

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Bennett Memorial Diocesan School

Vision

Inspired by a God who never gives up on us we seek to empower Bennett students to live their lives tenaciously, to serve and bring meaningful change to the world.

'We love because he first loved us.' 1 John 4:19.

Bennett Memorial Diocesan 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 is driven by a powerful vision which is biblically rooted, deeply understood and clearly articulated. This has a profound impact, enabling pupils and staff to achieve well and flourish.
- Spiritual flourishing is at the heart of the school. Varied forms of collective worship, reflection and prayer offer a range of spiritual experiences. Chaplaincy empowers pupils as spiritual leaders within and beyond school.
- A culture of mutual respect and encouragement characterises this school community. Warm, constructive relationships between pupils and staff foster an inclusive climate in which individuals feel known and valued.
- The vision-inspired ethos of love and service entuses pupils to engage in a wide range of meaningful leadership experiences. This extends across the whole of school life, including into the curriculum and co-curricular activities.
- Consistent high-quality teaching of a knowledge-rich curriculum in religious education (RE), and the use of precise assessment strategies, enable pupils to thrive in their learning and achieve well.

Development Points

- Enhance the curriculum for core religious education at Key Stage 5. This is so that pupils engage deeply with their thinking, encounter diversity of worldviews and flourish as reflective, discerning young adults.



Inspection Findings

Vision and Leadership

At Bennett Memorial Diocesan School, a deeply rooted Christian vision shapes daily life and guides community relationships. Leaders express this vision clearly and align school policies, high expectations and opportunities with Christian values. Consequently, pupils understand their own inherent dignity and recognise the value of every individual. Leaders nurture a culture of care, encouragement and respect that supports personal and spiritual growth. Pupils demonstrate confidence, empathy and resilience because the vision promotes hope and purpose. Leaders intentionally link biblical teaching with everyday decision making across school life. This approach helps pupils develop moral awareness and thoughtful attitudes toward others. The vision also shapes leadership decisions that prioritise wellbeing. The consistent expression of the Christian vision strengthens belonging and shared purpose across the school community.

Vision and Curriculum

Leaders offer an ambitious curriculum that draws pupils deeply into learning and sustains high engagement. Purposeful trips enrich understanding and create a vibrant curriculum aligned with the school's vision. Pupils select from a wide range of extra-curricular opportunities that nurture interests and enable flourishing. Staff plan rich opportunities for spiritual development across the curriculum. They also seize everyday moments to deepen pupils' spiritual growth and reflection. Pupils pursue personal interests in which they experience awe, wonder and deeper understanding. For example, they explore opportunities to take photographs during study periods and reflect on God's creation through the art of photography. Every pupil learns a musical instrument by the end of Year 9. This supports greater fullness of life and helps them express emotion and explore spirituality through music. Strong support enables pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), and pupils who are vulnerable, to access learning confidently. Targeted provision removes barriers and builds confidence, strengthening pupils' progress and engagement. Leaders review these personalised approaches regularly to increase their impact on learning and wellbeing.

Worship and Spirituality

A varied programme of collective worship reflects the school's Christian vision and Anglican heritage. Leaders involve pupils when selecting themes and planning content. As a result, pupils demonstrate high levels of engagement. Leaders ensure that staff are appropriately trained and have detailed resources, which strengthens delivery. Worship is inclusive, offering reflection and stimulating spirituality for the whole community. Pupils, staff and parents recognise the importance of school worship. This daily pause supports spiritual awareness and strengthens a shared sense of belonging. Pupils value the time for reflection and personal thought. The chaplain benefits from active participation in the diocesan chaplain network. This connection strengthens practice and encourages continued development. Leaders respond carefully to pupil feedback about worship. They adapt provision and introduce new opportunities for participation. Regular Communion services and a structured confirmation programme encourage pupils and adults to explore faith and commitment more deeply. Governors and trust leaders review the impact of worship with rigour. Their evaluation focuses clearly on spiritual growth for pupils and adults. A structured programme of training and review now sits firmly within whole-school evaluation. This approach strengthens accountability and guides improvement.

