

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Ashurst Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Vision

Achieving together with love, hope and joy.

Guided by our Christian values of love, hope and joy, we endeavour to motivate and inspire children to become lifelong, resilient, successful and enthusiastic learners. We aim to nurture and support every pupil to meet the challenges of our rich, diverse and ever-changing world, and to be responsible citizens who make a positive contribution to society. We encourage all pupils to become happy, confident individuals who are able to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives.

Our vision is rooted in the biblical text found in 1 John 3:18 – ‘Let us not love in words or speech but with actions and in truth.’

Ashurst 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.

Notable Strengths

- The Christian vision is central to the life of the school. The community’s culture informs leadership decisions and inspires an ongoing commitment to development as a Church school.
- Inspired by the vision, the school places strong emphasis on nurturing relationships and supporting wellbeing. As a result, pupils and adults feel loved and demonstrate kindness and mutual respect.
- Curriculum planning reflects the school’s vision and is enhanced through a wide range of enrichment opportunities. These help pupils discover new interests, build confidence and develop their skills. Effective support enables pupils with additional needs to succeed.
- Pupils have opportunities to develop an understanding of fairness, responsibility and caring for others. They show respect for people and demonstrate concern for the world around them.
- Collective worship is valued by pupils and adults and is strengthened through the partnership with the local church. It fosters a strong sense of belonging while providing space for reflection, celebration and prayer that nurtures spiritual development.

Development Points

- Strengthen the religious education (RE) curriculum by ensuring that non-religious worldviews are represented and that pupils’ learning about world faiths is explored in greater depth. This is so that pupils are supported to develop a secure understanding of diversity of beliefs and engage confidently with different viewpoints.
- Extend and embed a shared understanding of spirituality that permeates the curriculum. This is so that pupils and staff are encouraged to recognise and express spiritual reflection more clearly and with greater confidence.



Inspection Findings

Vision and Leadership

Rooted in John's Gospel, the Christian vision of 'achieving together with love, hope and joy' shapes a nurturing and inclusive small school community. The vision is lived out consistently. As a result, pupils show confidence, compassion and thoughtful action in their daily choices. The vision is seen in healthy relationships, respectful attitudes and high aspirations across the school. It informs expectations and contributes to high standards of behaviour and positive engagement with learning. A strong sense of belonging and shared purpose is evident throughout the community. Pupils and adults speak with pride about being part of a school shaped by love, hope and joy. Leaders foster a culture where individuals are known and valued. Strong partnerships with parents encourage active involvement in school life. Governors visit regularly and know the school well. They engage positively with pupils and staff. Through a planned system of evaluation, they have the insight to effectively support and challenge the school as a Church school. Their commitment ensures the vision remains active, visible, and influential in daily practice.

Vision and Curriculum

Guided by the Christian vision, the curriculum is designed to motivate and engage learners. First-hand experiences help pupils make meaningful connections between subjects. For example, pupils make paper before painting scenes from ancient civilisations. The curriculum and enrichment opportunities are broad and varied. They enable pupils with different interests and abilities to develop their talents. Pupils express the joy they receive from painting with watercolours, planting bulbs and solving puzzles. Visits to places of interest, including museums, extend pupils' horizons. These experiences provide valuable cultural learning opportunities. However, the school lacks a shared understanding of spirituality among pupils and adults. This limits recognition of spirituality across different areas of learning. Consequently, the curriculum's impact on pupils' spiritual flourishing remains unclear. Staff carefully tailor support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Learning is thoughtfully adapted to reduce barriers and promote independence. These approaches strengthen pupils' confidence and readiness to learn.

