Statutory Inspection of Anglican & Methodist Schools

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Willaston Church of England Primary School

Vision

We are committed to quality teaching and learning in a positive and compassionate Christian environment, where everyone is valued as an individual.

We expect everyone to, 'Treat others as you want them to treat you.' (*Matthew 7:12*).

We have high expectations of all, and strive to provide a safe, challenging and stimulating environment where everyone can flourish spiritually.

Willaston 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.

Strengths

- Leaders and staff, guided by their shared Christian vision, ensure kindness and ambition are the hallmarks of the school. Their Christian values shape behaviour, learning, and relationships so that pupils and adults can flourish.
- The school cares deeply for its pupils as unique and valued individuals. Leaders and staff create an ethos of Christian love that surrounds and supports the school community. This nurturing environment enables both pupils and adults to thrive.
- The creative, stimulating curriculum reflects the school's vision. Leaders act with clear intent to ensure pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disability (SEND), access exciting opportunities to flourish.
- Collective worship plays a key role in living out the school's vision. Pupils enjoy taking active roles in worship and also value time set aside for stillness and personal reflection. These experiences support and deepen their spiritual development.
- The skilfully led religious education (RE) curriculum is well-balanced and engaging, offering pupils varied, meaningful, and thought-provoking learning experiences. There are many opportunities provided to share opinions respectfully and explore how faith influences their own lives and the lives of others.

Development Points

- To extend curriculum opportunities that help pupils feel connected to something greater than themselves and inspire awe. This is to enhance spiritual flourishing.
- Support pupils in developing a deeper understanding of global Christianity. This is so that pupils reflect on challenges people face living out their faith.

Inspection Findings

Willaston is an inspirational school environment where pupils and adults flourish. Guided by the Christian vision, leaders have created an environment of safety, challenge, creativity, and mutual respect. Leaders are ambitious for pupils to flourish academically and spiritually, rooted in their deeply held Christian vision. They invest in high-quality staff development so that adults can confidently live out the school's Christian foundation. Displays are curated to showcase learning and inspire excellence. A striking copper beech sculpture in the foyer mirrors a cherished local tree, symbolising nature, creativity, and community. This artwork, alongside pupil projects on the local area, fosters a strong sense of belonging beyond the school gates. Governors are well known in school and act as vital links to the church and wider community. Their deep understanding and commitment to the vision ensures leaders receive both support and challenge. Effective monitoring and evaluation shape actions that help the school community to thrive.

The school's Christian vision inspires an inclusive, ambitious curriculum that fully uses its grounds and local area. Learning extends beyond the classroom, offering pupils rich opportunities to explore and connect with nature. Leaders are committed to high expectations and to ensuring pupils are treated with dignity and respect. Specialist art lessons support pupils, including those with additional needs, to express themselves creatively and grow in confidence. Every class benefits from outdoor learning experiences that support holistic development and foster a connection with the natural world. Sport is valued, with inclusive opportunities enabling pupils to develop skills and build self-belief. Identifying and fully harnessing the awe and wonder embedded within this rich curriculum, to deepen pupils' spiritual reflection remains a developing area. Thoughtfully designed provision for pupils with SEND reflects the vision, enabling individuals to flourish. Targeted sessions such as horse-riding therapy provide additional support with measurable impact on wellbeing and confidence. Inspired by the Christian vision, pupils flourish through inclusive, creative and ambitious learning that nurtures dignity, confidence, and personal growth.

Collective worship is a valued, inspirational part of school life. It unites the community in inclusive celebration of life with God. Creation artwork and the Christian 'Big Frieze' are central features in the hall, creating a welcoming yet spiritual atmosphere. These focal points help pupils and adults reflect on Christian values and shared purpose. Worship is well-structured, with leaders and governors planning a thoughtful programme. Each half term focuses on a Christian value linked to Bible passages, encouraging pupils to follow the positive examples in their daily lives. Values such as compassion, creation, respect, perseverance, and service deepen pupils' spiritual awareness. Class literature and biblical stories are used to connect Christian teaching with pupils' lives. Visitors, including Open the Book and local church members, enrich worship with varied perspectives. These experiences help pupils see faith as vibrant, lived, and expressed in different ways. Worship warriors help shape worship through prayer and song choices, developing confidence and responsibility. Classroom and hall reflection areas including 'peg a prayer' offer space for stillness and invite creative, pupil-led responses. Prayer and reflection are woven into daily routines through both planned and spontaneous opportunities. These practices also encourage adults in school to pause, reflect, and engage spiritually, fostering a shared culture of spiritual flourishing.

