

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

| Wendover Church of England Junior School | |
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| Address | Wharf Road, Wendover, HP22 6HF |
| How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish? | |
| Overall grade | Good |
| The impact of collective worship | Good |

| School's vision |
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| <p>We aim to be the school of choice for our community.</p> <p>Through living our Christian values, everyone at WCEJS has the opportunity to flourish.</p> <p>We nurture the curiosity to learn, the courage to lead and the compassion to care.</p> <p>Building solid foundations (Matthew 7: 24-27)</p> |
| Key findings |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school's Christian vision is understood by everyone. It drives governors' actions, impacts on curriculum learning and supports the daily life of pupils and adults, thus enabling its community to flourish. • Leaders are proactive in addressing circumstances that might affect the wellbeing of the school community. There is a spiritual dimension to school life that allows for emotional healing and recuperation. However places for adults and pupils to experience stillness, reflection and prayer are limited. • Leaders have established a new approach to teaching to ensure an exciting, engaging and inclusive curriculum. However, pupils have limited opportunities to explore global ethical issues such as injustice and inequality. • Pupils are excited by the topics they encounter in religious education (RE). Joint subject planning is highly effective. However, teachers have limited professional development to strengthen their understanding of the core theological concepts of Christianity. • Collective worship is held in high regard. It is inclusive, in line with the vision, and enjoyed by pupils and adults. It is well planned and resourced although not all those who lead collective worship have received training. |
| Areas for development |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop pupils' understanding of inequality and injustice in the wider world through engagement with global ethical issues. • Develop teachers' subject knowledge in RE, especially their theological understanding of Christianity. This is to ensure that they develop pupils' theological understanding. • Further develop provision for spirituality by creating spaces for adults and pupils to experience spiritual moments through stillness and reflection. |



Inspection findings

The school has an ambitious vision underpinned by the clear biblical narrative of 'building solid foundations' (Matthew 7: 24-27). It drives the academic and spiritual growth of the school community and is central to the school's policies and procedures. Leaders, including governors, know the school well and use the vision to hasten improvements. Strong and beneficial working relationships with the church and local community clearly demonstrate the school's vision. Wellbeing is a strength of the school and is highly valued by all. Governors care about the emotional and practical needs of staff and support them during difficult circumstances. They make wise decisions for the benefit of the whole school community, such as the employment of a wellbeing leader. Her role is invaluable to those affected by current situations including the national cost-of-living crisis.

Staff speak positively of their experience of working at the school. The vision drives their approach to teaching. It fosters curiosity, courage, and compassion. Additionally, their determination to live out the vision is reflected in their relationships with each other. They understand the emotional strain their workload can create and willingly support one another.

Pupil attendance is very good and improving. This is because the school's pastoral care leader works closely with families to support pupils to attend school regularly. Pupils and families in vulnerable circumstances are particularly well cared for. Staff have a clear focus on nurture for pupils. They work exceptionally well to help pupils self-regulate their feelings, energy, and sensory needs. Their care shapes learners' positive behaviour. This results in confident, self-resilient pupils who experience forgiveness and reconciliation as they live and learn well together. Pupils clearly reflect the curiosity, courage and compassion cited in the school's vision. As a result, all pupils are included in the full life and rhythm of the school.

Numerous opportunities for pupils to debate and explore their own and others' opinions are woven throughout the curriculum. This has a positive impact on the community's culture of mutual respect and reflects the school's values. The curriculum is underpinned by a growth mindset with an emphasis on curiosity and courage which allows pupils to make appropriate progress. Improved teaching strategies, created through the 'What I Need to Know' (WINKS) programme have increased pupil participation in learning. It enables teachers and learners to better reflect on progress and identify gaps in learning. Pupils are learning to take appropriate age-related responsibility for their own learning. Consequently, they are developing the resilience, courage and responsibility found in the school's values and vision. All staff are deeply committed to ensuring that pupils, including those considered to be vulnerable, have their individual needs met. Those who need additional help with learning are supported by effective teaching assistants.

The school has a shared understanding of spirituality and there are opportunities for spiritual development within the curriculum. However, opportunities to learn about global ethical issues such as inequality and injustice are limited. Nonetheless, pupils' understanding of the vision extends beyond the school community. For example, pupils help at a local centre for children with neurological conditions. In addition, they talk knowledgeably and with compassion about wider issues, such as global warming and once-only plastic use. They lead initiatives that encourage them to be agents of social change. Their activities include cake sales to raise money for those impacted by the war in Ukraine and the earthquake in Turkey-Syria. Through supporting such causes, pupils make positive, age-related contributions to the local and wider community. In accordance with their school's vision, they are learning to respond to adverse situations with curiosity, courage, and compassion.

RE makes a constructive contribution to the Christian character of the school. Enquiry-based

approaches and varied experiences challenge pupils' thinking. Pupils rise to the challenge of new concepts such as how Christians might respond to the plastics industry. They particularly enjoy learning about 'God and the Big Bang.' This resource strongly reflects the school's vision to nurture curiosity. In addition, study of major religions and worldviews promotes respect so that every individual is valued. Consequently, pupils have a growing understanding of their own uniqueness and that of others. RE offers a safe space to share and discuss ideas and disagree well. The WINKS approach allows pupils to evaluate the progress they make in RE so that they understand the next steps to take. The subject leader ensures that standards are consistent and that every pupil makes appropriate progress. This is evidenced through monitoring and evaluation procedures. Joint planning in RE is highly effective and appreciated by teachers, particularly those with less experience. Through working together, they ensure a balanced curriculum that explores learning about religion and how religion impacts upon believers. However, teachers have limited focused training regarding the concepts of Christianity. Teaching observed by the subject leader is consistently good. Governors' recent in-depth survey of the subject means they are aware of how well RE reflects the school's vision.

Collective worship is an important part of each day. It is a clear expression of the school's vision. Through prayer, stillness and Bible teaching linked to current events, worship develops curiosity, courage, and compassion. Its invitational nature means that pupils and adults, regardless of their personal viewpoint, can attend worship with integrity. It inspires each to develop their own spirituality. Worship is planned and led by a dedicated team that includes school staff and clergy. However, not all those who lead worship have access to training. Pupils take part in a weekly reflection task, led by class worship leaders. These sessions encourage deep discussions of ideas presented during collective worship. They develop pupils' freedom to ponder and re-examine their perceptions. Prayer is part of the experience of worship, although there are few opportunities to explore prayer outside of acts of worship. Designated and resourced spaces to experience spiritual moments through stillness and reflection are limited. Therefore, deeper understanding of the practice of personal prayer and reflection is not maximised. Parents receive a weekly worship update through the school newsletter. This helps them understand the nature of worship in a Church school. They are invited to join worship at church and they enjoy these services.

Curiosity, courage, and compassion underpin the academic and spiritual growth of this community. The school, driven by its distinctive Christian vision, builds solid foundations that enable pupils and adults to grow and flourish.

| Information | | | |
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| School | Wendover Church of England Junior School | Inspection date | 18 May 2023 |
| URN | 110421 | VC/VA/Academy | Voluntary controlled |
| Diocese/District | Oxford | Pupils on roll | 360 |
| Headteacher | Gareth Kynaston | | |
| Chair of Governors | Jo Garlick Christine Lane | | |
| Inspector | Delia Sheppard | No. | 942 |