Statutory Inspection of Anglican & Methodist Schools

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Ashwicken Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Vision

Our vision is to offer an environment which gives opportunities for creativity and challenge, where curiosity is welcomed, enquiry encouraged, and the excitement of learning is fostered. We want our school and the school community to be a place where all children feel loved, respected, safe and encouraged to develop to their fullest potential.

Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit – Galatians 5:25

'Caring for each other. Caring for our world.'

Ashwicken Church of England Voluntary Aided 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.

Strengths

- The Christian vision unites the school community with a clarity of purpose that is well understood and enthusiastically embraced. Pupils and adults know that they will be cared for in school, but that they must care for others too.
- Leaders and governors successfully promote the spiritual development of pupils and adults through thoughtfully crafted acts of collective worship. These are infused with contemplation and joy because of a shared understanding of the meaning of spirituality.
- Staff are highly attuned to the importance of good mental health and wellbeing for pupils, families and colleagues. Their effective mutual support successfully lives out the Christian vision that that the school community should be 'caring for each other'.
- Taking responsibility for others is the lifeblood of this school as the community encourages each other to develop to their full potential. Older pupils see it as their duty to care for younger pupils, who glow in the attention they receive.
- Religious education (RE) lessons are carefully planned and skilfully delivered. Pupils brim with detailed knowledge about religions, such as the importance to Christians of their belief in the resurrection.

Development Points

- Embed clear opportunities for spiritual development more explicitly into curriculum planning. This is so that pupils can experience strong spiritual growth in lessons as well as in acts of worship.
- Deepen the school's culture of justice by improving pupils' understanding of minority groups not well represented in the school community. This is so that pupils can be better prepared to spread their caring Christian vision beyond the school gates.

Inspection Findings

Ashwicken Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School enjoys a strong unity of purpose centred on its Christian vision. Adults and pupils know their vision well, and seek to apply it to everything they experience throughout the school day. Leaders and governors have reflected deeply on what it means to 'keep in step with the Spirit' in their school. Pupils know about the biblical 'fruits of the Spirit', such as love, joy and peace, and aspire to demonstrate them. As a result, school life is based on these Christian principles while welcoming everyone regardless of their beliefs. Their motto, 'Caring for each other. Caring for the world,' encourages pupils to focus on others before themselves. Governors know their school well because they visit regularly to monitor important aspects of school life. Governors think about what they have found out, and leaders respond where necessary.

Because teachers know and understand the Christian vision, they ensure that the curriculum explicitly embraces its core ideals. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), are challenged to think creatively and achieve well. Pupils' demeanour in lessons encourages curiosity, effortlessly blending ambition and excitement as they learn together. Teachers understand the school's definition of spiritual development and work hard to create a learning environment where this is nurtured. This is seen in the 'big questions' embedded into many subjects, as well as an emphasis on resilience and reflection. Outdoor learning is firmly integrated into the curriculum. This makes pupils more independent, inquisitive and courageous. Staff willingly provide a range of after-school clubs. Pupils appreciate this generous attitude and seek to replicate it in their relationships with each other. Explicit opportunities for spiritual development are not, however, consistently and rigorously included in curriculum planning. This restricts the extent to which pupils can develop spiritually from the content of their lessons.

Collective worship reflects the strong sense of unity in the school. Key to this is the well-established connection to the local church. Church representatives lead worship in school, and in two local churches, for pupils and their families. This helps to cement strong relationships between pupils, their families and staff. Collective worship evolves and improves over time because pupils are confident to say what they want from it. They recently asked for more opportunity to worship in small groups. This has enhanced spiritual development for pupils because they now have more opportunities to express their feelings. Outdoor worship enhances pupils' appreciation of God's world. Smaller group discussion enables difficult subjects, such as bereavement, to be handled sensitively. Prayer is a natural part of the school day. Supported by local church representatives, pupils learn how to structure prayers to give them a sense of achievement and hope.

Leaders are ambitious that the school should reflect its Christian vision by being a welcoming haven of calm for all. Pupils quote Jesus' advice to be like the birds and not worry. They follow this advice because they trust staff to look after them. The school prioritises strong relationships with parents, helping to extend the school's calming influence into pupils' homes. Staff respond quickly to draw upon their knowledge and expertise whenever a pupil's mental health or wellbeing is in jeopardy. Older pupils form caring friendships with younger ones, helping them in school and playing with them in the playground. While the curriculum supports pupils' understanding of diversity, there is scope to broaden the range of minority groups it represents. This is so that pupils can gain a richer and more inclusive worldview. Pupils with SEND are supported by expert and well-trained staff who help them to be included in school life. Families value the way each pupil is treated individually, and how adjustments to normal routines are made when necessary. Leaders and governors understand their responsibility for the mental health

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and wellbeing of staff, and support them effectively. The example set by leaders unites staff to support each other because they enjoy a shared sense of purpose.

Inspired by the example set by adults, pupils enthusiastically seek out opportunities to take responsibility for each other. Play leaders provide fellow pupils with lunchtime activities to promote friendship. The eco-council and school council have taken responsibility for the school environment, successfully applying for funding to achieve this. Working with other local schools, a group of pupils is actively promoting walking to school to reduce carbon emissions. There is no sense of entitlement at this school – only a sense of duty that reflects the Christian vision to care for each other. When disagreements arise between pupils, staff members skilfully work with them to achieve reconciliation through resilience and forgiveness. As a result, pupils understand what it means to be treated with justice, and challenge each other to do this. Pupils aspire to spread their Christian vision into their local community by visiting and raising funds for a local hospice. This prompts pupils to reflect on the positive impact their actions can have in the wider world.

