Statutory Inspection of Anglican & Methodist Schools

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Great Whelnetham Church of England Primary School

Vision

Nurture – Grow – Succeed Together: From a mustard seed… (Matthew 13:31-32)

Our children's journey through Great Whelnetham will support them in building a wealth of experiences which will positively impact on them for the rest of their lives. Together we will build a collection of amazing memories where learning is fun and education is valued.

We will work together to provide the best outcomes for all our children, and we will accomplish this through our Christian Values which are: Perseverance, Respect, Truthfulness, Thankfulness and Friendship.

We are a school family: strong in our community and faith.

Great Whelnetham Church of England 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 compelling and deeply embedded Christian vision is expressed throughout school life. It drives the actions of leaders ensuring significant positive impact for pupils and adults.
- Care and nurture are palpable throughout the school community, reflected in the authentic way wellbeing is prioritized. This ensures pupils and adults feel valued, receiving the support they need to flourish.
- The religious education (RE) curriculum is highly effective. Well-resourced lessons enable pupils to enjoy rich opportunities to explore their understanding and personal beliefs.
- Collective worship is central to the daily life of the school, highly valued and contemplative. It powerfully contributes to the spiritual growth of participants.
- The curriculum is strongly shaped by the Chrisitan vision. The wide-ranging experiences of awe, wonder, and creativity captivate pupils and support their spiritual development.

Development Points

- Deepen the school's collective understanding of spirituality. This is so pupils and adults can confidently express the personal impact of the many opportunities for spiritual development available.
- Develop pupils' understanding of how to recognize and challenge injustice. This is to empower them to make a positive difference, both independently and collectively, within their local community and beyond.

Inspection Findings

Vision and Leadership

Inspired by the parable of the mustard seed, the school's Christian vision radiates through each aspect of daily life. Five carefully selected values shape an ethos where nurturing, child-centred relationships are prioritised. Leaders know their community deeply and respond with a commitment to service and collaboration. Strong partnerships with All Saints Schools Trust, St Thomas à Becket church, the diocese, and wider community, enrich school life. For example, staff benefit from collaborative networks of support through the trust. As a result, the school brings its Christian vision to life, creating meaningful experiences that develop pupils holistically. Governors and trust leaders offer effective challenge and encouragement for school leadership. For example, recognising the need to enhance the role of the vision in school life, governors formed an ethos committee. This provides a channel that has strengthened the link between curriculum and values by ensuring governors regularly review these connections. The trust's vision complements the school's, underpinning the close working relationship between trust and school leaders. The trust offers detailed external review of the impact of the vision, ensuring the ongoing success of this church school. Diocesan guidance and training are used well to support the school's understanding of spirituality and teaching in RE. As a result, leaders are empowered to make decisions that benefit pupils' learning and staff workload.

Vision and Curriculum

The curriculum, driven by the Christian vision and reflective of the school's context, offers challenge and creativity. Opportunities to express understanding through art, music, and purposeful writing enables pupils to make meaningful connections and develop curiosity. The values, as 'golden threads', are woven through engaging lessons, ensuring pupils use them as tools to support their success. Leaders are passionate about offering inclusive and motivating learning experiences, adapted to meet the needs of pupils. For example, an impressive range of strategies and intervention support are available to any pupil that needs them. Parents are fully included on this journey and recognise the significantly positive impact it has on their children. Consequently, pupils, including those considered vulnerable or with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), flourish academically and thrive. Pupils' interests and achievements are nurtured and celebrated through a broad menu of enrichment entitlements available to all pupils. Activities like the Big Spring Sing, forest school, and science and technology days provide engaging moments of awe and wonder. As a result, there are many opportunities for pupils to explore their sense of self and develop spiritually. However, the school's understanding of spirituality is underdeveloped, which prevents a clear evaluation of the impact of planned spiritual experiences.

