

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Altwood Church of England School

Vision

To identify and develop the full potential of every member of our community and give them the skills and qualifications they need to achieve their ambitions.

John 10:10 'I have come that you may have life and have it to the full'

At Altwood School – I am known, I am valued, I will succeed.

Faith; Hope; Joy; Truth; Forgiveness.

In our school everyone is welcome, everyone is valued, and everyone can flourish. Each person grows in our school community and in turn is nurtured by that same community.

Altwood Church of England 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

- Altwood's Christian vision is absolutely central to its life and work. As a result, students and adults flourish in this deeply compassionate community.
- Students and staff know that they are valued as unique individuals. This means that they develop in confidence to become the best version of themselves.
- Collective worship reinforces and applies the school's vision and values. As a result, students grow in spiritual maturity and understanding during their time at the school.
- Leaders and staff pay particular care and attention to the needs of the students deemed to be the most vulnerable. Consequently, students rightly see the school as a place of nurture.
- Students' clear understanding of the vision means that they have a well-developed sense of justice and compassion. This informs their actions and helps them develop into articulate agents for change.

Development Points

- Deepen the contribution that subjects across the curriculum make to students' spiritual development. This is to further strengthen the impact of the vision by making students more reflective.
- Redesign the core provision for religious education (RE) in the Sixth Form. This is to enable students to better build on the strong foundations laid in the subject in Key Stages 3 and 4.



Inspection Findings

Vision and Leadership

Altwood's Christian vision is carefully crafted and effectively addresses the school's context. The vision, particularly the mantra 'I am known, I am valued, I will succeed', meets the needs of students. It is routinely applied in policies and practices and is displayed throughout the school. The result is a deeply compassionate culture in which students and adults understand the vision and know that they matter. In this environment students flourish spiritually, socially and academically. The vision is supported by Christian values that are actively celebrated and promote the character formation of students. The Agape Multi Academy Trust (MAT) supports the outworking of the vision by providing resources for key elements of the school's work. Collaboration within the MAT promotes teachers' professional development and results in richer learning for students.

Vision and Curriculum

Leaders have put in place a curriculum and extra-curricular offer that enable students to enjoy life to the full. The taught curriculum is broad, challenging and tailored to the needs of individual students where possible. In particular students who face barriers to learning benefit from bespoke programmes of study and support. These enable them to thrive by combining work in lessons with targeted support provided by expert practitioners in an alternative environment. There is a wide programme of extra-curricular clubs and societies. These are often prompted by students' own interests and supported by adults and Sixth Form students. Leaders and governors take great care to ensure that disadvantaged students have equal access to extra-curricular opportunities. Subject leaders have identified opportunities for spiritual development within their subject areas and there are good examples of this having a valuable impact on student's experience. For example, the art department teaches kintsugi, the Japanese craft where broken pottery is restored and made beautiful. This is a powerful metaphor for the school's vision and is recognised and valued as such by students. However, spiritual development is not consistently and systematically included in the taught curriculum.

Worship and Spirituality

Collective worship strongly supports the outworking of the school's vision and values and contributes significantly to students and adults' spiritual development. Weekly house gatherings follow a pattern that draws on key Christian themes including significant festivals. These are supplemented by smaller form gatherings where the same theme is explored through sensitively led discussion. Students and adults see acts of worship as important and value the opportunity they give for respectful silent prayer and reflection. Students' attitudes to worship are mature. They enjoy hearing the views of others and feel comfortable in sharing their own insights, some of which are highly perceptive. The partnership with the local clergy contributes powerfully to the spiritual life of the school community. The weekly 'chapel and chat' offers a valued opportunity for students of a variety of faiths and worldviews to learn from each other through discussion and fellowship. Students' spiritual development is also promoted through their deep involvement in the Remembrance and carol services at the local church. Local clergy regularly lead weekly worship. The pastoral support they provide for students and adults is an important and valued feature of the spiritual life of the school.

Vision and School Culture

The vision emphasises the unique value of each member of the school community, creating a culture where students respect themselves and others. This makes Altwood a calm and purposeful learning environment in which people treat each other well. Breaks and lunchtimes are characterised by good-humoured relaxation and conversation. The organisation of the school into three houses, who share a fiercely competitive but friendly rivalry, contributes importantly to the vibrant school culture. Weekly inter-house challenges involve adults and students competing in a celebratory atmosphere. This helps generate a deep cohesion across the school. Staff are well trained to recognise and understand those triggers that can cause young people to find school difficult on occasions. They respond with sensitivity to defuse potentially difficult situations, so that students' dignity is promoted. Leaders, with the support of the MAT, invest wisely and generously in the welfare of adults and



students. The pastoral and mental health support, both formal and informal, is comprehensive and promotes the wellbeing of adults and students. Vulnerable students benefit particularly from the rich support they receive in the 'ready to learn' room.

Vision, Justice and Responsibility

Students show a passion for justice, valuing both the personal accountability and opportunities for restoration embodied in the behaviour code. They know that to be valued imposes a responsibility to value others and to be committed to their wellbeing. The confidence that the vision and culture impart to students helps them develop into articulate leaders. Within school, the Altwood Parliament is a persuasive voice for student-led change, such as to the school uniform. Student leaders are articulate in their view that they have a responsibility for fairness beyond the school. They are particularly committed to supporting those whose lives are more challenging than their own. They have a close connection with a particular children's charity in Guatemala and raise funds through an annual sleep out. Students who have taken part in this sleep out value the insight that it gives them into the struggles that children elsewhere have to face. This exemplifies the deep empathy and concern for justice that the lived vision engenders among the school community.

Religious Education

Teachers of RE are well qualified and enthusiastic specialists. They have access to professional development and peer support from within the MAT. The curriculum at Key Stages 3 and 4 is well balanced and covers a variety of world faiths and non-religious world views with an appropriate emphasis on Christianity. It is clear that the syllabus is challenging and deeply engaging. The importance of RE is shown by the fact that all students take a GCSE in religious studies. Their strong exam performance confirms that the curriculum is effective and well taught. The time allocated to core RE at Key Stage 5 is generous and students are able to continue their interest in the subject. However, the choice of modules covered and the organisation of the teaching programme mean that learning is less effective than in the younger years.

Information

Address	Altwood Road, Maidenhead, SL6 4PU		
Date	6 October 2025	URN	138342
Type of school	Academy	No. of pupils	850
Diocese	Oxford		
MAT	Agape Multi Academy Trust		
MAT Chair	Richard Thiele		
Headteacher	Cath Harden		
Chair of Governors	Janice McLucas and Louise Griffin (co-chairs)		
Inspector	Andrew Wilcock		