Statutory Inspection of Anglican & Methodist Schools

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Debenham High School

Vision

We hold that all people are made in the image of God and as such we encourage students to develop a respect for and tolerance of others. Therefore, the whole school community is encouraged to live by Jesus' teaching to **'Treat others as you wish to be treated,'** thus enabling all members of the community to flourish. In doing so developing a love and curiosity for knowledge and wisdom, becoming resilient and ready to succeed in, and contribute to, an ever-changing world having developed compassion, moral strength and an understanding of others.

Debenham High 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 Christian vision is central to the way leaders shape and model the life of the school, fostering a culture that is both ambitious and genuinely inclusive. As a result, the school community is valued, respected and nurtured as unique individuals, enabling both pupils and adults to thrive.
- Strong and productive relationships with the diocese and newly formed Multi Academy Trust (MAT), reinforce the school's distinctively Christian character. Leaders, trustees and governors demonstrate a deep commitment to the school and understand its context well.
- An ambitious curriculum, rooted in the vision, sits alongside a wide range of enrichment opportunities that inspires students, including those who are disadvantaged, to aim high. These experiences broaden aspirations, helping individuals to recognise their talents, cultivate their strengths and realise their ambitions.
- Driven by the Christian foundation of the school, staff show exceptional dedication in meeting the needs of students, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Through a determined focus on understanding individuals, support is carefully tailored, creating a profound sense of belonging that has a lasting impact.
- Strong leadership of religious education (RE), supported by a skilled and committed teaching team, delivers a curriculum that captures pupils' interest and engagement. This is building understanding and sustains enthusiasm for learning.

Development Points

- Enhance the school's shared understanding of spirituality. This is to enable them to better recognise, articulate and reflect upon the impact that spiritually enriching experiences have on their lives.

Inspection Findings

Vision and Leadership

The Christian vision, rooted in treating others as we wish to be treated, shapes leaders' decisions and actions. They align the school's vision closely with that of the newly established trust. This shared commitment cultivates ambition, compassion and a strong sense of purpose. Warm, respectful relationships demonstrate the vision's influence across daily school life. The school community radiates joy, belonging and mutual support. Leaders intentionally nurture a culture that values the dignity and potential of individuals. Pupils and adults speak proudly of their place within the Debenham High School community. Staff actively create opportunities for pupils to contribute and influence decision-making. Guided by the example and teachings of Jesus, leaders serve with authenticity and conviction. They work alongside parents, carers, governors and pupils to embed the vision. Consequently, pupils report feeling heard, valued and secure. Parents express confidence and hope for their children's futures. They recognise the vision's transformative impact on their children's wellbeing, development and aspirations.

Vision and Curriculum

Leaders have designed a curriculum that promotes aspiration, curiosity and personal growth. A wide range of enrichment options broadens pupils' opportunities beyond the classroom. Meaningful visits and engaging activities challenge pupils to explore new perspectives and possibilities. Personal development experiences complement and strengthen academic learning. For example, art projects and outdoor events encourage spiritual growth and deeper self-reflection. However, pupils demonstrate the impact of these with varying confidence. The school has not established a shared and consistent understanding of spirituality. Consequently, pupils struggle to communicate fully how these experiences shape their understanding of themselves and others. Inclusion lies at the heart of the school's vision and practice. Leaders listen carefully to pupils and respond proactively to individual needs. They remove barriers to learning and create pathways for success. The vision informs highly effective personalised support for learners. This includes pupils with SEND and/or those facing disadvantage or with vulnerability. As a result, pupils flourish within a culture of hope, dignity and opportunity. Staff know pupils well and celebrate their unique gifts and potential. This nurturing approach transforms lives, strengthens wellbeing and enables flourishing.

