

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

### Great Gaddesden Church of England Primary School

#### Vision

**“Treat others exactly as you would wish to be treated yourself”** - Luke 6:31 (World English Bible)

1) **Be** observant and thoughtful    2) **Be** kind and empathetic    3) **Be** flexible and reflective

Our vision is a call to empathy, encouraging us to step into the shoes of others. By treating each other with the respect and kindness we wish for ourselves, we create a culture of mutual respect, where productivity and collaboration soar. We aim to grow a community that values learning and humanity towards others, guided by the life and teachings of Jesus, our Christian values, and our 3'Be's. We aim to support all to feel valued, included and become flourishing individuals, with a heart for others and the world.

Great Gaddesden Church of England 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 is an imaginative, effective and compelling response to the context of this small, rural school. This means that pupils flourish through a rich and diverse educational experience.
- Collective worship is central to the life of the school. It strongly reinforces the Christian vision and its associated values and promotes the spiritual flourishing of adults and pupils.
- Leaders, teachers and support staff work tirelessly to ensure that pupils and parents are known as unique and valued individuals. As a result, pupils who are vulnerable or going through difficult times receive timely and sensitive support.
- Religious education (RE) is carefully planned and taught with expertise and passion. Consequently, pupils greatly enjoy their lessons, develop impressive religious literacy and make strong progress.
- Leaders have established a rich culture in which adults make pupils' spiritual development a priority. The forest school and reflection areas offer them rich opportunities to reflect and experience wonder.

#### Development Points

- Build on the work being done by the pupil leaders in standing for justice. This is to further enhance their confidence in using their sense of personal responsibility to enrich the lives of others.
- Enhance the way experiences for spiritual development are planned across the curriculum. This is to deepen the opportunities for pupils and adults to flourish spiritually.



## Inspection Findings

Great Gaddesden's Christian vision is deeply embedded and has a profound impact on the life of the school. The more recent addition of the 'three Bes' to the vision has sharpened its focus, enhancing its impact. Consequently, leaders, adults and pupils understand and value it as a crucial guide to their conduct, priorities and attitudes. The vision is an enlightened Christian response to the context of this small rural school. It is supported by 11 associated Christian values that are explored in depth through collective worship and the rewards system. The school is a cohesive community in which people are known and cared for. This view is confirmed by both pupils and adults. Leaders use the vision purposefully to prepare pupils for the diversity they will encounter later in their lives. As a result, pupils flourish at school and are equipped to thrive in the future.

Collective worship is at the heart of the school's life. It is carefully planned to enhance pupils and adults' understanding of the school's Christian values. At the start of each week leaders introduce a 'big question' based on the value of the month. This enables pupils to explore each one in detail, enriching their understanding and helping them to grow spiritually. Worship is carefully structured to be warmly welcoming and readily accessible. It is deliberately positioned at the start of each morning to set the tone for the day and inform people's interactions. Pupils can and do respond to the big question by posting their thoughts on a central notice board. The quality of these responses confirms the deep impact that collective worship has on supporting their spiritual development. Friday's act of worship is in the parish church. Thoughtful planning by school and church leaders ensures that it reinforces and deepens pupils' understanding of the week's theme. As a result, the close collaboration with the parish church greatly strengthens the Christian life of the school. It gives rich additional opportunities for the spiritual development of adults and pupils. This valuable partnership is further deepened by a monthly parents' café after Friday worship and services on important Christian festivals. Pupils, parents and staff greatly value the fact that the parish church is an integral part of their experience of school. They flourish because the school's Church of England foundation is central to its work.