The RE curriculum is thoughtfully constructed so that pupils acquire increasingly detailed knowledge as they move through the school. Leaders access support from the Diocese of Norwich to ensure that pupils' learning about religions and other worldviews is accurate. It also means that the curriculum is well balanced to include a wide range of religions and worldviews. Most teaching time is devoted to Christianity, and includes core Christian beliefs. The curriculum is enhanced by visitors with specialist personal knowledge. These visitors offer a diversity of religious insight from Christianity and other religions in the curriculum. This enables pupils to ask questions and makes it easier for them to remember what they have learned. Pupils enjoy imaginative activities, such as an 'escape room' to promote understanding of the Old Testament of the Bible. Such events give RE a high status, helping pupils to look forward to their lessons. Art activities provide an opportunity to reflect on the content of the curriculum to deepen pupils' understanding.

Pupils progress well in RE because the curriculum empowers staff to teach accurate and engaging information. Leaders provide regular training to ensure that staff have a good knowledge of what they teach. This enables them to correct any misunderstandings that pupils might have. Pupils record what they have learned in shared 'floor books'. These significantly enhance what pupils can recall as they use them to access learning they may have forgotten or missed. Pupils also produce individual pieces of work which leaders use to assess their knowledge alongside regular quizzes. This gives leaders an accurate understanding of what pupils know, resulting in adjustments to the curriculum where necessary. As a result, pupils speak knowledgably about what they have studied, explaining core religious beliefs accurately and thoughtfully.

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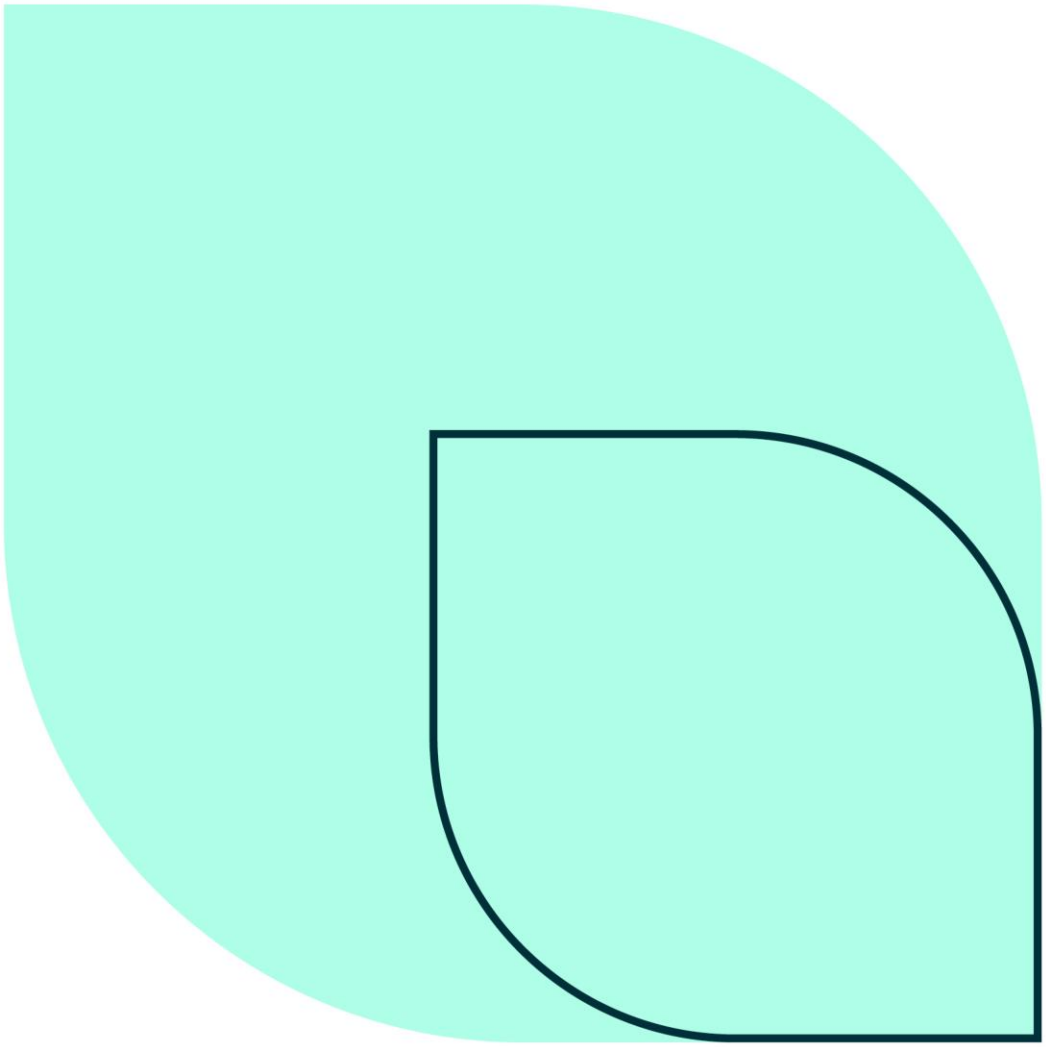
Information

Address	East Winch Road, Ashwicken, King's Lynn, Norfolk, PE32 1LY		
Date	12 June 2025	URN	121135
Type of school	Voluntary Aided	No. of pupils	104
Diocese	Norwich		
Headteacher	Sophie Dickson		
Chair of Governors	Murree Groom		
Inspector	Richard Hopkins