Worship and Spirituality

Collective worship reflects and strengthens the school's Anglican foundation. Pupils and staff value these shared gatherings and the sense of belonging they create. Worship offers regular moments for reflection, stillness and community connection. Staff intentionally provide experiences rooted in the school's Christian character, including the experience of leading prayer. Consequently, worship brings the vision to life and encourages positive action. Weekly themes inspire pupils to consider how their choices affect others. Reflective resources draw on biblical teaching and the examples of inspirational individuals. This results in a deeper understanding and more thoughtful responses to everyday situations. Worship contributes meaningfully to spiritual growth and development. Monthly Eucharist services enrich these experiences and strengthen the school's Christian identity. The frequently used chaplaincy room provides an additional space for reflection, conversation and pastoral support, also used in times of challenge. Pupils and staff benefit from the presence of a dedicated chaplain. The diocese funds this full-time role, demonstrating a strong commitment to community wellbeing. The chaplain gives invaluable support especially during periods of difficulty and uncertainty. Leaders and governors place high value on collective worship and evaluate its impact carefully. Their oversight ensures worship remains a significant expression of the school's vision and Christian foundation.

Vision and School Culture

Inspired by Jesus' teachings, leaders foster a culture where pupils and adults feel valued and cherished. This creates a nurturing community, particularly for those who are vulnerable. Pupils demonstrate respect for one

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another and restorative conversations promote healing when difficulties arise. Driven by the Christian vision, school and trust leaders prioritise the wellbeing of pupils and staff. As a result, both feel seen and understood as special individuals. Staff highly value the compassionate support they receive. This results in extending this care to colleagues, pupils and families, especially during challenging times. Consequently, pupils' views are listened to and respected. Staff respond quickly to emerging needs and provide support with dignity and respect. For example, the school utilise a fund that offers sensitive financial assistance to families facing hardship. Parents greatly appreciate this compassionate approach. Staff greet pupils warmly each morning, helping establish a calm and purposeful start to the day. Early morning activities further strengthen pupils' readiness to learn. Thoughtful support for disadvantaged pupils enables participation in trips and enrichment experiences, removing barriers and widening chances to thrive.

Vision, Justice and Responsibility

Strong partnerships with the diocese and local clergy enrich the school's Christian foundation through effective training and practical support. A thriving Christian Union and pupil-led Youth Alpha course reflect pupils' enthusiasm for faith exploration. Guided by the vision, school and trust leaders nurture a strong sense of responsibility towards the school and wider community. Pupils demonstrate this through charitable initiatives, often inspired by the experiences of staff and peers. They take great pride in leadership roles and embrace opportunities to make ethical choices. This includes the eco Green Team, who promote positive environmental action. For example, litter picking in a nearby forest. The vision inspires staff and pupils to serve others with generosity and compassion. Examples include Harvest Festival support for foodbanks and sponsorships that enable children overseas to access education. Consequently, pupils understand how their actions can challenge injustice and improve lives beyond the school community. Growing relationships with local churches strengthen the school's Christian character. Clergy contribute enthusiastically to daily school life, enhancing pastoral and spiritual support for pupils, families and staff. Leaders and clergy share a clear commitment to this impactful and mutually beneficial relationship.

Religious Education

RE is placed at the heart of learning at Debenham High School. Strong partnership with the diocese ensures a carefully sequenced and relevant course of study. Ongoing professional development strengthens subject expertise. An ambitious and knowledgeable team shares high aspirations for pupils, including those who are disadvantaged. The curriculum is carefully planned to meet the needs of a wide range of learners. It reflects local diversity while exploring the varied ways people express belief and identity. Contemporary examples engage pupils and make learning meaningful and relevant. As a result, pupils value RE in helping them understand the world around them. Leaders and governors monitor the subject rigorously, using reviews and pupil feedback to drive continual improvement. Their collaborative approach strengthens provision and pupil engagement. Driven by leaders' high aspirations, all pupils take the full GCSE course. Pupil enjoyment of RE is high. It empowers them to live out the school vision in their daily lives.

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National Society for Education
Church of England & Church in Wales

Methodist Schools

Information

Address	Gracechurch Street, Debenham, Stowmarket, Suffolk 1P14 6BL		
Date	10 June 2026	URN	136416
Type of school	Academy	No. of pupils	715
Diocese	St Edmundsbury and Ipswich		
MAT	Heart of Suffolk Education		
MAT Chair	Helena Tiernay		
Headteacher	Simon Martin		
Chair of Governors	Helena Tiernay		
Inspector	Clare Murray		