Statutory Inspection of Anglican & Methodist Schools

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Great Chesterford Church of England Primary Academy

Vision

'Together we are great' epitomises everything we do. It reflects the Bible reference 'Two are better off than one, because together they can work more effectively' Ecclesiastes 4:9.
At Great Chesterford C of E Primary Academy, we aim to provide the best possible education for each child within the context of a caring Christian community.
Our school values underpin all aspects of school life, including behaviour and relationships within our school. Our school values are:
God's Guidance
Respect One Another
Excellent Behaviour
Aiming High
Tremendous Teamwork.

Great Chesterford Church of England Primary Academy 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

- Deeply committed and reflective leaders ensure the Christian vision and values are lived out across the school community. The strong focus on working together shapes a culture where pupils and adults are valued and enabled to flourish.
- The vision underpins a nurturing and caring ethos. The educational and pastoral needs of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those considered vulnerable are given high priority. This creates an inclusive environment that leads to positive change for pupils and families.
- The curriculum, including its varied extra-curricular offer, is shaped by the vision and values. It seeks to engage and stimulate, broadening pupils' experience. As a result, pupils enjoy learning and are given many opportunities to thrive.
- Strong leadership of religious education (RE) enables high-quality teaching throughout the school. This leads to pupils exploring Christianity, and other religions and worldviews, with confidence and respect.
- Collective worship is a significant and highly valued part of the school day. It is well supported by members of the local church and enriches the spiritual life of the school.

Development Points

- Enhance the opportunities that pupils have to independently engage with issues of justice. This is to extend how they use their sense of personal responsibility to make a positive difference to the lives of others.

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Inspection Findings

Vision and Leadership The school's Christian vision, which aligns with that of the trust, is at the heart of leaders' decision making and actions. The deep commitment to working together compels leaders to create strong partnerships for the benefit of adults and pupils. For example, the school prioritises building trusting relationships with families, local schools and the church. This results in the school being very well regarded in the community. In addition, staff benefit from the formation of subject leader networks across the trust. In this way, good teaching practice is shared and staff are empowered in their roles. The vision is further developed through core values which motivate pupils and staff. Pupils reference the values to make positive choices about their behaviour and attitudes. As a result, they support one another well and take pleasure in the success of others. Governors are proactively engaged and have a deep understanding of school life. This is evident through regular visits and planned monitoring of the school's values in action. This experience means that they have a good knowledge with which to support the strategic direction of the school.
Vision and Curriculum Leaders have created an engaging, enquiry-based curriculum with rich learning experiences, including residential trips and extra-curricular activities. As a result, pupils enjoy their time at school. Leaders have also considered carefully how pupils can learn from and support one another. The use of learning partners and mixed age friendship groups helps pupils live out the school vision to work together effectively. Teamwork is further encouraged through after-school clubs, including sport and the arts. These activities mean that pupils can follow and develop their interests in order to flourish. Awarding pupils values points, for example for 'aiming high', reinforces the importance of the school's vision. Staff have a good understanding of how to encourage pupils' spiritual development. They refer to well-understood strategies across the curriculum to enable pupils to think more deeply about their learning. The purposeful atmosphere in classrooms promotes further reflection and discussion about what they are being taught. Staff are well trained by the school and trust to support pupils who have SEND and those considered vulnerable. They thoughtfully tailor their work to ensure that the needs of individuals are addressed.
Worship and Spirituality Daily collective worship provides a valued opportunity for pupils and adults to unite as a school community. Leaders plan worship around big questions, for example on the theme of fairness, which are explored throughout the week. A variety of ways are used to actively engage pupils, including drama, singing and prayer. Each week older pupils are entrusted to interpret the theme and share their ideas with the whole school. Their leadership enhances participation and supports the school community to grow spiritually. Further opportunities to reflect are provided through classroom prayer spaces and the prayer shed in the school grounds. These support pupils to engage on a spiritual level. Collective worship is enriched by the close links with the local church. Clergy lead services in school and pupils and parents are invited to church services at special times, such as Christmas and Easter. In line with the vision, these occasions create a strong feeling of connection and build close relationships between school, home and church. Leaders' evaluation of collective worship is thorough. This ensures that this aspect of school life contributes to the spiritual development of pupils and adults.
Vision and School Culture The school's vision places relationships, partnership and mutual support at the heart of school life. This includes creating an inclusive community in which pupils and adults are treated well. Staff support pupils in managing their feelings, helping them to develop resilience and coping strategies. They consistently apply the behaviour policy which is based on a restorative approach. This encourages pupils to treat each other with respect. Parents and carers rightly recognise that this ethos is modelled for pupils by caring staff. Good mental health is of prime importance to school leaders. Consequently, staff are well trained to promote pupil wellbeing. The school also works closely alongside agencies offering valued therapeutic support for individuals and families. In line with the vision, school staff work as a cohesive team, offering advice and encouragement to each other. Leaders and governors ensure staff development is a high priority. Training is

