



Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Hartford Church of England High School

Address Neot Road, Hartford, Northwich, CW8 1GY

How effective is the school’s distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish

Overall grade

Good

The impact of collective worship

Requires Improvement

The effectiveness of religious education (RE)

Good

School’s vision

We are a caring and disciplined Church of England school pursuing academic excellence and moral integrity.
Our school is built on ‘**Caritas**’ and ‘**Veritas**’ – God’s love and truth.
Our students know caritas: empathy, kindness and serving others, “...*abounding in love and faithfulness.*” (Exodus 34:6).
They grow in veritas: humility, knowledge and faithfulness, “...*full of grace and truth.*” (John 1:14).

Key findings

- As a result of passionate Christian leadership, the whole school community is committed to a deeply rooted vision. This particularly drives curriculum development and pastoral care of pupils and staff. It is less clear how the vision explicitly drives school improvement.
- Through the character development work within the school pupils are flourishing as they live well together. Pupils are becoming advocates to affect positive change and are beginning to initiate action.
- Whilst there are some opportunities for spiritual development within the curriculum, the lack of a shared definition and understanding limits the impact.
- Pupils’ views on collective worship vary. There are limited opportunities for pupils to regularly engage, contribute and be inspired by their experiences.
- Pupils enjoy learning in religious education (RE) and benefit from good teaching within a balanced curriculum largely in line with the ‘Statement of Entitlement,’ the expectations for RE in Church of England schools.

Areas for development

- Develop explicit monitoring of the vision, collective worship and spiritual development in order to drive improvement as a Church school.
- Improve the provision for collective worship so that all pupils benefit from engaging and varied worship that provides further opportunities for more pupils to lead aspects of worship.
- Cultivate a shared definition and understanding of what spiritual development is at Hartford to inform wider curriculum and collective worship provision.

How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?

Inspection findings

The school's vision, Caritas and Veritas - God's love and truth, is at the heart of the ethos at Hartford. Alongside other leaders, the headteacher drives the vision within the school. As one parent commented, 'the headteacher lives out the vision with integrity'. Leaders are passionate about their role in living out the vision which is particularly evident through the exceptional pastoral care towards pupils and staff. This is a hallmark of Hartford. Staff are proud to work at the school and highly value the care they receive now and throughout the pandemic. Although the school's distinctive Christian character is abundantly apparent, the impact of the vision is not explicitly monitored. Subsequently, it is less clear how the vision drives longer term strategic development as a Church school.

Partnerships with local churches, particularly St John's Church, and with the Diocese are strong. The missional work of school leaders means that many serve on Church school governing bodies. Others, including the headteacher, serve more widely within the Diocese as they seek to better church school education locally. This has enabled greater collaboration with other Church schools for the benefit of the pupils at Hartford.

Curriculum and character development work is cleverly underpinned by the two pillars of Caritas and Veritas. Pupils are prepared for life beyond Hartford as they grow in 'truth' through their academic studies and 'love' as they develop as individuals. Within lessons pupils value the support given by teachers, particularly pupils with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) who are well supported by individualised approaches taken. Furthermore, the care that pupils have experienced, especially throughout the pandemic, has meant that they and their families feel valued. Members of staff made pastoral phone calls during lockdowns, which families greatly appreciated. This is an example of the vision being actively lived out.

Pupils are growing as agents of change, as a result of the vision of 'love'. The large completion rates of the Caritas and Veritas Awards are a vehicle by which pupils develop advocacy. The student council opportunities mean that pupils are listened to and their ideas are actioned. Additionally, form groups routinely lead whole-school charity initiatives such as bake sales, which raises money to support work in Uganda coordinated by local churches. As a result, pupils are beginning to initiate change. For example, the environmental awareness project and the work of the feminism group in promoting inclusion and equality.

Pupils and parents value the wide variety of extra-curricular opportunities on offer and point to these as vehicles for pupils to develop in their character. Opportunities such as leading assemblies and completion of the Duke of Edinburgh Award have helped pupils to overcome barriers and build confidence. However, the spiritual development of pupils is less clear as it is not yet explicitly planned and monitored. It is distinct from social, moral and cultural development and pupils and staff grow spiritually, but a lack of a shared definition of spirituality limits this.

Driven by the vision, the pastoral care of pupils is at the centre of the school's approach to behaviour management. The restorative approach taken when pupils get it wrong means that forgiveness and reconciliation are at the heart of this work. This means that pupils and staff live well together and flourish as a result. Within lessons pupils learn to disagree well as a result of the discussion work, particularly in RE and in the Pastoral Empathy Tutor Sessions (PETS). Although rare, when conflicts arise pupils and parents are confident that they will be dealt with by a highly proactive pastoral team.

The care the school shows extends to the mental health support available. In expressing God's love and care, the school employs a counsellor and the chaplain leads a bereavement support group. Staff speak highly of the care that is also available to them when they need it. Furthermore, the sense of community and support for one another is strong. Staff lean on each other, often citing that they feel uplifted as a result of coming to work and point to the vision as the reason.

The work of the school chaplain is exceptionally highly regarded within the school community. It is fundamental in supporting pupils pastorally and those who actively seek spiritual guidance. Opportunities for those exploring faith further, such as the Christian union (THL) and the weekly Friday chapel services, are welcomed. As a result, an increasing number choose to attend and find them a source of comfort and hope. Pupils involved enjoy the opportunity to lead these and the school worship ambassadors are instrumental in their construction.

However, wider collective worship is not regularly monitored by leaders and the impact across the rest of the school is highly variable. Subsequently, pupils do not routinely find worship inspiring and cannot articulate the difference it makes to their lives. Beyond the school worship ambassadors, pupil leadership of wider collective worship is limited despite a desire of more pupils to become involved. As a result, there are fewer opportunities for all pupils to access inspiring, invitational and inclusive worship.

Largely meeting the Church of England expectations for RE, the curriculum is effective and is valued by pupils. The specialist teachers have strong subject knowledge and a passion for RE which means that pupils thrive in their lessons. As a result, pupils are deepening their world views and religious literacy. They value the 'safe space' that RE lessons provide. Pupils enjoy the opportunity to ask questions about faith and the role of religion in society. The discussion work within RE lessons enables pupils to explore ethical issues, such as crime and punishment. The coverage of a range of world religions including Christianity means that pupils are broadening their depth of understanding of living in a multi-faith world.

Through Caritas and Veritas, God's love and truth, it is evident that pupils and adults flourish. As a result, Hartford thrives as an oversubscribed Church school.



The effectiveness of RE is

Good

RE is well led and managed by an enthusiastic assistant principal and recent curriculum revisions are having a positive impact on learning. Routine monitoring by leaders, including governors, judges teaching as consistently good or better, which was verified at inspection. As a result, pupils enjoy their learning and value the lessons. Work produced is of a good standard and pupils achieve well including vulnerable pupils and those with additional needs.

Contextual information about the school

| | | | |
|------------------------------|--|-----|--------|
| Date of inspection | 16 and 17 June 2022 | URN | 138148 |
| Date of previous inspection | 15 and 16 October 2015 | | |
| School status | Voluntary Aided Secondary School | NOR | 1060 |
| Name of MAT/Federation | | | |
| Diocese / Methodist District | Chester | | |
| Headteacher | Michael Holland | | |
| Pupil profile | The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is below national averages. | | |
| | The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with national averages. | | |
| Inspector's name | Sadie Batstone | No. | C2001 |