

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

### Stapleford Primary School

#### Vision

Believe Nurture Enlighten  
Rooted in the countryside...Embedded in village life  
Preparing well-rounded individuals for the world

'But blessed is the one who trusts in the LORD, whose confidence is in him. They will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.' Jeremiah 17.7.8

Stapleford 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 the driving force of the school's work. It underpins leaders' decisions and actions to ensure the needs of pupils and adults are met.
- The inclusive culture, which stems from the vision, is all encompassing. Pupils thrive in an environment of nurture as attitudes are positive and the expected behaviour for learning embedded.
- Inspired by the vision, the holistic curriculum is transformative to the lives of pupils, and as such, significantly contributes to their flourishing.
- Strong leadership of religious education (RE) ensures progression in learning via high quality teaching. This positively impacts pupils' confidence when describing core concepts in RE.
- Collective worship inspires a strong sense of belonging. Rooted in Christian belief and practice, it sensitively encourages the spiritual growth of pupils and adults, equipping them to talk articulately of their growing spirituality.

#### Development Points

- Extend opportunities to widen pupils' understanding of injustice. This is to strengthen the way the vision drives a sense of personal responsibility, making a difference to the lives of others beyond the school community.
- Broaden meaningful partnerships in order to enrich the Christian vision-driven work of the school. This is to expand pupils' experience of wider communities and prepare 'well-rounded individuals for the world'.



## Inspection Findings

Stapleford Church of England Primary School is built on a rich heritage of education spanning more than 150 years. The Christian vision is deeply rooted in the bond with the village community and rural wooded location. It supports strong roots to grow and inspires purpose and energy for pupils and adults alike. The vision is understood and exemplified through carefully chosen values. Each value has a clear biblical reference. This helps pupils to better understand the teachings of Jesus and effectively frames the behaviours which are expected from both pupils and adults alike. Staff communicate well with families, which provides pupils with a loving foundation upon which to grow. Matters of interest, or concerns of parents and carers are actively heard, and swiftly addressed. They are right to feel reassured. As a further outworking of the school's vision, the school breakfast club brings together pupils of all ages. Pupils are encouraged to eat healthily and play in a friendly and co-operative atmosphere. Governors know the school well because they visit often and monitor the effectiveness of the school as a Church school regularly. Governors access relevant training from the diocese. This results in governors' deep understanding of Church school education. They use their knowledge and areas of expertise to positively support leaders to drive the school's vision in particular regard to the curriculum.

The school's vision forms the foundation of a carefully crafted, inclusive and aspirational curriculum. It deliberately reflects and embraces the school's locality and context 'rooted in the countryside...embedded in village life'. Success is measured both by academic outcomes and by personal growth. Pupils demonstrate enthusiasm and excitement for the school day, knowing they are in a place of safety, nurture and enlightenment. They discuss their learning enthusiastically, thinking carefully about their responses when questioned. The small, semi-rural position of the school has not impeded ambitions to enable pupils to experience a wide range of opportunities. A key aspect of the curriculum is outdoor learning and exploration. In these sessions, pupils are strikingly empathetic towards each other, and respectful of the wildlife habitats. Pupils comment they like the spaces outside where they can be calm, and themselves. The use of nature and the outside resources are contributing to pupils' flourishing spiritually, and enriching their lives. Within the wider school day, pupils aptly use the language of spirituality to convey what they distinguish as spiritual moments. They express these as 'ow, wow, and now' moments. Staff encourage thoughtful discussions and assist pupils in navigating their unique spiritual journey. This allows pupils to pursue their God given potential and as result they are sustained and flourishing.