enriched by working in partnership within the trust and local schools. This leads to staff feeling confident and valued in their roles.

Vision, Justice and Responsibility

True to the vision, pupils are enabled to take on responsibility and contribute to their school community. Through a range of leadership roles, such as school council representatives, pupils know that their voice is important. This empowers them to take ownership and look out for others. For example, older pupils proudly act as buddies for Reception pupils. This contributes to the school's strong family atmosphere and helps build meaningful relationships. Leaders have created an effective, mutually supportive partnership with the local church. Recent intergenerational activities with older congregation members enable pupils to understand how their actions can create connections with others. Such initiatives ensure the school remains rooted in the life of the community. Pupils encounter a range of justice-related issues through the curriculum and collective worship. As a result, they have a good understanding of fairness and the needs of others. Fundraising activities and charity work support an understanding of the importance of showing generosity. For example, the school collects items for a local foodbank at harvest and has a strong link with a school in Uganda. However, opportunities for pupils to independently consider issues of justice are less evident. This limits the extent to which they can make ethical choices for themselves.

Religious Education

Dedicated leadership of RE ensures the subject is given a high profile across the school. The RE curriculum is well-structured so pupils can learn about a range of religions and worldviews. It means that topics, such as creation, are revisited and developed as pupils progress through the school. Lessons provide opportunities for pupils to develop curiosity and explore topics. This is through big questions, such as 'is it possible to live in an entirely peaceful world?' As a result of this enquiry approach, older pupils learn how to participate in debates about prejudice and discrimination. Enrichment activities broaden RE teaching. These include RE theme weeks and visits to local places of worship. Clergy willingly support the teaching of key Christian topics, such as incarnation. In this way, pupils have the opportunity of exploring challenging concepts. This supports their spiritual development. Monitoring of the impact of the RE curriculum by leaders ensures they know both the strengths and next steps.

The quality of teaching is high. Through support from the diocese and the RE leader, teachers are confident in their subject knowledge. Skilled questioning encourages pupils to form their own opinions and make comparisons between religions. As a result, pupils talk about their learning in RE with confidence and maturity. They enjoy and value the subject, recognising its importance in promoting awareness and respect. Staff adapt activities for pupils who have SEND so that they are fully included and able to participate successfully. A variety of assessment strategies enable staff to monitor and evaluate progress accurately and adapt teaching to meet pupils' needs. This leads to pupils making good progress in their learning.

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National Society for Education
Church of England & Church in Wales

Methodist Schools

Information

Address	School Street, Great Chesterford, Saffron Walden, Essex, CB10 1NN		
Date	13 October 2026	URN	136516
Type of school	Academy	No. of pupils	187
Diocese	Chelmsford		
MAT	Great Oak Multi-Academy Trust		
MAT Chair	Lilly Barker		
Headteacher	Amy Sargeant		
Chair of Governors	Wazz Mughal		
Inspector	Neil Henery		

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