

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

| <b>Little Waltham Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School</b>   |  |
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| Address  | The Street, Little Waltham, Chelmsford, Essex, CM3 3NY |
| How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish? |  |
| <b>Overall grade</b>   | <b>Good</b>  |
| <b>The impact of collective worship</b>  | <b>Good</b>  |
| <b>The effectiveness of religious education (RE)</b>   | <b>Good</b>  |

| <b>School's vision</b>  |  |
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| <p>Our vision is based on us, like the body of Christ, being a team. The body is not supported by one person, but by all of us. We are strongest working together in unity, which is key to living life in harmony so that we can do God's will. This reflects the biblical text:</p> <p><i>'For the body is not one member, but many'</i> 1 Corinthians, 12:14</p>   |  |
| <b>Key findings</b>   |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The well-established vision is the school's 'golden thread'. It drives leaders' actions, informs decision-making, is used to evaluate practice and is the means to ensure flourishing for all.</li> <li>• Governors' strategic decision-making has been underpinned by the school's vision; notably in the appointment of the new headteacher.</li> <li>• Positive relationships at all levels are of paramount importance, ensuring everyone is valued and even the smallest achievements are celebrated. Pupils are aware of issues such as poverty and hunger. They raise money for charity but are not yet acting as courageous advocates.</li> <li>• Religious Education (RE) is a strength of the school. It is well led and highly valued by all pupils. Pupils' knowledge of Bible stories is strong. However, they need a more diverse range of opportunities across the curriculum to explore spirituality.</li> <li>• Pupils and staff value collective worship. Parents are pleased to see the reintroduction of wider community worship. Currently there are insufficient opportunities for private or spontaneous prayer.</li> </ul> |  |
| <b>Areas for development</b>  |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support pupils to take effective action in tackling injustice and unfairness in issues about which they are passionate, so they understand they can make a difference.</li> <li>• Facilitate pupils who wish to do so to engage in private prayer so that they deepen their understanding of the importance of prayer.</li> <li>• Identify planned opportunities for spirituality across the curriculum so that pupils develop a deeper understanding of what this means.</li> </ul>   |  |

## Inspection findings

Little Waltham Primary School is highly valued by all members of the community. Its well-established vision is the heartbeat of the school and drives all its actions. The theological text that underpins the vision is known, understood and lived out by staff and pupils. The new headteacher has fully embraced this vision. He is determined to use it to develop the school further. Governors are equally focused on the vision, using it to support their decision-making and in holding themselves to account in steering the school through a period of turbulence. Newly appointed governors are committed to their roles and have engaged well with the training and support provided by the diocese. Governors participate in school activities, such as the recent faith day, enabling them to evaluate the work of the school in detail.

Positive relationships throughout the school are transformative. Pupils and staff are committed to supporting everyone to achieve and delight in each other's success. All adults act as positive role models for pupils, resulting in a culture of respect and support for all. Pupils have complete faith in their teachers to help resolve any issues and are emphatic in their view that everyone is welcomed, valued and respected, regardless of race or religious belief. The flourishing of staff is of equal importance to school leaders. Various opportunities to develop practice are prioritised, including specialist training and national qualifications. In line with its vision, the school has committed to supporting pupil behaviour using trauma informed practice, resulting in an award. Pupils' behaviour throughout the school is exemplary.

Leaders are committed to enabling all stakeholders to become 'the best person they can be.' Pupils are supportive of each other and strive to live out the school's vision through its chosen values. Older pupils can talk about the values and give examples while younger pupils are given practical opportunities to demonstrate them, such as turning cream into butter to show endurance. Displays around the school positively reinforce these values and parents/carers are confident they have a strong impact on their children's character development. The determination of leaders to ensure pupils receive what they need is valued by parents and carers, who speak of their confidence in the school to manage their children's medical and learning needs.


Daily collective worship is highly valued by all stakeholders. It is invitational in nature and follows the Anglican tradition. Pupils of all ages look forward to worshipping together. They engage well and individual pupils are given personalised support when required so they are able to participate fully. This is very discrete and accepted by their peers as a natural occurrence. Music forms an integral part of worship with all participants singing joyfully and with understanding. Pupils are involved in presenting aspects of worship, but the school is yet to return to pupils planning and leading worship for themselves. The use of reflection is well established and valued by all, enabling pupils to consider how the teachings of Jesus are relevant to their lives today. Pupils talk positively about their use of prayer, both at home and at school. There are planned moments for communal prayer during the school day but limited opportunities for additional private or spontaneous prayer. Leaders carefully monitor collective worship. The collective worship leader conducts pupil surveys and governors review collective worship as part of their regular visits. Together, leaders draw up action plans with progress monitored over time, leading to sustained developments.

The pervading culture of dignity and respect for all enables pupils to explore and debate key concepts freely. The weekly 'big question' prompts pupils to think deeply, express their point of view and discuss with adults at home. They confidently challenge each other during lessons, extend each other's learning and disagree peaceably. In one lesson, pupils were observed discussing statements about the Christian view of creation, challenging each other to put them in order of importance. Pupils understand what constitutes bullying, and although they say it is very rare, they know the actions to take if it occurs and are confident staff will take effective action.

Pupils know the term ‘spirituality’ but are not yet confident in what it means for them. The school has a spirituality policy, which offers a shared definition for the community but it is not yet widely known by all. Currently, there are insufficient opportunities built into the curriculum to allow for pupils’ spiritual development outside of collective worship.

School leaders are beginning to review curriculum content to ensure it aligns closely with the school’s vision; for example, the choice of text for English work providing an opportunity to discuss poverty in a different context. Pupils know of and understand societal challenges, such as disease, war and hunger, and want to make a difference. However, this work is in its infancy. Pupils currently view advocacy as fund raising rather than actually being the change they want to see.

RE is a strength of the school. The knowledgeable RE leader monitors outcomes and ensures regular training for staff, leading to securely good provision. Staff training is prioritised and pupils enjoy their lessons. Tasks are well-structured, enabling pupils to work independently and make good progress. Carefully scaffolded support enables those with learning needs to demonstrate the depth of their learning and all pupils are challenged to think widely and deeply about what they themselves believe. Teachers add further questions to pupils’ work to encourage them to develop even further and they respond thoughtfully. The RE syllabus is well structured and enhanced by additional resources which allow pupils to compare Christianity with other world faiths and beliefs, including Humanism. Each year, key themes are revisited and expanded. This enables pupils to build and broaden their knowledge of different religions over time.

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|  | <b>The effectiveness of RE is</b>  | <b>Good</b> |
|  | <p>The quality of RE is good and meets the statement of entitlement. Robust monitoring ensures all pupils achieve well. The quality of pupils’ work is good; those with special educational needs or disabilities are supported to achieve as well as their peers. The youngest pupils are carefully supported to talk about God as they begin to explore their own beliefs.</p> |             |

| Contextual information about the school |                                     |                 |                   |
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| School                                  | Little Waltham CE VA Primary School | Inspection date | 30 September 2022 |
| URN                                     | 115175                              | VC/VA/Academy   | VA                |
| Diocese/District                        | Chelmsford                          | Pupils on roll  | 202               |
| MAT/Federation                          | N/A                                 |                 |                   |
| Headteacher                             | Stephen Saunders                    |                 |                   |
| Chair of Governors                      | Diane Regan                         |                 |                   |
| Inspector                               | Victoria Burgess                    | No.             | C2002             |