

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

| Wadhurst Church of England Primary School and Nursery  |                                       |
|--|---------------------------------------|
| Address  | Sparrows Green Road, Wadhurst TN5 6SR |
| 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   | Requires improvement                  |

| School's vision  |
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| <p>'Learning together, flourishing together' Confidence, curiosity, respect.</p> <p>We are a family of learners who are empowered to flourish, we aspire to excellence in all that we do. Together we take joy in the pursuit of wisdom and knowledge, inspired by our fascination and wonder of the world. We nurture and celebrate the inherent preciousness of every individual, shaping articulate, creative and compassionate citizens.</p> <p>'I was filled with delight day after day, rejoicing always in his presence, rejoicing in his whole world and delighting in mankind.' Proverbs: 8 (30,31)</p>   |
| Key findings   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior leaders including governors, have a clear and strong understanding of the school's vision which shapes the work of the school, including influencing strategic decision making. Learning outcomes for religious education in Key Stage 1 and the impact of collective worship indicate that leadership in these areas needs to be strengthened.</li> <li>• Wadhurst is blessed with confident and articulate pupils who are keen to learn and thrive, their preciousness, celebrated with joy, is the embodiment of the school's vision to 'learn and flourish'. Opportunities for pupils' character development, based on a clearly set out programme identifying specific qualities, are woven into the curriculum.</li> <li>• Whilst there are significant opportunities for character development, opportunities specifically for pupils to be agents of change and consider issues of social injustice where they might make a difference, beyond their own community, are limited.</li> <li>• Collective worship is planned and regular though not evaluated effectively because it is not sufficiently well focused on the essential areas which offer opportunity to everyone without compulsion, to grow spiritually, through the experience of prayer, stillness, worship and reflection. The quality of singing contributes significantly to spirituality.</li> <li>• RE leadership is strong, so too is the understanding of RE's status as an academic subject. The impact of the RE curriculum in Key Stage 2 enables them to flourish well but this has yet to be realised in Key Stage 1 so pupils are able to talk confidently about their learning.</li> </ul> |
| Areas for development  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review collective worship so that further opportunities can be given to pupils and staff to reflect, respond and be inspired by the chosen theme.</li> <li>• Work with pupils in order that they have a more comprehensive and secure understanding of social injustice and how they can independently affect change particularly nationally and globally.</li> <li>• Improve the contribution of RE to pupils' flourishing in Key Stage 1 so that they are more able to talk confidently about their learning.</li> </ul>  |

### Inspection findings

This is a good school because all members of Wadhurst's community are united in their support for the Christian vision and values which are lived out in the everyday working of the school. The vision, rooted in biblical teaching makes a powerful difference to the lives, learning, spiritual growth and experience, of both pupils and adults. Motivated by the vision, governors and leaders make bold financial and organisational decisions such as the provision of an on-site nursery, catering for and responding to the needs of the school and its community. The vision promotes an exceptional culture of compassion, care and encouragement, especially for the most vulnerable, in which barriers to learning are overcome. This enables all pupils to flourish. Pupils, parents, staff and governors are very proud of their school and its distinctiveness as set out in the desired behaviours of the 'Wadhurst Way' created with pupils. Well modelled by the senior leadership team, all school relationships are caring, forgiving and life giving. Leaders' decisions about curriculum design and extra-curricular provision are driven by the school's aspirational Christian vision. The school has a wholehearted commitment to inclusion. It ensures that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who are disadvantaged or vulnerable are able to thrive, flourish and participate. This was demonstrated by the recent all-inclusive Sports Day.

Leaders support for staff wellbeing creates an open culture where all are supported in practical and compassionate care. Relevant training is provided for all staff. Through this investment by leaders, staff feel highly valued. As a result, morale is high. The school's links with the diocese are productive. Work with the alliance of local schools has had a positive impact, such as training for aspiring leaders. The school enjoys exceptionally good relationships with the wider community, including the church and its vicar. Consequently, the school is successful in responding to the specific needs of individual pupils and their families. Parents are grateful to the school.

