



Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Waltham-on-the-Wolds Church of England Primary School

Address Melton Road, Waltham on the Wolds, Melton Mowbray, Leicestershire, LE14 4AJ

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**

The effectiveness of religious education (RE) **Good**

School Vision

‘Let your light shine.’ Matthew 5:16. Enabling children to flourish and succeed.

In our small rural, church school our vision is to maximise the potential of all learners, encouraging them to become responsible global citizens. Based on our Christian and British values we cherish our community and family partnerships, where we celebrate friendship, diversity and inclusion.

Key findings

- The whole school community share a clear Christian vision for the school. This vision, and associated values, underpin the whole life of the school and inform every decision that is made.
- Waltham-on-the-Wolds School is a highly inclusive and caring community where every pupil is valued, nurtured and challenged as the unique person God created them to be. However, opportunities for spiritual development and reflection are sometimes missed as the school lacks a clear shared view of what spirituality means to them.
- The pupils’ needs are met effectively, including through the promotion of mental health. Pupils live out the vision and values through care for each other, social action and opportunities to challenge injustices.
- Collective worship, springing from the Christian vision, is valued, biblical and affirming. It is developed and enriched by strong opportunities for pupil leadership. Collective worship influences the lives of both pupils and staff, enabling them to flourish.
- Enquiry-based religious education (RE) develops curiosity through questioning, although expectations of what pupils will learn in each lesson sometimes lack clarity.

Areas for development

- Deepen the culture of reflection, and prayerfulness, across the curriculum and the entire life of the school. Ensure that opportunities for personal reflection can be accessed by all.
- Strengthen the influence that spirituality has across the school through a clear shared understanding of what spiritual development means within the school’s local context.
- Through tightly focussed learning objectives, ensure that expectations of what pupils will learn in RE is consistently and clearly communicated and therefore understood by all learners.

How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?

Inspection findings

At Waltham-on-the-Wolds, the Christian vision, 'let your light shine', is clearly attributed to the words of Jesus in Matthew 5:16. This vision enables all to flourish because it is inclusive, aspirational and deeply rooted in the school's local context. Distinctively Christian values of friendship, love, perseverance, respect and compassion flow naturally from the vision. These values are given life and relevance through key Bible verses and stories, and impact strongly on the whole life and work of the school. Committed engagement with diocesan and academy trust support has contributed to the exceptional clarity with which leaders and governors articulate and live out the Christian vision and foundation of the school. This informs exceptionally close and mutually supportive relationships between church and school. A new structure of shared governance across four schools maintains the distinctiveness of Waltham-on-the-Wolds school, whilst benefiting from collaboration and a shared strategic overview. Governors work together with staff to secure the 'vision for the year', involving and empowering the whole team to set and evaluate the school's strategic direction. Staff and leaders embrace opportunities to broaden their impact and 'let their light shine' across the cluster and academy trust, including in RE, character development and pupil voice. Provision is highly inclusive, with a sustained focus on individual nurture and support, enabling all members of the school community to flourish.

The school and trust vision for enabling every child to flourish and succeed has raised expectations across the school. All pupils are nurtured and challenged to be the best they can be and 'let their light shine'. Pupils report that they, 'love time to reflect and think'. However, opportunities for deep meaningful reflection are inconsistent across school. Staff strengths and expertise have been used to develop a cohesive and relevant curriculum. This is impacting positively on attitudes to learning, with pupils engaged and hungry to learn. Whilst opportunities exist that support pupils' spiritual development, the school lacks clarity on what spiritual development really means for them. Consequently, the school does not take full advantage of opportunities across the curriculum for pupils to question and explore spirituality. Bold staffing decisions have been made to ensure that wellbeing and mental health sit at the heart of the school's 'recovery and rediscovery' curriculum. Through this, pupil needs are met quickly and responsively so that all may flourish.

The school is characterised by the tangible care that pervades the whole school community. As a clear outworking of the Christian vision, pupils routinely put others before themselves and are keen to see others do well. Through a social justice focus that runs across the curriculum and collective worship, pupils share a passion for tackling inequality. They are keen to talk about, 'changing the world by our actions', and are motivated to make a positive difference to the lives of others both locally and globally.