Leaders give spiritual development a high priority in the way they structure the curriculum. All classrooms have a reflection area and each class spends weekly time in the forest school. Here, pupils follow a programme that gives them the opportunity to reflect and to experience wonder at the created world. These spiritual experiences have a profound effect on pupils. Teachers are attuned to exploit opportunities for spiritual reflection where they arise. For example, they include a torchlit moonlight walk during a residential trip, so that pupils can experience the wonder of night and silence. Though staff are adept at sensitively promoting spiritual inquiry, there is no systematic mapping of it within the curriculum. This limits the impact of the curriculum on the breadth of pupils' spiritual development. Leaders, aware of the school's context, ensure that the curriculum challenges pupils to embrace the diversity of the wider world. Bespoke interventions effectively support pupils who experience learning difficulties. Leaders work energetically to ensure that pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, have a rich school experience. Consequently, pupils, including those who are deemed vulnerable, make strong progress during their time at school.

The 'three Bes' have a profound impact on relationships at Great Gaddesden. School culture is characterised by the practice of thoughtfulness, empathy and reflectiveness. As a result, pupils are mindful of their impact on others making relationships within the school positive. They have a keen understanding of their own responsibility to act justly to others in the school community. In addition, they respond empathetically to support local charities such as the nearby food bank and care home in practical ways. Older pupils flourish through the opportunities they have to



lead the pupil community and support their younger peers. Reflection ambassadors deepen their own spirituality by supporting younger pupils to reflect on acts of worship. This enriches their own engagement and develops a contemplative attitude in them. The change team is active and effective in pressing leaders for improvements to the school site and resources. This group also takes the lead in school-wide discussions about which charities to support and how to support them. However, opportunities for pupils to independently and actively exercise their voice in speaking out for justice are less fully developed.

In this small school, people know each other well. A culture of care amplifies the impact of this familiarity. People actively look out for each other, consciously living out the school's vision. This contributes valuably to the flourishing of both pupils and adults. The caring culture is supported by effective practices and policies. Staff meetings routinely begin with an update on pupils, including those who may need additional care and support. Pastoral staff respond rapidly when pupils going through difficult times use classroom 'connection boxes' to alert them to their concerns. These practices enhance the wellbeing of pupils. Leaders ensure that pupils deemed to be vulnerable have access to appropriate and timely specialist support when this is needed. On the rare occasions when conflicts occur, adults are skilled in resolving them using restorative approaches. This ensures that relationships are mended and those involved learn from the experience. Adults thrive through the kindness they are shown when facing difficulties and the unwavering support that leaders give to their professional development.

Leaders, including governors, ensure RE is prioritised as having a high status throughout the school. Careful planning ensures that the curriculum is broad, with an appropriately balanced range of worldviews and faiths, including Christianity. Challenge is woven throughout the curriculum to ensure it enhances the depth of pupils' understanding of the way beliefs and views are lived out. Teachers take particular care to ensure that pupils gain a deep understanding of faiths and worldviews that may fall outside their experience. The curriculum is enriched by a programme of visits to places of worship. These are valued by pupils who rightly see them as a way of helping them develop flexible and empathetic attitudes. The visits also prepare pupils for the diversity of faith and belief that they experience in secondary school and beyond.

Pupils are deeply engaged in their learning in RE. This is because of the relevant curriculum, taught with enthusiasm and skill by well-trained teachers. Teachers structure lessons imaginatively so that pupils explore important religious questions in a way that is memorable and relevant to their lives. For example, a lesson on heroes of the Christian faith with upper KS2 pupils led to a lively and passionate discussion about who best demonstrated the school's 'three Bes'. Pupils show notable recall and well-developed religious literacy. They take great care in their written work. Teachers' accurate and careful monitoring and assessment ensure that pupils of all abilities make strong progress. In addition, they grow spiritually because teachers habitually invite them to reflect on their own response to the deep religious questions they study. Consequently, RE makes a significant contribution to their growing spiritual awareness.

## Information

Address	Great Gaddesden Church of England Primary School		
Date	7 July 2025	URN	117433
Type of school	Voluntary aided	No. of pupils	78
Diocese	St Albans		
Headteacher	Matt Beach		
Chair of Governors	Sarah Pugh		
Inspector	Andrew Wilcock		