Worship and Spirituality

Collective worship is a highly valued and important part the school day, offering a contemplative moment of thought-provoking reflection. Demonstrating their high regard for this time, pupils feel it provides them with time 'to think and be'. Adults value this time as a chance to come together as a community at the start of a busy day. Worship is carefully planned in collaboration with the local clergy, enabling a broad range of worship styles. Half-termly themes using Christian values inspire acts of worship that build and deepen the shared understanding of the school's vision. Participants encounter biblical stories through drama and song in ways that stimulate personal reflection and nurture spiritual growth. Pupils are actively involved in leading worship, opening and closing sessions, reading, praying and reflecting, supporting the community's spiritual learning. These opportunities enable pupils to develop spiritual insight and express how worship shapes their understanding of themselves and others. Links with the clergy strengthen partnerships with the local church community, enhancing the school's worship and RE. This encourages children and families to seek further engagement, enabling deeper opportunities for pastoral support within the parish.

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Vision and School Culture

The vision inspires a culture of deep and authentic nurture, ensuring people are treated exceptionally well. This atmosphere of care encourages everyone to recognise each other's potential. As a result, pupils actively seek to demonstrate the school's values in their behaviour and attitudes, seen through kind friendships. Difficulties are quickly resolved and often without adult support. Leaders actively and routinely seek the views of pupils and staff to shape their support of the community. Subsequently, pupils and adults feel heard and valued. They benefit from an extensive range of wellbeing initiatives. Calm spaces throughout the school, including the 'Zen Den', enable accessible areas for pupils to regulate themselves. Highly trained support staff offer bespoke support to individuals and groups, helping them to manage challenging emotions. Staff are a closely knit team and enable each other to give their best through an open atmosphere of trust. Impactful partnerships with the trust and local schemes provide meaningful opportunities to support wellbeing in the wider community. For example, parents highly value a school-led social and emotional learning group that supports them in helping their children. Consequently, adults and pupils feel equipped to face times of need, confident that they will receive whatever support is required.

Vision, Justice and Responsibility

Leaders promote positive relationships that balance rights with responsibility for pupils toward those around them. Learning opportunities to debate moral dilemmas and important issues, such as the suffragette movement, help deepen their understanding of justice. Pupils have a strong sense of community which prompts them to contribute and help. They serve as sports leaders, reading and writing ambassadors, library monitors, and ethos committee members. In these roles they develop a sense of care for their school community and the world around them. Both charitable fundraising and visits to the local care home to sing and chat further enhance pupils' desire to act. These projects, guided by staff, are impactful. However, pupils are not confident in recognising or challenging injustice independently. Therefore, they do not fully appreciate the difference that they can make as individuals in the wider community.

Religious Education

As a result of strong leadership, the RE curriculum is highly effective, challenging, and coherent. It provides a good balance between Christianity and a range of religions and worldviews. Enquiry-based lessons offer pupils opportunities for questions, discussion, and exploration of diverse resources. Subject leader and diocesan support enable teachers to confidently tailor the RE scheme of work to the school's context. Consequently, pupils are supported to develop an increasingly secure knowledge of global expressions of Christianity, alongside world faiths and views. They speak enthusiastically about how their learning helps them to 'feel better connected to others'. Creative responses through drama, artwork, posters and extended pieces of writing further enhance pupils' enjoyment of RE. Though recently introduced, floor books enable teachers to capture learning and pupils to recall previously completed lessons. Governor and trust monitoring highlights the success of this approach and the positive impact on teacher workload and pupil engagement.

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National Society for Education
Church of England & Church in Wales

Methodist Schools

Information

Address	Stanningfield Road, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk, IP30 0UA		
Date	16 March 2026	URN	147450
Type of school	Academy	No. of pupils	71
Diocese	St Edmundsbury & Ipswich		
MAT	All Saints Schools Trust		
MAT Chair	Russell Ayling		
Headteacher	Nicky Tyler (Head of School) Marc Gilbert (Executive Headteacher)		
Chair of Governors	Sam Keast		
Inspector	Philip Asher		

