worldviews.

Development Points

- Extend the shared language and school-wide approach to spirituality. This is to enhance the spiritual flourishing of pupils across the curriculum.
- Develop greater opportunities for pupils to respond to issues about injustice in ways that go beyond charitable fundraising. This is to develop the ways they use their sense of responsibility towards others and be more effective agents of change.



Inspection Findings

Vision and Leadership

Rusthall St Paul's is committed to its Christian vision. The deliberately chosen parable provides a strong foundation, rooting the vision and work of the school in scripture. It reflects the context and needs of the school and resonates with that of the trust. The vision effectively informs leaders' decision-making, for example how pupils with additional needs are supported. The parable is well understood by the school community, who recognise themselves as the birds roosting in the branches. They also relate to the school as the tree offering unconditional shelter and welcome which shapes relationships. Furthermore, efforts are made to know families well, meaning that parents and carers feel welcome and supported by the school. Parents know that if they have worries about their children they can talk to staff and the school will listen. Staff exemplify the vision in their daily practice, actively modelling the school's values and intentionally weaving them into school life. The vision is further supported by six associated values of individuality, respect, compassion, ambition, belonging and growth. These are lived out through loving and giving relationships and positive attitudes to challenges in life and learning. Governors visit regularly and know the school well. They engage positively with pupils and staff. Their commitment ensures the vision remains active, visible, and influential in daily practice.

Worship and Spirituality

Collective worship is a valued part of school life that brings the community together. Pupils and adults appreciate this cherished part of their day. Leaders ensure worship is welcoming and inclusive, using adaptations to allow pupils to benefit from these important times of togetherness. Centred around the school values, worship is well planned and carefully considered so that it is relevant and inspires adults and pupils. Bible stories and prayers enrich and deepen pupils understanding of each value and help them to know how they can be lived out. Contributions from Church leaders and local Christian groups provide opportunities for pupils and staff to experience a diversity of worship experiences. While singing a range of songs and hymns, lyrics are unpacked, which supports spiritual flourishing. Pupil leaders, known as leading lights, are involved throughout worship, for example, facilitating discussion during think, pair, share times. Supported by the diocese, the school has established a clear definition of spirituality. Staff, pupils, parents and carers use the language of windows, mirrors and doors in worship and RE. Carefully matched, practical reflection activities in class worship allow time for pupils to reflect and be still. These contribute to their spiritual development and deepen understanding.

Vision and School Culture

The school's vision supports a culture of caring for others, helping individuals grow to be the best version of themselves. Leaders and staff go out of their way to get to know pupils and their families well. Pupils feel valued and understood for who they are. They recognise the welcome the school gives to families, regardless of their background, which builds a strong sense of community. Pupils also recognise the way adults support them to persevere when things are difficult, which helps them grow. The school uses a restorative approach to repair and strengthen relationships. It responds to pupils' individual needs, instilling compassion. Determined efforts mean that pupils and adults are nurtured, particularly in difficult times. The school helps pupils keep a healthy perspective around assessments and this is appreciated by pupils and parents. Staff recognise that training provided by leaders and the trust enables them to meet the needs of pupils. They particularly value the way they are able to support one another to develop professionally.

Vision, Justice and Responsibility

The vision inspires pupils' sense of justice and responsibility towards one another. They build strong bonds within school and are inspired to help others. For example, pupils wrote letters to councillors about changes to the local commons while learning about sustainability. Leadership roles such as leading lights encourage pupil contributions. Older pupils look out for those who are upset, lonely or in need of help and act to make a difference. They take part in adult led charitable work and can explain why there is a need to support these



causes. This includes making contributions to a local foodbank and singing at a local care home. However, opportunities for pupils to independently act for justice are underdeveloped. This limits the way they are able to fully live out their vision and make a positive impact on the world.

Religious Education

RE is given priority and makes a valuable contribution to pupils' personal development. One pupil explained that RE helped her to understand a friend's beliefs. Key questions as starting points for learning, help pupils to see the relevance of their learning in RE. The subject leader supports staff, providing training and resources to deepen subject knowledge and develop practice. The school approach to spirituality is integrated into RE to encourage reflection. Reflection days support and enrich the curriculum. For example, a recent day helped deepen pupils' understanding of Easter and the suffering of Jesus through different activities. Pupils study a wide range of beliefs and worldviews that help them learn more about themselves and others. They appreciate that people live out and express their beliefs in different ways. Pupils particularly enjoy hearing from each other about how festivals are celebrated at home. As a result, pupils from faith backgrounds have been able to be a living resource to enrich the RE curriculum.

Diocesan and internal training supports teachers to deliver the RE curriculum with increasing confidence. As a result, teaching is effective and pupils are able to build and deepen learning over time. Leaders make good use of systems to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of RE. Teachers use regular assessment and feedback which helps pupils make secure progress. Teachers demonstrate secure subject knowledge and deliver lessons that are engaging and adapted to meet the needs of a range of learner's needs.

Vision and Curriculum

Guided by the Christian vision, the curriculum is designed to motivate and engage learners. Pupils experience a full and varied curriculum that inspires them as learners. This is enriched by specialist teaching and creative opportunities in a range of subjects including forest school, music, arts and sport. This, together with extra-curricular opportunities, further enhances the breadth of the curriculum. For example, following a theatre visit, pupils are enthused and excited about their learning. The impact of the inclusive vision means that staff and leaders show high ambition for pupils, including those who have SEND. Staff provide targeted support and intervention that improves access to and progress in learning for those who have SEND. Work to identify planned opportunities for spiritual development within the wider curriculum beyond RE is at an early stage. This restricts capacity for deeper spiritual flourishing in pupils. The trust supports teachers and curriculum leaders in their role through training and subject networks. Quality assurance visits ensure that the curriculum provides the best opportunities for pupils to learn.

Information

Address	High St, Royal Tunbridge Wells, Tunbridge Wells TN4		
Date	20 May 2026	URN	151115
Type of school	Academy	No. of pupils	110
Diocese	Rochester		
MAT	Inspire Academy Movement Trust		
MAT Chair	Nick Catt		
Chair of Local Board	Simon Griffiths		
Headteacher	Lyndsay Smurthwaite		
Chair of Governors	Simon Griffiths		
Inspector	Andrew Jervis		