

# Walkwood Church of England Middle School



National recognition as a school committed to improving



The Principal and pupils: the school has a comfortable atmosphere

**W**alkwood Church of England Middle School is one of just 132 middle schools across the country. Two years ago, it was under threat of closure due to a couple of local schools looking to change their age range. Now, it is oversubscribed. It is open to everyone regardless of ability or faith. In 2016, Government Initiatives named it as one of the 100 most improved schools in the country.

The number of parents likely to recommend the school has increased from 68% to a 100% from last year's intake. This year it was graded Outstanding at the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools – the first time it has achieved this status in any inspection.

## Welcome to Walkwood!

Walkwood had a distinctive feel from the moment I came through the front door. It has an essence of purpose and friendliness. Since I took up the post in January 2015, we defined our purpose simply. We want pupils to 'love to learn, learn to live and live to love.' As I am both a teacher and an Anglican priest, such phrasing was instinctive.

*Love to learn:* We tailor the curriculum to suit the needs of pupils so they have a passion for learning itself.

*Learn to live:* We want them to use skills within that process, and build these into lessons by using 'Learning Superheroes'. This works well with the age of our pupils.

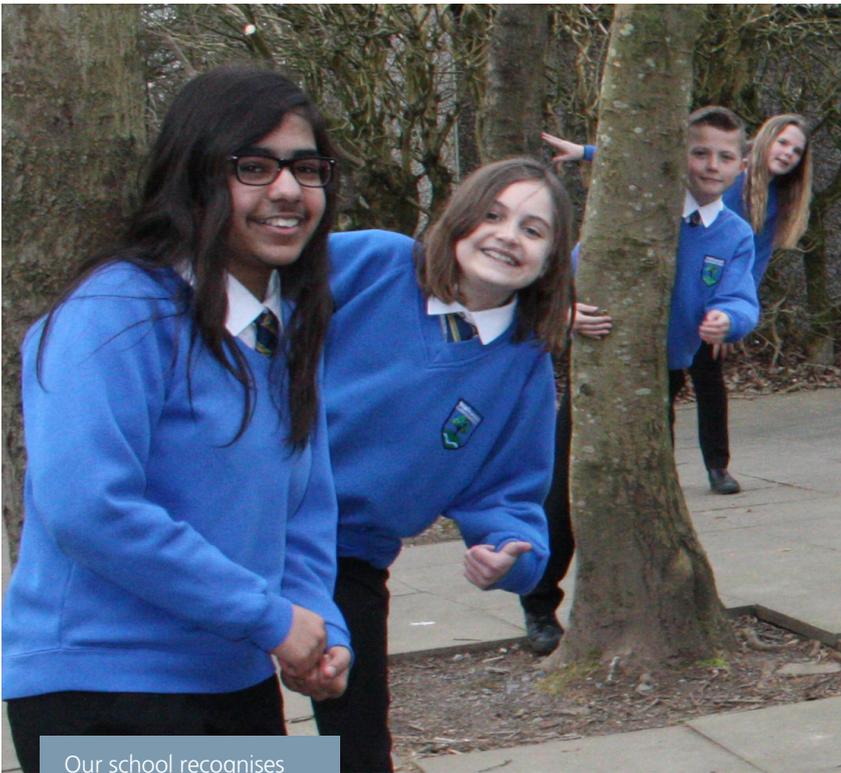
*Live to love:* As a church school, we want pupils to develop values that demonstrate God's love to, and for, the world. To do this, we used the ten pearls on the school badge for our Fruits of Faith, which are linked to individual Bible passages.

## REPORT CARD

- » Principal: The Reverend Clive Leach
- » Location: Redditch, Worcestershire
- » Age range: Year 5 – Year 8 (ages 9-13)
- » Number of roll: 680
- » Number of teachers: 47
- » Percentage of SEND pupils: 17%
- » Percentage of disadvantaged pupils: 18%
- » Ofsted rating: Good
- » Church of England inspection rating: Outstanding

Our ten values are shared by those of all faiths and of none





Our school recognises the importance of the development of good character

### Church School distinctiveness

We celebrate diversity, knowing that all people are made in God's image. As a priest, I see our school in the same terms as a Church of England parish, which holds the 'cure of souls' for all who live in the area. For many of our pupils, we are their only connection with anything 'church'. We believe that there is a spiritual dimension to living, and offer pupils the opportunity to consider this too. It's a position which is hugely respected by those of other faiths who attend our school, and those who have no faith commitment, as the values are shared.

### Middle school distinctiveness

The middle school format also gives children the opportunity for an extra two years of specialist teaching. The curriculum is balanced between the subject-centred and pupil-centred needs of the young adolescent, promoting self-esteem and self-knowledge and developing a foundation for life-long learning. Walkwood has around 25 children in each teaching group.

Tutor groups include pupils from all years, creating an expectation that the older children will look out for and share their experience with the younger children. Our children really like the mixed tutor group and it fits our inclusive ethos. However, the most important thing for me is that in these middle years, children can still be children – we enable a gentle transfer to high school.

### Educational progress

Children make excellent progress through the school, and even though the results in Year 6 tests are not amazing, by the end of Year 8 (age 13), three quarters of our children are achieving above the national expectations for their age.

We know that some of our pupils find learning a challenging process, and others may struggle with certain topics or subjects at particular times of their schooling.

“Walkwood has created a wide range of areas in which children can develop their skills such as the pupil leadership team and school parliament. This strength comes from the school's commitment to emulate the way in which Our Lord put faith in his disciples to take risks and go out and demonstrate their leadership”

Church School Inspection 2017



The family-feel of the school is recognised as a strength

With such pupils there is tailored support to get them back on track. The same notions apply for pupils' pastoral needs, as would be expected in a school that aims to be a loving community.

Walkwood is working particularly hard to 'diminish the difference', ensuring the more disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils are able to achieve similar outcomes to others. This has resulted in the school's last Ofsted inspection noting that: 'All groups of students, including the disabled, those who have special educational needs, disadvantaged students and the most able, make good progress and achieve well'.

I have been working with two of our local First Schools so that Key Stage 2 is tackled as a joint project. The transition from First to Middle school is already a smooth one but the education secretary's decision to abolish the use of national curriculum levels has provided professional challenges. Working in collaboration is a must.

## Facing the future

We have not engaged in exceptional projects to deliver results, but rather have sought to do the commonplace things exceptionally well.

The school is further looking to develop its distinctiveness, particularly focussing on how prayer could be best shared with children. I am also looking at how we might share our experiences with other schools, particularly helping church schools to have a clear vision as set out by the Church of England's vision document 'Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good'.

Walkwood Church of England Middle School does not work magic, but it blends different aspects of education, inspiring progress and passion for learning in an inclusive environment. We will not be perfect but shall never be complacent, for we aim to be wholly outstanding.

“The school's inclusive Christian ethos ensures that children have an outstanding understanding of and respect for difference and diversity”

Church School  
Inspection 2017