

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Aldbury Church of England VC Primary and Nursery School

Vision

‘To live life in all its fullness’ John 10:10

Through our Christian character, our vision at Aldbury is to ensure that every pupil and staff member of the school family lives life to its fullness. Jesus taught us that he came to give life –life in all its fullness (John 10:10) and this important lesson is the strand that runs through everything that we do. It helps us promote confidence, wisdom, aspiration, resilience and independence in every child. It is key in developing partnerships with parents, the local community and the church. It underpins the learning and environment in school and ties together our core Christian values.

Strengths

- The deeply embedded Christian vision and values are lived and breathed throughout the school. ‘Life in all its fullness’ is enabling pupils and adults to thrive at Aldbury.
- The rich curriculum and extra-curricular activities are built on the foundations of the Christian vision. This unites the staff team who strive to promote confidence, wisdom, and resilience in pupils.
- Inclusive collective worship enables those present to participate with integrity. The variety of worship offered ensures that pupils encounter the teachings of Jesus and the Bible effectively.
- Pupils and adults are treated well and thrive within a culture of care and kindness. Strong partnerships with families, the local church and community make significant contributions at this harmonious school.
- Strong leadership of religious education (RE) guarantees that an engaging and balanced curriculum is offered to pupils.

Development Points

- Develop a shared language and understanding of spirituality. This is to strengthen the opportunities for spiritual development across the curriculum and within collective worship.
- Offer further opportunities for pupils to plan, deliver and evaluate worship independently. This will enable it to become a personal experience where individuals can flourish spiritually.
- Embed the changes made to the RE curriculum. This is to enhance pupils’ knowledge of world religions and non-religious worldviews.



Inspection Findings

Leaders at all levels have crafted a vision that unites the family-focused community they serve. 'Life in all its fullness' is at the heart of the school's success. This inspires leaders to model their ambition for every pupil to thrive. Consequently, the vision acts as the golden thread that weaves throughout Aldbury binding the school community together. Governors know the school well, monitoring the impact of the Christian vision robustly. Staff speak confidentially about the harmonious community they work in. The core values of respect, responsibility, and friendship function as a compass to pupils and adults alike. Staff know the pupils exceptionally well. Parents rightly acknowledge the dedication of staff to ensuring that pupils grow in confidence. A culture of continuous self-evaluation leading to improvement contributes to the happy and purposeful learning environment. Leaders harness diocesan expertise to support the development of Aldbury as a Church school.

The Christian vision is central to learning. Pupils are resilient learners, and their academic achievement is a priority for leaders. Aldbury's curriculum is aspirational and is further enhanced by a wide range of extra-curricular experiences and educational visits. These are designed to develop independence, resilience, and confidence. For example, the 'muddy church' club is a place where nurture, mindfulness and biblical teachings are interwoven with fun activities. There are both planned and spontaneous opportunities within lessons to support pupils in their spiritual growth. However, there is not a shared language to articulate spirituality at the school. As a result, there are some missed opportunities to harness spiritual moments within the curriculum. Support for those pupils considered to be vulnerable is guaranteed. They are well cared for and barriers to learning and engagement are overcome. For example, bespoke support for pupils and families has led to improvement in attendance. The inclusive nature of the vision assists pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) effectively.

Collective worship enables pupils and adults to grow spiritually. Inclusive worship is planned by adults following the church's year. Relationships with St John the Baptist Church contribute to spiritual development, and pupils speak about this as, 'their Church'. It is used for inclusive worship, as a learning resource and for celebrations with families and the village community. The 'church council', consisting of one pupil from each year group, supports the delivery of worship. Beyond this, pupils rightly identify a desire for more regular opportunities to plan, lead and evaluate elements of worship. Prayer led by adults, is invitational. Rich storytelling brings to life familiar narratives from the Bible. This inspires pupils to talk with confidence about morals and connects the values to the school's Christian foundation. Friday celebration worship helps those present to understand the inclusive vision and values, as they are exemplified. Pupils relish the opportunity to be awarded the 'what a star' award for demonstrating Christian values. There are opportunities for spiritual growth linked to the vision within worship and throughout the day, such as, using the calm areas around the school. Moments of stillness and reflection are valued by pupils and adults alike. However, the lack of a common language to articulate spirituality hinders the level of spiritual development within worship.

Driven by the vision, leaders create an inclusive environment where wellbeing is prioritised. This instils pupils with confidence, greater independence, and resilience. Parents rightly value the care and compassion shown to their children. This is replicated by pupils, who foster excellent relationships with one another. Behaviour at Aldbury is good. Playtimes are harmonious and pupils of all ages mix and play together well with confidence. They learn to have positive relationships with each other and rare disagreements are swiftly reconciled. A culture of forgiveness permeates school life. Pupils explain how the values help them to make positive behaviour choices when they play with others. Staff function as a united team, and leaders ensure that their morale and wellbeing are maintained. Support for good mental health is intrinsic. The values of respect, responsibility and friendship are lived out through the warm and caring relationships that exist. When challenging times occur, the



nurturing community come together to help one another. Recent workshops for families on positive mental health are just one example. Pastoral support for transition between classes and into secondary education, in order to develop independence, is a priority for leaders. Consequently, pupils settle well as they move through the school and avoid loss of learning as a result.

The curriculum ensures that pupils develop an age-appropriate understanding and respect for diversity and difference. Policies and practice encourage pupils to undertake leadership responsibilities within school and in the local community. Pupils suggest charitable causes, and they take their responsibilities to making a difference in the world, seriously. For example, the choice to raise funds for a neonatal intensive care unit, as families within the community benefit from this. Pupils can see firsthand the work of the charity as they develop awareness and learn about the impact of their fundraising. A wide range of learning resources harnessed by staff, ensure that diversity is represented. For example, older pupils learn about segregation during history lessons. Issues of injustice in the world are explored and debated by pupils within the safe environment staff create. Pupils are empowered to consider those less fortunate than themselves by making ethical choices. For example, younger pupils learn about sourcing fruit and vegetables ethically and shopping for seasonal produce. Partnerships with food banks and worthy causes to help pupils see that their actions have a positive influence on others.

Subject leadership of RE is a strength. Expert training and support from the local diocese are harnessed to develop provision and expand the breadth of curriculum coverage. Although new, leaders have created a curriculum that is ambitious, well-planned and is relevant to pupils' lives. As a result, RE has a high profile at Aldbury. Leaders monitor RE accurately and make improvements to the content of the curriculum as a result. For example, the newly introduced work on humanism gives a broader range of worldviews for the oldest pupils to explore. The delivery of the revised two-year cycle is in its infancy. Consequently, pupils are not always confident to talk about a full range of world religions and non-religious worldviews with conviction. Experienced practitioners have high expectations and ensure that those with SEND can take a full part in lessons. Pupils explain the importance of learning about world faiths and cultures as this will help them to understand people with a range of beliefs in later life. Alongside this, they develop a sound understanding of Christianity as a global religion.

Information

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| Address | Stocks Road, Aldbury, Tring, Hertfordshire, HP23 5RT | | |
| Date | 22 October 2024 | URN | 117382 |
| Type of school | Voluntary Controlled | No. of pupils | 109 |
| Diocese | St Albans | | |
| Headteacher | Jacqueline Moore | | |
| Chair of Governors | Georgina Ledward | | |
| Inspector | Toby Long | | |