

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

The Abbey Church of England Primary School

Vision

We learn, we care, we achieve together for ourselves, for each other and for the wider community in which we live within a Christian environment.

Live fully, care deeply, grow together.

‘I have come that all may have life and have it to the full.’ John 10:10

The Abbey 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

- Driven by the vision of 'life in all its fullness', leaders are ambitious for the school. They place pupils at the heart of decisions and policies.
- A culture of dignity and care, rooted in love, friendship and forgiveness, creates a joyful community through the 'Abbey Promise'. It supports pupils and staff by building mutual respect and a strong sense of belonging which results in positive behaviour.
- Strong leadership in Religious Education (RE) has established a broad and challenging curriculum. This enables pupils to develop a firm understanding of a range of religions.
- The school benefits from strong community links with the Cathedral, parents and local groups. These partnerships, shaped by friendship, service and justice, inspire pupils to serve others and bring about positive change.
- The school's nurturing and inclusive culture means pupils and staff feel valued and supported. Wellbeing systems are embedded, helping the school community to flourish.

Development Points

- Strengthen the school vision so that it shapes and directs all aspects of school life. Ensure that its impact is evaluated by all leaders including governors. This is so that it consistently guides decisions and practice to enable the school to continue to improve as a Church school.
- Enhance the shared understanding of spirituality. This is to ensure a consistent approach to how it is experienced across the school.
- Further develop the planning and evaluation of collective worship so it reflects the school vision. This is so that it deepens and strengthens the spiritual flourishing of pupils and adults.



Inspection Findings

Vision and Leadership

Leaders at the Abbey Primary School are ambitious and determined, giving the school a clear sense of purpose and direction. This has led to higher expectations and renewed consistency across the school. The vision is understood in school through a set of values including thankfulness, love, wisdom, trust and justice. Leaders model these values daily and create a culture where staff and pupils flourish. They influence the staff's work and particularly the way they support pupils' confidence and wellbeing. Governors understand these developments and speak with knowledge about how the school has improved. The vision informs key policies, including behaviour and wellbeing, ensuring that decisions reflect the school's Christian values. As a result, pupils learn, behave and care for each other within a community shaped by trust and love. However, the vision does not shape every aspect of the school's work, and its impact is not consistently evaluated by leaders, including governors.

Vision and School Culture

The school promotes dignity and wellbeing through its culture and relationships. Leaders and staff describe the school as a family, and this is reflected in the care they offer. They work together to support pupils and colleagues, creating a united and caring team. They are highly committed and show deep compassion both for pupils and one another. As a result, pupils feel safe, cared for and respected. Behaviour is exceptional. It is shaped by the 'Abbey promise', a set of behaviours linked to the school's values and created by pupils. One pupil said the values give a 'genre to be,' helping them focus on the person they want to become. Staff wellbeing is a clear priority for leaders. They listen carefully, respond quickly and value the commitment of their teams. Recent adjustments to marking and workload have reduced pressure and created time for professional collaboration. Nurture groups and carefully planned strategies, help pupils manage their emotions and build confidence. The mental health support team works with pupils and families to promote wellbeing and resilience. Parents value the way the school supports their children's personal growth through its caring approach. The impact is a joyful, calm and welcoming school that radiates care and kindness. Pupils and staff flourish together in a culture shaped by love and friendship. As a result, the school is a happy and caring place to learn and work.

Vision, Justice and Responsibility

Through the curriculum, staff encourage pupils to challenge unfairness with confidence and respect. Justice and responsibility are lived out daily. Pupils understand fairness and act for others with compassion. There is a strong sense of trust between pupils and adults, visible throughout the school day. Pupils take on meaningful roles that give them genuine opportunities to lead and make a difference. In initiatives such as the green and faith councils, pupils put the school's values of trust and justice into action. They lead environmental and community projects that promote fairness and care for creation, reflecting the school's commitment to caring deeply for one another and the world around them. Pupils' actions demonstrate their understanding of what it means 'to live fully and grow together' as members of a wider community. Pupil-led projects such as the RSPB birdwatch, wildlife survey, and the plastics campaign show advocacy in action. Through the campaign to reduce single-use plastics, pupils took their views to Parliament and saw that their voices could influence change. Their work for the Bishop's harvest appeal and the local foodbank show care and compassion. As a result, they recognise their ability to make a difference in the lives of others, both locally and nationally.

Vision and Curriculum

The school provides a broad and ambitious curriculum shaped by Christian values. Staff make adaptations to help remove barriers to learning. This ensures that pupils, including those deemed to be vulnerable, learn confidently and achieve well. 'Big questions' encourage curiosity, reflection and early expressions of spirituality. These prompt pupils to discuss moral and spiritual ideas thoughtfully and connect these to their values. The school's exceptional grounds create a unique outdoor space that enriches learning and nurtures awe and



curiosity. Pupils are given significant trust to explore and care for these spaces, which they respect and value. A variety of trips, clubs and creative projects broaden horizons and raise aspiration. Pupils show confidence in their learning, which they apply in wider experiences beyond school. The curriculum reflects the school's values of wisdom, trust and justice and nurtures pupils' academic, moral and spiritual growth. However, there is not a consistent shared understanding of spirituality across the school.

Worship and Spirituality

Collective worship is a valued part of daily life and is welcoming to pupils, staff and visitors. Worship in school provides time for prayer, reflection and thanksgiving. Themes link to the school's values and current topical events which enables pupils to think about how they can live their values in daily life. Pupils are encouraged to think about faith, kindness and personal choices. They have the opportunity to be more included through shared leadership and involvement in faith council. Weekly worship in St Albans Cathedral enhances the experience and strengthens links with the wider church community. Clergy contribute regularly, helping pupils and staff see how Christian teaching shapes worship and life in the school. Stillness and reflection are important features, allowing pupils moments of quiet and gratitude. However, opportunities for deeper spiritual reflection are limited. Planning and evaluation are not clearly linked to the school's vision and worship does not fully enable the spiritual flourishing of pupils and adults.

Religious Education

RE has a clear and valued place at the school. The curriculum is broad and encourages pupils to be curious and explore ideas. It encourages them to think about faith and belief with curiosity and respect. Leaders have reviewed and improved the programme so that learning builds carefully over time. Pupils study Christianity in depth and learn about a range of world religions through comparison and reflection. Big questions promote philosophical thinking and prompt pupils to share ideas and explore the thoughts and beliefs of others. Effective training from both the diocese and the Cathedral support the RE lead. In turn this is cascaded to other staff which strengthens their subject knowledge and confidence. The subject promotes respect and diversity and reflects the school's Christian values. As a result, pupils think deeply about faith, express ideas with confidence and show respect for different beliefs.

Teaching in RE enables pupils to learn effectively through well-planned lessons that help them speak confidently and make connections between religion and life. Lessons are adapted for every pupil. Teachers use discussion, art, drama and writing to explore belief and meaning. Pupils who need additional help learn alongside others through clear and sensitive support. Assessment is straightforward and reviewed each term. Staff use the information to plan next steps and adapt lessons effectively. Pupils discuss their learning confidently, reflecting curiosity about different religions. Clear leadership and collaboration has strengthened the consistency of teaching and increased staff confidence in delivering RE. Pupils make steady progress and show understanding and respect for difference. Governors are well informed about RE and recognise its positive influence on pupils' learning and personal development.

Information

Address	1 Grove Rd, St Albans AL1 1DQ		
Date	01 October 2025	URN	117449
Type of school	Voluntary aided	No. of pupils	190
Diocese	St Albans		
Headteacher	Linda O'Melia		
Chair of Governors	Simon Oaten		
Inspector	Anthony David		