

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

### Great Waltham Church of England VC Primary School

#### Vision

**'Let all that you do be done in love.'** 1 Corinthians 16:14

We ASPIRE for all our children to be confident, happy and caring individuals, to love as Jesus shows us and to develop a love of learning, living responsibly in God's world. Our Christian vision is underpinned by Jesus' example of love for all. **Our ASPIRE values are Aspiration, Strength, Perseverance, Integrity, Responsibility, Empathy.**

Great Waltham Voluntary Controlled Church of England Primary School is living up to its foundation as a Church school and is enabling adults and pupils to flourish. It has the following notable strengths.

#### Strengths

- Leaders, including the governing body, and the staff, are deeply invested in this as a Church school. Central to all they do is a well-understood Christian vision that is rooted in the teachings of Jesus. This creates a loving culture where all are known and valued as the unique person they are.
- The Christian vision guides and drives decisions by school leaders, including governors. It empowers clear strategic planning, reflecting the needs of the school.
- The bespoke curriculum inspires and motivates pupils and ignites their love of learning. Carefully selected extra-curricular activities and trips enrich the breadth of learning that pupils encounter. It encourages pupils, including those who are deemed vulnerable and/or disadvantaged, to flourish as learners.
- Collective worship is a valued part of each day, providing meaningful moments to gather together. The spiritual development of adults and pupils is enhanced. This is through music, time to be still and thoughtful, as well as opportunities to reflect on Bible stories.
- The school's Christian vision creates a very strong culture of justice and responsibility. Pupils use their voice and actions to demonstrate their love and respect for people and the world that God provides.

#### Development Points

- Embed the spirituality policy further so that there is a shared understanding of what spiritual development looks like at Great Waltham. This is so that it can be planned for as an intrinsic part of the curriculum.
- In religious education (RE), extend the opportunities for pupils to learn about Christianity as a global faith. This is so that their knowledge and understanding of the diversity of practice and tradition within Christianity is enhanced.



## Inspection findings

Rooted in the teachings of Jesus, the distinctively Christian vision at Great Waltham School unites the whole school community. Pupils, parents, staff and governors understand the Bible verse that underpins it and therefore, it has profound impact. The school has chosen core Christian values of aspiration, strength, perseverance, integrity, responsibility and empathy (ASPIRE). These run through every element of the life of the school from the behaviour policy to curriculum design. They are spoken about confidently by pupils. They use these values as inspiration for how to act in their lives. The vision creates a deeply loving culture where nurturing relationships enrich the lives of pupils and adults, who are known and loved as the unique person they are. Governors are deeply invested in the school and have the needs of adults and pupils as their core focus. Governors regularly monitor and evaluate the impact of the vision in close partnership with the staff. Staff and governors are a highly effective team. This is evident in clear strategic planning for future development. As an impact of the vision leaders are outward looking. They maximise opportunities to work with other organisations. The collaborative work with six local schools further enhances the school's provision. It widens opportunities and encourages aspiration. Benefits include sporting fixtures for pupils and professional collaboration for the staff.

Ambitious staff and leaders know their school and community well. This is reflected in the aspirational nature of learning which is shaped by the vision. It encourages pupils to develop enquiring minds and a strong work ethic. This is evident in pupils' eagerness to ask questions and their readiness to delve deeper into their learning. Consequently, this extends the richness of pupils' vocabulary. The curriculum provides valued opportunities to consider diversity within the local and global community. A pupil explained that they are taught about differences and to celebrate them because everyone is important. This is evident in decisions by leaders to create personalised extra-curricular clubs to match the interests of pupils. Lego and technical clubs are valued because they provide distinctive, additional opportunities for pupils with a particular interest in these areas. As an outworking of the vision, pupils, including those who are deemed to be vulnerable and/or disadvantaged, thrive and make progress in their learning from their own individual starting point. They are encouraged by an understanding, promoted by adults, that it is safe to take risks in learning. This breadth of experience supports pupils' transition to secondary school and helps prepare them for life in modern Britain. The school embraces spontaneous opportunities for spiritual development. However, the curriculum does not include planned activities that promote spiritual growth.

RE is well-led, providing pupils with a curriculum that is both broad and well-sequenced. Pupils speak articulately about the variety of interesting teaching approaches and tasks that help them to embed their learning and to remember more. Informed monitoring by leaders, including governors and the school's diocesan partner, ensures RE is relevant, well-resourced and effective. Leaders carefully track the impact of RE. They access staff and governing body training through the school's valued relationship with the Diocese of Chelmsford education team. Pupils demonstrate a highly developed religious literacy. They have a strong knowledge of a range of worldviews and faiths, including Christianity. However, their understanding that Christianity is a global faith is less developed.

Collective worship brings the school together in a time that is central to the school day. It embeds the vision so that it has greater meaning and impact. This enhances relationships, binding the school together in care and respect for one another. Over the course of a week adults and pupils experience worship in a variety of styles and contexts. It provides important moments to sing, reflect, respond and be still. It is inclusive and active. One pupil stated, 'We don't just sit and watch.' Adults and pupils enjoy worship. They feel comfortable and involved. Worship provides meaningful moments to be inquisitive as adults and pupils reflect on current events, big questions and Bible



stories. This inspires pupils into action and underpins the excellent behaviour evident throughout the school. The long-established relationship with the local church is cherished by the school. School services are held there regularly and are attended by families and members of the village. They relish the opportunity to join in the uplifting worship, sharing opportunities for joyful singing and prayerful reflection. These moments promote a sense of community and enhance opportunities for spiritual growth. Leaders, including governors and the school's diocesan partner, effectively monitor and evaluate the impact of worship. This leads to continuous improvement and ensures that it meets the spiritual needs of adults and pupils.

A sense of love and care for one another permeates throughout the school. Pupils are encouraged to love themselves and others. This creates a culture where positive relationships blossom. Wellbeing and good mental health are prioritised by leaders, including governors. Adults and pupils who are experiencing difficult times, receive caring support. There is a strong team spirit amongst the staff. They go above and beyond and work together with families to meet the needs of pupils. Adults and pupils who join this school are welcomed with open arms. This encourages feelings of being individually valued. Provision via the forest school area, a therapy dog and a sensory room are some of the ways that pupils are helped to flourish. Relationships are strong and bullying is rare. This is because adults ensure pupils know how to stay safe and build positive relationships.

At Great Waltham School, pupils are encouraged to take responsibility both for themselves and others. They are taught to love and respect the world God provides. Pupils are inspired by the lives of people who are advocates of change. This is enhanced through active involvement in initiatives such as the Archbishop of York Young Leaders' Programme and Christian Aid's Global Neighbours. Motivated by these, and the teachings of Jesus, pupils actively support others. Driven by a sense of service, locally and globally, leaders seek to extend the way pupils challenge injustice further. They provide them with the tools to play a confident part in creating a fairer world. This further enhances the breadth of opportunities pupils have to live out the vision. Pupils at Great Waltham School live by the school's values and aspire to do everything in love.

## Information

Address	South Street, Great Waltham. Chelmsford. Essex. CM3 1DF		
Date	22 January 2025	URN	115114
Type of school	Voluntary controlled	No. of pupils	167
Diocese	Chelmsford		
Headteacher	Justine Brooks		
Chair of Governors	Steve Huggins		
Inspector	Judy King		