Worship and Spirituality

Daily collective worship is carefully planned and firmly rooted in the Christian vision. It provides pupils and adults with opportunities for spiritual growth. Bible stories help pupils see how the school's values are lived out through Jesus' teaching and actions. Pupils reflect deeply on biblical themes and confidently relate them to their own lives. Worship includes moments of quiet reflection, stillness and prayer. Singing is particularly valued by pupils, who find it joyful and uplifting. Adults appreciate the opportunity to gather as part of the school community as it brings a strong sense of belonging. Members of the pupil worship committee actively lead worship. They connect national and global issues to the school values of love, hope and joy. This develops their awareness of others and how they can act to support the wider world. The school celebrates key Christian festivals, including Harvest, Christmas and Easter, bringing pupils and families together through collective reflection. These shared experiences encourage participation and mutual respect, building strong relationships and a unified school community. Partnerships with the local church provide varied opportunities to explore scripture and enrich pupils' spiritual experiences. For example, to support understanding of stewardship, pupils spend time in the churchyard observing nature. They value discovering spring flowers and listening to birdsong, reflecting thoughtfully on God's creation.

Vision and School Culture

A deeply nurturing ethos permeates the school, and relationships across the community are exemplary. Staff, parents and pupils feel valued and listened to. Guided by the Christian vision, pupils treat one another with



respect and genuine care. They willingly support each other and demonstrate kindness in daily interactions. Expectations for behaviour are high, creating a calm and purposeful environment. Strong partnerships with families further strengthen this positive culture. Leaders prioritise the wellbeing of both pupils and staff. Focus days help pupils reflect on their personal health and explore ways to support a positive mindset. These activities develop resilience and encourage pupils to learn from mistakes. Staff also value these days and contribute by leading activities they enjoy. These include sport, craft and creative pursuits that encourage participation and shared enjoyment.

Vision, Justice and Responsibility

Pupils demonstrate a well-developed sense of care for their community. Through collective worship and learning, they explore justice, fairness and responsible citizenship. Motivated by the vision, pupils express love through practical and meaningful action. They support a local voluntary organisation helping vulnerable families and individuals. By packing food boxes for people in need, pupils learn how their actions can make a difference. Intergenerational work with local care home residents encourages compassion and thoughtful service. These experiences help pupils understand the value of caring for others. Pupils speak confidently about their ideas and leadership roles allow them to influence decisions and shape school life. The young governors' group takes responsibility for promoting improvements within the school. Their work has helped develop playground spaces and activities for pupils.

Religious Education

Teaching in RE is effective. A range of approaches, including discussion and role-play, are used in lessons. These allow pupils to express ideas and listen respectfully to others. Staff check what pupils already know and identify the next steps in learning. Key vocabulary and concepts are revisited regularly to strengthen understanding over time. Work is assessed frequently, and accurate judgments are made about pupils' learning. At times, helpful feedback enables pupils to understand their progress and improve their work. However, this practice is not consistent. Activities are adapted so that pupils with additional needs can participate fully and succeed in RE.

Leadership of RE is strong and effective, giving the subject a high profile. Pupils value RE because it helps them understand themselves and others. The curriculum includes Christianity and world faiths such as Islam, Judaism and Hinduism. However, structured teaching about non-religious worldviews is limited. The curriculum is carefully sequenced, enabling pupils to build on prior learning. Engaging lessons and resources support pupils to enjoy RE. Their books and responses show pride in their work. Visits and visitors, including Christian and Jewish representatives, enrich learning through lived encounters. Lessons encourage thoughtful discussion about belief and life in a diverse world. As a result, pupils develop awareness of different perspectives. However, discussions with pupils reveal some misconceptions about the distinct practices within different religions. This indicates the need for deeper learning and greater clarity in understanding. Leaders, including governors, regularly monitor teaching and learning of RE.

Information

Address	School Lane, Ashurst, Nr Steyning, West Sussex, BN44 3AY.		
Date	09 March 2026	URN	126020
Type of school	Voluntary Aided	No. of pupils	48
Diocese	Chichester		
Headteacher	Sarah Smith		
Chair of Governors	Tom Sheldon		
Inspector	Susan Costa		