Mental health and wellbeing are championed for pupils and adults across school. This is firmly rooted in the Christian vision, with everyone given the care, encouragement and opportunity to flourish and succeed. High levels of nurture continued through lockdowns and a recently appointed emotional literacy support assistant (ELSA) now works tirelessly to support children and families. Well-targeted and compassionate support is helping children to noticeably grow in their self-esteem. A school wide initiative on character development, linking values and achievements, supports children in using 'character muscles' to develop resilience. Pupils value the many opportunities for their voices to be heard. Anti-bullying ambassadors articulate the school's fair and consistent behaviour system and are rightly proud of their 'Beyond Bullying' gold award. Pupils care for and support each other with kindness and respect. As noted by a pupil, 'We let our light shine to others by showing kindness'.

Everyone is valued inclusively with dignity and respect as precious children of God. The vision, 'let your light shine', contributes to a culture where the whole school community shows tolerance, respect and understanding. As put by a parent, 'each individual feels part of a big family because everyone is valued and welcomed.' Through relevant sex and relationship teaching, children understand choices in relationships and celebrate difference and diversity. The school's behaviour focus of 'Care and persevere, show respect and be fair', supports all in treating others as they wish to be treated. As a pupil said, 'we let our light shine by respecting and valuing people who do not believe the same things as us'. Pupils are keen to challenge injustice and enjoy articulating the difference they make. They feel listened to and their viewpoints are treated with respect.

Collective worship is inclusive yet invitational and, as noted by the vicar 'woven into the daily rhythm of the school'. All staff participate in worship and feel valued as part of the school community. Worship flows from the school vision and supports pupils' biblical understanding. This gives pupils and staff space to grow spiritually and reflect on the challenge,

'when have you let your light shine?' Pupils value opportunities for prayer and reflection, although these are not deeply embedded across the whole life of the school. Pupils see opportunities to plan, lead and evaluate worship, including across the cluster, as an outworking of their vision to let their lights shine. Children are well supported in acting on evaluation feedback to bring about changes, such as the introduction of more engaging worship songs. Following the positive impact of worship during lockdowns, some acts of worship continue to be live streamed, engendering a sense of community and belonging across all four schools.

RE lessons build effectively on previous learning. They are active and creative and are becoming more enquiry-led over time. Opportunities to live out what they have learned makes RE relevant to pupils, who rise to the challenge to make a difference. The vicar supports the teaching of RE, increasing pupil understanding of the 'big picture' of the Bible. Work in RE builds on prior learning, taking children's existing knowledge and understanding as a starting point. Knowledge organisers help pupils and parents to see what pupils need to know and remember. Pupils understand the activities that are required of them. However, learning objectives are not always clearly focussed on what children need to learn so opportunities for deepening understanding can be missed. Pupils are knowledgeable and respectful of a range of religions and world views. Staff are supported by an effective leader of RE and collective worship, who 'lets her light shine' by supporting RE across all four schools and the Rise RE network group.



The effectiveness of RE is

Good

The quality of teaching in RE is consistently good or better, shown through school monitoring and verified during inspection. Where monitoring identifies areas for improvement, swift action is taken. For example, leaders identified missing opportunities for pupils to apply knowledge to everyday life. These have been put in place and progress against this is evident in RE books. Individuals and groups who are not making expected progress are quickly identified and appropriate provision put in place. This ensures that all pupils' learning needs are met effectively.

Contextual information about the school

Date of inspection	Tuesday 30 November 2021	URN	140913
Date of previous inspection	30 January 2015		
School status	Academy inspected as Voluntary Aided	NOR	95
Name of MAT	Rise Multi-Academy Trust (RISE)		
Diocese	Leicester		
Executive Headteacher Head of school	Julie Hopkins Hollie Geeson		
Pupil profile	The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is below national averages.		
	The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below national averages.		
Additional significant information (if needed)	Waltham-on-the-Wolds CE Primary school is a small village primary school with a significantly rising number of children on roll over time. The school has been an academy within RISE since 2014. The four schools led by the executive headteacher benefit from an exceptionally close partnership.		
Inspector's name	John Clapham	No.	775