Pupils at Willaston develop a growing understanding of injustice and respond through meaningful action. Curriculum projects raise awareness of inequality and encourage thoughtful response. Leaders have invested in diverse reading resources that challenge stereotypes and celebrate difference across cultures and beliefs. Through its inclusive approach, the school helps pupils understand the harm of prejudice and become respectful advocates

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for justice. Structured debate enables engagement with global issues such as climate change and inequality. This awareness inspires action. Pupils choose to litter pick in their own time and take part in local tree planting projects. Roles like eco warriors, safety officers and ambassadors deepen their sense of responsibility to the environment and for each other. The active school council gives pupils a voice and enables them to address issues they see as unjust. One example is how football arrangements were changed following concerns about fairness and inclusion. Pupils respond positively to charity initiatives, especially when linked to justice and human need. Projects often reflect causes close to pupils' hearts, promoting empathy, generosity, and action. Worship themed around an international Christian charity prompted thoughtful reflection on global inequality. One pupil later recalled, "That's not right – we need to help." This demonstrates how such opportunities inspire compassion and a desire to act.

RE plays a vital role in academic and spiritual development. It is taught as a rigorous, ambitious subject that nurtures deep thinking and curiosity. Strong subject leadership ensures the curriculum is carefully sequenced to build understanding. Foundational Christian concepts are revisited to deepen knowledge over time. Pupils explore sacred texts, reflect on beliefs, and discuss challenging questions of meaning and purpose with impressive maturity. They feel safe to share opinions and reflect on how beliefs influence lives, including their own. High-quality resources ensure Christianity is studied in depth alongside principal worldviews. Visitors from Christian, Muslim and Jewish communities enrich learning and challenge stereotypes. Recent curriculum updates aim to broaden understanding of global Christianity. However, this is at the development stage. Pupils are enthusiastic about RE, enjoying the creative approaches including drama, art and discussion. RE at Willaston equips pupils with insight, empathy and confidence to explore faith in today's diverse world.

Kindness is the heartbeat of Willaston and is lived daily in words, actions and relationships. Pupils and adults treat each other with compassion, creating a community where individuals feel safe, seen, and valued. Pupils are happy and confident, knowing their voices are heard. Carefully selected, high-quality literature, helps pupils reflect on inclusion and positive human connections. Pupils understand that difference is a strength, and every individual should be included and celebrated. Inclusive play is modelled across age groups using well-planned outdoor zones to promote interaction and wellbeing. A bird hide, outdoor library, quiet spaces, and physical play areas foster friendships and support emotional development. Pupils are equipped to resolve minor conflicts, referring to their own strategies such as 'hug it out' or 'sleep on it'. Staff know pupils well and are highly vigilant to changes in behaviour. Trained staff offer timely wellbeing support, ensuring pupils feel cared for. Staff show real pride in belonging to the Willaston team. Parents are welcomed as valued members of the school community and appreciate the open-door approach. Together, these relationships ensure the Christian vision is lived out daily through a culture of kindness, compassion, and mutual respect.

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National Society for Education
Church of England & Church in Wales

Methodist Schools

Information

Address	Willaston C of E Primary School, Neston Rd, Willaston, Neston CH64 2TN		
Date	4 July 2025	URN	111245
Type of school	Voluntary Controlled	No. of pupils	213
Diocese	Chester		
Headteacher	Gary Graham		
Chair of Governors	Richard Hinds		
Inspector	Lynne Williamson		