Vision and School Culture

Across the school, people take the motto 'Semper Tenax' to heart. As a result, pupils and staff support one another to love deeply and live tenaciously. Leaders within both school and trust place pupil and staff wellbeing at the centre of school life. Pupils understand where to seek help for themselves or others and do so with confidence. Clear mental health strategies strengthen support within lessons and across the wider curriculum. For example, pupils regularly use an anonymous online reporting system to raise concerns. Through this, pupils are confident that the school will address issues and see them through to resolution. As a result, trust is



deepened. Staff show determination when removing barriers that hinder success. This approach enables all pupils to achieve more ambitious goals. A vision-led approach to behaviour ensures pupils are treated with dignity and care. Bennett Memorial Diocesan School staff also collaborate closely with neighbouring schools. They welcome pupils who need a fresh start, supporting wellbeing and future success. Through this work, the Christian vision strengthens lives beyond the immediate school community. Pupils say that staff respect and value them deeply. They attribute this strong culture to the Christian vision, which shapes their lives and relationships with others.

Vision, Justice and Responsibility

The biblical foundation, 'We love because he first loved us', defines the school's culture and expectations. It drives interaction within and beyond the school community. As a result, pupils treat others with dignity and respect. Pupils are explicitly taught how to disagree well and communicate with clarity. This focus strengthens relationships and builds collective responsibility across the school. Sixth form pupils model these values and lead community initiatives. Older pupils and prefects actively shape a culture of service. Pupils gain recognition and rewards for positive contribution and leadership. They are proud of their development in responsibility and achievement. The Bennett Journey clarifies how each student contributes to a thriving society over the time a pupil attends the school. Planned opportunities, including the Duke of Edinburgh award programme and open evening leadership, embed and encourage responsibility. The school curriculum and debating programme cultivate respect for difference and thoughtful dialogue. Global issues such as war are addressed with precision, neutrality and care. The school champions forgiveness and restoration.

Religious Education

RE is led with enthusiasm, expertise and clear purpose. Experienced staff apply strong subject knowledge to deliver a challenging, balanced and diverse curriculum. The content has been carefully developed to be relevant to the context of the school and its community. Additionally, staff have carefully researched pupils' previous learning in RE and this shapes the content of the programme of study. As a result, pupils develop secure understanding of diversity across world religions and non-religious worldviews. The school places high value on RE and requires all pupils to study the subject at GCSE. This expectation leads to strong outcomes and sustained engagement. Pupils speak positively about RE and acknowledge its relevance and challenge. Core RE in the Sixth Form is provided for all pupils and is held in high regard. Staff ensure that it has a high profile and that provision is carefully planned. However, leaders recognise that increased focus on previous learning would provide more opportunities for in depth study.

Leaders maintain a clear and accurate understanding of the strong quality of RE teaching in the school. They use a wide range of monitoring and evaluation strategies. These approaches give them effective insight into classroom practice and pupil progress. This ensures that they have reliable evidence to bring about improvement. Leaders across the school and trust provide focused training that strengthens teaching. This support helps teachers refine practice and sustain high standards. As a result, pupils make strong progress and flourish in RE. Whole-school assessment systems provide clear expectations for staff and pupils. Teachers apply these systems consistently and pupils understand them well. This consistency strengthens learning and supports improvement.

Information

Address	Culverden Down, Tunbridge Wells, Kent, TN4 9SH		
Date	04-05 March 2026	URN	136603
Type of school	Academy	No. of pupils	1908
Diocese	Rochester		
MAT	Tenax Schools Trust		
MAT Chair	Simon Curtis		
Headteacher	Karen Brookes		
Chair of Governors	Joanna Langton		
Inspector	Clare Murray		