Statutory Inspection of Anglican & Methodist Schools

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Farnham Church of England Primary School, Bishop's Stortford

Vision

Through faith and nurture, we thrive.
'Life in all its fullness.' John 10:10

Farnham 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 school's Christian vision inspires school leaders and supports them to make courageous decisions. This ensures the experience provided enables pupils and adults to flourish.
- The vision is the backbone of the school's curriculum. It is carefully designed for the school's unique context and ensures each pupil is appropriately provided for.
- Nurturing the continual development of adults and pupils is central to the school's work. Pupils are happy, confident and feel safe to express themselves and, as a result, they thrive.
- The religious education (RE) curriculum is carefully planned to cover a range of religions and worldviews. Training is provided to ensure teaching is of a consistently high standard. Learning activities are well-structured to enable pupils to demonstrate their learning.
- Pupils make clear progress from their starting points in RE. They enjoy learning in different ways and are confident to talk about their knowledge.

Development Points

- Embed the school's shared understanding of spirituality into pupils' everyday experiences. This is to enable them to express what it means for themselves.
- Enhance opportunities for pupils to challenge injustice and make changes on issues important to them. This is so that they have greater ownership in selecting issues and finding creative ways to make a difference.
- Improve governors' monitoring of the school's Christian vision throughout all its work. This is to deepen their understanding of the effectiveness of the vision.

Inspection Findings

Vision and Leadership

The school's theologically rooted Christian vision, based on 'life in all its fullness', is firmly embedded in all its work. Its simplicity means it is easily understood. Leaders have ensured it remains relevant as the school continues to evolve. They use the school's vision to guide their decision making, particularly in times of challenge. Although the school is going through a period of considerable change, leaders continually seek innovative ways to meet the needs of its community. Carefully chosen Christian values are well established and widely known. Adults model these values consistently, resulting in pupils reflecting them in their own behaviour. Staff work hard to ensure pupils enjoy additional experiences, such as keeping chickens and Forest School. This enriches their experience of school beyond academic lessons. Governors ensure school staff are well supported. However, they do not consistently evaluate the school's work for themselves. This means they are not closely monitoring the school's work as a Church school or the effectiveness of the vision. Leaders work hard to identify and develop emerging talent within their team. Consequently, staff flourish alongside their pupils.

Vision and Curriculum

Staff at all levels share a determination to ensure pupils thrive, personally and academically. Consequently, the school's curriculum takes careful account of the pupils it currently serves and enables them to flourish. Staff recognise the uniqueness of every pupil. They work tirelessly to meet their pupils' needs and ensure continuing progress. Courageous decisions have been made about how to organise pupils' learning experiences in order to maximise their potential. Staff believe that pupils' happiness and emotional needs must be met before academic learning can take place. As a result, thoughtful and strategic use is made of different areas of the building which supports pupils' progress. Outdoor learning is a high priority and pupils talk about how much they value being outside. They talk positively about their learning experience at Farnham. They know they are cared for and are included in decisions. As a result, they feel safe, accepted and able to express themselves as unique children of God.

Worship and Spirituality

Daily collective worship is a cornerstone of the school's work. Careful thought is given to organising it in a meaningful way, ensuring consistency for pupils. Worship is well planned by the leadership team, making good use of resource materials to support delivery. Teachers think carefully about how to make worship inclusive for all. Moving from the hall to the library has resulted in more intimate worship, allowing everyone to contribute spontaneously if they choose. Pupils are encouraged to participate in leading worship, sometimes spontaneously. Pupils' reflections and prayers show a good understanding of the need to share with those less fortunate than themselves. Parents value the opportunity to join worship in school. Recently, leaders have refreshed the school's shared understanding of spirituality. This work is in its infancy and is not fully embedded in the pupils' everyday experiences. They talk generally about 'ows' and 'wows' but find it difficult to suggest how these relate to the world around them.

Vision and School Culture

Supporting one another to flourish is the golden thread that runs through all Farnham's work. Leaders are determined to fulfil their vision and enable everyone to thrive. They recognise the importance of supporting wellbeing as the first step to enable adults and children to reach their potential. Strategic decisions about staff training have been made to ensure all are aware of the lasting effect trauma can have. This enables staff at all levels to support pupils and their families. Pupils speak naturally about their past experiences and value the difference the school makes to their lives. They recognise that individual pupils need personalised adaptations and they know they can rely on all staff to provide support. Pupils also know that they do not have to share the same ideas and opinions. They are learning to express these thoughtfully and disagree respectfully. As a result, positive relationships are nurtured successfully. Staff work hard to support families and this is greatly

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appreciated. As Farnham is such a small school, families are also able to support one another in times of crisis. This extends the vision beyond the school gate.

Vision, Justice and Responsibility

Leaders continually look for opportunities to enable their pupils to thrive. They do this by carefully selecting partnerships that directly enhance the school's work. Most notable is its collaboration with other schools. This distributes the burden of leadership across a wider range of staff and enables the sharing of ideas and strategies. In turn, sharing best practice supports staff to enable pupils and families to thrive. Pupils have a strong understanding of rights and responsibilities. They know they have individual rights but also appreciate they have a responsibility to each other and the wider community. They enjoy taking part in activities to bring about change and can talk about their impact long after the event. At present, these tend to be led by adults and this limits pupils' ability to suggest issues and make decisions for themselves.

Religious Education

Religious Education (RE) holds high status at Farnham. Leaders have chosen to follow the locally agreed syllabus. This ensures pupils learn about a range of religions and worldviews. Carefully selected resources supplement the curriculum objectives and support teachers to plan well-structured lessons. Leaders have prioritised staff training which supports teachers to deliver the curriculum accurately. They monitor the quality of RE carefully. It is taught regularly and meets all the statutory requirements. Leaders use research and evidence to make decisions about content and assessment. The way the curriculum is planned allows pupils to revisit selected religions over time. This enables them to build on their prior learning and make comparisons between religious traditions, e.g. comparing Divali and Christmas.

Pupils enjoy their RE lessons and show curiosity about beliefs and traditions other than their own. They are proud of their work and enjoy demonstrating their knowledge. Even the youngest children can talk about their prior learning, using their books as prompts. Teachers use creative ways to evidence and assess pupils' progress. This is not always documented in books but recorded in practical ways and photographed or annotated to show their verbal responses. In order to ensure pupils thrive, teachers carefully select resources and employ different ways of recording. This enables pupils to demonstrate their learning in the most appropriate way for them. Teachers use careful questioning during lessons to ascertain pupils' understanding and to offer further challenge. In turn, older pupils ask their own challenging questions and enjoy discussing different responses. As a result, progress from their starting points is evident.

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National Society for Education
Church of England & Church in Wales

Methodist Schools

Information

Address	Farnham, Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire, CM23 1HR		
Date	23 October 2025	URN	115189
Type of school	Voluntary aided	No. of pupils	11
Diocese	Chelmsford		
Federation	The Federation of Farnham and Rickling Primary Schools		
Headteacher	Tracey Bratley		
Chair of Governors	Richard Ward		
Inspector	Victoria Burgess		