

# Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

## Walkwood Church of England Middle School

### Vision

In our inclusive community, each valued individual is taught self-belief.

We are resilient and optimistic, caring for ourselves and our peers.

We are children of God, with hope, awe and wonder in our hearts.

Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave 'you'. Ephesians 4:32

### Strengths

- Led by the vision, leaders are resolute in driving forward the work of the school. This ensures positive outcomes for pupils and adults.
- A strong commitment to inclusion, faith and hope underpins a culture of welcome and aspiration. As a result pupils, including those with additional needs, are able to benefit fully from all aspects of school life.
- Pastoral care is exceptional and extends from the school into the local community. As a result of this feeling of being treasured, lives are transformed.
- There is a strong culture of togetherness, respect and trust between all members of the school community. This enables everyone to live well together.
- Inclusive and engaging collective worship is a natural expression of the school's Christian vision. This offers space for prayer and reflection for the whole school community, contributing to personal spiritual growth.

### Development Points

- Strengthen opportunities for spiritual development across the curriculum. This is to extend the ways in which pupils and adults can grow spiritually.
- Support pupils to take the lead individually and collectively in acting for justice. This is so that they can become active citizens who drive positive change in their communities.
- Ensure that, through training and resourcing, staff are well equipped to deliver high quality religious education (RE) in line with national best-practice guidance.



## Inspection Findings

Walkwood is grounded in inclusivity, with a deeply embedded Christian vision rooted in biblical principles. The vision is modelled and upheld by strong leadership. The thoughtfully planned restructure of the senior team, supported by the Diocese, has created clear opportunities for school growth. The smooth transition into the Spire Trust enhances the school's ability to live out its vision by fostering a stronger community. Leaders and governors actively seek to understand the vision's impact on the school's life, work, and Christian character. This rightly allows for the celebration of the school's many successes as a Church school. The vision drives leaders' unwavering commitment to fostering kindness, compassion, and forgiveness. This has created a school in which everyone feels valued and cared for. For staff, the vision means there are wide-ranging opportunities for career development and a rich offering of wellbeing enhancements. Consequently, leaders and governors at Walkwood have created a loving culture where people gain a strong sense of belonging.

The school's vision forms the foundation of its broad and balanced curriculum, thoughtfully designed to meet the needs of its community. Success is measured both by academic outcomes and by personal growth. This reflects the vision's focus both on individual and collective development. Subject leaders ensure the curriculum is coherent, providing meaningful learning experiences that build on prior knowledge and cultivate essential skills. This deepens pupils' understanding, fosters critical thinking, and equips them for future challenges. Consequently, pupils become more aware of their strengths and feel supported by staff dedicated to nurturing their potential. An extensive extra-curricular programme offers opportunities for everyone to build self-belief and develop resilience. It also encourages care for self and others. Adults support each pupil, harnessing their gifts and talents and responding to their needs. This leads to pupils flourishing, no matter what their starting points. Early intervention, coupled with bold decisions using additional funding, means gaps in learning are swiftly tackled. Consequently all pupils thrive, including those who are vulnerable or disadvantaged. Curiosity and asking questions are encouraged. Pupils enjoy the challenge of thinking beyond themselves, but spiritual development is not explicitly planned within the curriculum. A shared understanding of spirituality is underdeveloped.

Following a review of pupils' learning in RE, the school has moved to deliver RE as a separate subject in the curriculum. This is more consistent with Walkwood's foundation as a church school. It creates the opportunity to review the curriculum and offer an improved programme of study. In doing this, the school benefits from a strong relationship with the Diocese. The support of the Trust, in reviewing the curriculum and sharing good practice with other schools, is also invaluable. Learning in RE builds on the established use of high-quality resources for teaching about Christianity. The programme of study also covers a wide range of religions and worldviews. Pupils develop good knowledge and understanding and enjoy the opportunity to learn about a range of diverse beliefs. Consequently, it broadens their horizons. Pupils take pride in their work and develop depth in their thinking by exploring their views in writing. Lessons offer a space in which pupils feel safe to discuss ideas and explore life's big questions. As a result, they can talk about a range of Bible stories and are curious about faith.

Collective worship offers moments for shared and personal focus, contributing effectively to spiritual flourishing. Leaders and pupils see this as a key feature of school life. Anglican in practice and Christian in character, collective worship successfully provides opportunities for listening, exploring, singing, reflecting and praying. Because of this, worship is invitational, enjoyable and engaging, drawing the whole community in. Leaders recognise that exploring powerful images and biblical stories raises questions around the values people hold. These occasions are highly valued by members of the school community, pupils and adults alike. One pupil said, 'it is a special time', noting how they've embraced the school's values and started applying them at home. Worship develops pupil engagement because they have opportunity to lead alongside adults. Links with the local



church strengthen the relationship with families through shared services. This enables the wider community to be part of the joy of Harvest Festival and Christmas. This results in strong mutually respectful and enriching relationships.

As pupils progress through the school, they become more socially aware. For example, pupil leaders, inspired by learning about the environmental harm caused by battery waste, have launched a successful school-wide and community campaign to promote battery recycling. However, pupils' understanding of the concept of justice, and the responsibilities this implies, are less well-developed. There are few opportunities for them to seize the initiative for themselves. Especially in terms of exercising their age-appropriate agency in influencing and effecting social change beyond the school.

Inspired by the vision, the school has a life-enhancing culture of care and hospitality. Wellbeing matters, and this clearly benefits pupils and adults alike. Both feel, with justification, that they themselves are of importance and that the school provides them with refuge through difficult circumstances. Mental health is well-supported and external agencies used as appropriate. Students receive exceptional pastoral care. The school's pastoral hub is there for all students to support their welfare and is very well used. As a result, students thrive and are empowered to reach their full potential. Parents appreciate the values connected to the vision, noting it sparks meaningful conversations at home. High-quality training ensures staff identify and address barriers to flourishing through a host of pastoral support systems. This results in increased pupil attendance, raises pupil confidence and enhances people's emotional health. During difficult times pupils, parents and staff deeply appreciate the kindness and wealth of support they receive from school. One pupil articulated how he experiences the vision through regular check-ins with a staff member that 'just wants you to be the best version of yourself'. The school's provision for autistic children reflects compassion, with other pupils showing sensitivity to neurodiversity. The dedicated space allows vulnerable students to study in a supportive environment until they are ready to transition. This inclusive approach cultivates empathy and understanding among all students, enriching the overall school community. The behaviour code is appropriately linked to the vision with its emphasis on showing kindness and taking responsibility. Pupils understand that celebrating the successes of others is as important as celebrating their own successes. This is part of their understanding about how they fulfil the vision. The school ensures that even challenging conversations are framed in the context of care. As a result adults, including parents, and students clearly recognise that each person is valued as a unique individual.

## Information

Address	Feckenham road, Redditch, B97 5AQ		
Date	26/9/2024	URN	139185
Type of school	Middle School	No. of pupils	663
Diocese/District	Worcester		
Headteacher	Caroline Lowe		
Chair of Governors	Joanne Power		
Inspector	Gemma Hathaway		