The school's engaging curriculum, fully focused on meeting the needs of all pupils, is an expression of its vision giving all a chance to flourish. Opportunities across the curriculum are maximised to develop pupils' wide range of talents and interests. In this way, pupils are empowered to aspire to the possibilities of what they might achieve. Pupils understand this may not be easy and that perseverance is needed in their endeavours. Consequently, pupils enjoy their learning and value time at school. A strong feature of the curriculum is the way in which the extensive school grounds are exceptionally well used for a wide variety of enriching activities such as forest school. The school's values of curiosity and respect are strongly promoted and impact well. As a result, pupils engage in exploring the big questions about life, listen to each other's views and disagree well.

Strategies for promoting pupils' wellbeing, which help pupils understand their feelings and those of others, have a positive impact. Healthy relationships are promoted well by the school's relationship education curriculum. A restorative approach to behaviour management has been introduced. By encouraging and guiding, staff support pupils in taking responsibility for their words and actions. Pupils demonstrate a willingness to forgive one another in order to heal relationships. Parents agree that bullying is extremely rare and that when issues arise, they are dealt with quickly, sensitively and with empathy. Parents attribute pupils' good behaviour choices to the school's unwavering faithfulness to its goal of ensuring every individual is free to flourish and thrive.

Religious education (RE) is led and managed well by a skilled and committed leader. Staff receive training and support. This has impacted well on Key Stage 2 learning but has not been as effective at Key Stage 1. Extremely articulate older pupils, voice their enjoyment of RE lessons where they learn about Christianity and a variety of other worldviews and faiths, including Humanism in year 6. They talk confidently about the essential beliefs and worship practices of these religions and recognise the importance of showing respect for them. They express their varied understanding of spirituality as 'a connection with God and religion', 'having a healthy mind', 'who you are emotionally', 'what goes on in your thought process'. The impact of RE on Key Stage 1 pupils is less secure and limited. Younger children are less confident in talking about their RE learning referring to 'learning about new countries'. A few younger pupils were able to outline the Easter story and reasons for eating hot cross buns.

Pupils have a secure understanding of flourishing as ‘yourself thriving growing and learning’ and ‘metaphorically blossoming and getting the best out of yourself every day’. There are opportunities for pupils to do good work for others through a number of leadership roles, such as raising funds for the Ukrainian appeal, dog walking and litter picking. Useful links have been made with a school in Burundi. Pupils learn about aspects of the lifestyle and the educational opportunities which are open to children in Burundi compared to their own. Residents of Wadhurst Manor care home enjoy the company of pupils at school who visit to lead worship for them. Currently, pupils are less clear about how they can be agents for change and speak out against an issue of social injustice on behalf of those who may not have a voice. There are limited opportunities for pupils to independently initiate social action and bring about change beyond their school and its community. Therefore, pupils have limited knowledge about national and global issues of social injustice which they might give their energies to addressing. Though issues of injustice and inequality are raised within the curriculum, pupils are not yet enabled to make a tangible difference by campaigning in social action projects beyond their local community.

Whilst the school gathers regularly for themed collective worship such as ‘thankfulness’, the impact is limited due to its unimaginative approach. Acts of worship regularly contain content and style more akin to RE lessons. Older pupils comment that, whilst not Christian themselves, prayer time gave them an opportunity to think about themselves and the day ahead. The ‘stargazers’ pupil group enjoy opportunities to plan, lead and evaluate collective worship, though there is scope for the younger pupils to be more involved. Staff value collective worship as a time to come together to be still and reflect. Pupils and adults agree that singing together is a unifying and spiritual experience. Whilst collective worship is evaluated, it does not focus sufficiently well on key expectations of worship. The impact of worship is limited as opportunities for adults and pupils to reflect, think differently, and ask big questions are underdeveloped.

The committed headteacher and deputy headteacher have been pivotal in creating a distinct vision and ethos centred on Christian teaching and associated values. This is underpinned every day by ‘learning together, flourishing together’ and so enhancing the lives of pupils and adults.

| Information                        |  |                 |              |
|------------------------------------|--|-----------------|--------------|
| School                             | Wadhurst CE Primary School and Nursery | Inspection date | 13 July 2023 |
| URN                                | 114532                                 | VC/VA/Academy   | VC           |
| Diocese/District                   | Chichester                             | Pupils on roll  | 251          |
| Headteacher                        | David Helmsley                         |                 |              |
| Chair of Governors/<br>Trust Board | Miquela Walsh                          |                 |              |
| Inspector                          | Sally Kaminski-Gaze                    | No.             | C.21/22      |