Collective worship is given priority by leaders and valued highly by the wider school community. The whole school gathers daily in an atmosphere of calm reverence and expectation. Pupils take part in well-established routines, such as lighting of candles and contribute to a shared community experience. Worship follows the Church calendar, so pupils are well-versed in the Anglican seasons, rituals and routines. For example, pupils are able to readily explain why the current altar cloth is purple in colour. The rolling programme consistently addresses the school's vision, values and planned themes. It is inclusive and engaging. The strong partnership with the church and regular involvement of local clergy enhances the quality of the worship life of the school. Pupils particularly enjoy their weekly worship with the vicar who actively encourages their questions and reflections of biblical stories. These discussions increase pupils' knowledge of the Bible in meaningful ways. Invitational prayer and reflection also form an integral part of collective worship. Moments for shared and personal reflection are established and contribute effectively to spiritual flourishing. At the end of each worship, pupils are invited to record their reflections in a pupil voice book. This provides the opportunity for deeper contemplation and expression. Worship regularly takes place at the church to mark festivals and special occasions. These events further strengthen the understanding of Anglican traditions and practice and are appreciated by the community. Parents and carers also



value the opportunity to share in collective worship regularly in school. This meaningfully reinforces the relationship between school and home.

The school's vision prepares the way for pupils to understand justice and personal responsibility. Pupils are aware their actions can affect others positively. An example of this is a successful local litter-pick which was instigated by one of the pupils. Furthermore, the importance of fairness and being able to have their say is understood by pupils. Leadership groups such as the school council encourage pupils to champion causes. There are regular opportunities during collective worship for pupils to share issues which are important to them. Concerns such as the plight of endangered animals, habitats for bees, and the effects of deforestation are topical. However, at present, there are limited occasions for pupils to tackle injustice in an age-appropriate way beyond the school's audience. The school works proactively in developing reciprocal relationships. In particular, partnerships with neighbouring village schools, and the community hubs such as the food bank, are strong. Recently, the school has re-established a relationship with a school in Kenya. However, the purpose and sustainability of this affiliation does not have sufficient clarity.

RE is a strength of the school and is highly effective. Leaders ensure RE is well-resourced with high-quality materials and relevant professional development for teachers. With the support of the Diocese of St Albans Education Team, the school has created an RE curriculum which provides a strong framework for pupils' learning. It is broad and includes a good balance of world religions and worldviews. These are sequenced carefully to build knowledge over time and have been tailored to the particulars of mixed age classes. Pupils demonstrate enthusiasm for the subject, and are able to accurately articulate aspects of their learning. These include, for example, stories from the Hindu tradition, key events in the life of Jesus, and what it means to be Jewish.

High quality teaching and learning in RE reflects the school's strong commitment to the subject. Teachers carefully consider pupils' needs to support their leaning and enable progress. The lessons are particularly impactful in the younger years from Reception through to Year 2. Across the whole school, pupils demonstrate impressive knowledge of the practices, and beliefs of various global religious traditions. Books provide evidence of progress over time. Leaders use effective systems to closely track and evaluate attainment for individuals and groups. Staff understand the opportunities RE offers in 'preparing well-rounded individuals for the world'. Connections to the school's vision and associated values are made meaningfully. The quality of teaching is carefully monitored and staff are provided with clear feedback which further improves teaching and learning.

Reflecting the school's vision, respectful, nurturing relationships are at the heart of this community. Some families travel from neighbouring districts to the school. This is because they know the school cherishes and nurtures in an environment of belief, positivity and hope. Pupils thrive because bespoke support is driven by leaders' commitment to each child as the person God made them to be. Pupils experiencing distress are restored through individual and group provision. As a result, and over time, pupils grow in confidence and resolve. Staff work in a harmonious atmosphere, supporting each other professionally and personally. They greatly value the open-door policy of leaders, knowing they can discuss concerns in a safe and supportive environment. Opportunities for professional development are encouraged by leaders and are embraced by staff. This climate effectively equips staff for their ongoing and evolving roles. Supportive conversations, and clear promotion of healthy work-life balance are central to the culture of this happy and successful school.



## Information

Address	Church Lane, Stapleford, Hertfordshire, SG14 3NB		
Date	13 March 2025	URN	117455
Type of school	Voluntary Aided	No. of pupils	74
Diocese	St Albans		
Headteacher	James Shillito		
Chair of Governors	Jan Liversage		
Inspector	Pamela Gough		