



Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Longstone CE VA Primary School	The Cross Great Longstone Bakewell Derbyshire DE45 1TZ
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese/Methodist District	Derby
Previous SIAMS inspection grade:	Good
Local authority	Derbyshire
Date/s of inspection	29 September 2016
Date of last inspection	29 November 2011
School's unique reference number	112887
Headteacher	Gemma Harvey
Inspector's name and number	John Clapham (775)

School context

Longstone is a smaller than average primary school serving the Peak District village of Great Longstone and surrounding villages and hamlets. It has 123 pupils in five mixed age classes. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds and speak English as their first language. The proportions of pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium (those eligible for free school meals or who are in local authority care) are below the national average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are broadly average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Longstone as a Church of England school are good

- Longstone school is a highly inclusive, caring environment where every child is nurtured to fulfil their potential as a child of God.
- Children's broad learning experiences across the curriculum and in RE contribute very effectively to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school is well led at all levels. School leaders and governors share a clear picture, through astute monitoring, of where the school is as a church school, leading to a rapid rate of progress.
- The school enjoys strong partnerships with the parish church, with a high level of support and collaboration that clearly benefits the whole community.

Areas to improve

- Ensure that the Christian values of the school are communicated explicitly through a review of the school website, policies and documents.
- Develop and embed a wider range of opportunities for children to be actively involved and included in planning, leading and evaluating aspects of collective worship on a regular basis.
- Build on the strong enquiry led focus of questioning to strengthen children's learning skills of evaluation and reflection in RE.

The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is good at meeting the needs of all learners

Longstone is a welcoming inclusive church school which demonstrates God's love to the community through strong relationships based on genuine care for children and families. The head teacher, staff and governors have come to a renewed shared vision of the Christian values and ethos of the school, with a drive to embed the Christian values into the whole life of the school so that they "run through everything like Blackpool rock". The values of the school, however, are not yet fully and clearly articulated so as to be understood as distinctively Christian by the whole school community. The school's Christian character naturally results in a happy and caring learning environment where all groups of children have their needs met effectively and achieve well both academically and in terms of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Each child is given the support, challenge and opportunity to flourish and use and develop their God given talents. The school offers a wide range of enriching opportunities, including particular strengths in sport, music and drama. Children generally enter school with high aspirations, and these are nurtured and fulfilled as each child moves through the school. The emphasis that has been placed on service has impacted well on children who want to make a difference and serve others. The outward looking children have been proactive in their involvement in charity fund raising, and are proud of the difference that they have made, such as with a recent toilet twinning project in Uganda. In addition to the school councillors who make a tangible difference to the day to day running of the school, children are also represented on a parliament with other local schools, where they have developed shared ideas on British values. Children show genuine care and consideration for each other. During inspection, they were seen to look out for and look after each other, with a great deal of cooperation and interaction between children from across the school. The school council take their 'Buddy Stop' seriously, and are there to support other children at playtimes. Children overwhelmingly feel that the key strengths of the school are the friendliness and helpfulness of children, and the staff who "give us inspiration". Children know that any issues are dealt with quickly and fairly. As a result they are confident and feel valued. RE makes a significant contribution to the Christian character of the school. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. The school's open door policy is much appreciated by parents, who value the time and care that is expended in resolving any issues. One parent commented "We are pleased that our school is so inclusive, it really feels like a family." Parents report that children of all beliefs and backgrounds are respected, have their needs taken into considerations and are able to express themselves within this caring Christian environment.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship has a high profile in the life of Longstone school; children value collective worship, respond positively and participate willingly. This contributes to the ethos in which children thrive, succeed and are happy, and influences the thinking and day to day actions of the whole school community. As an example of this, signs visible from the playground remind children of the value for the week. Prayer is valued and part of daily rhythm of the school, with creative opportunities for prayer and reflection embedded into classroom practice and a clear expectation that prayer is central to collective worship. This was a focus of development from the previous inspection, and has been fully addressed. During inspection, children said that prayer made a big difference to them because "we can turn to God in our prayer areas, or anywhere, when we need peace". Children have a clear understanding of the meaning and relevance of The Lord's Prayer, as evidenced through the video produced by the whole school and made available on the school website. Children are developing an understanding of simple Anglican liturgy and practice. Children and parents value the partnership with the church community and monthly collective worship held in church is exceptionally well supported by parents and parishioners. A range of visitors from local churches and the Matlock Area Schools Trust input positively into collective worship. All teachers lead collective worship, and all staff participate daily wherever this is possible. A collective worship working wall in the hall is used effectively to develop ideas and build themes, which link well with the RE curriculum. The school is currently developing and embedding a range of strategies for the evaluation of collective worship, with each class taking turns weekly to record observations and thoughts. One child wrote "I love collective worship because we all come together like a family. I have learned that perseverance means that we should never give up". Collective worship is well planned around biblical material and Christian teaching and children are developing a good understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The collective worship observed was made relevant to the children's lives, with time given for reflection and a clear focus for personal application. Children enjoy contributing within collective worship when they have opportunity, but currently have limited responsibility in planning and leading worship.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

Religious education (RE) is carefully mapped out and planned on a three year cycle and links with the planning cycle for collective worship. RE is taught creatively through six RE weeks throughout the year, giving the subject a high profile within school. A range of resources are used to supplement the Derbyshire Agreed Syllabus, thus ensuring that Christianity in particular is given a strong emphasis. RE is clearly valued across school, with a focus area in each classroom. Teachers promote deep thinking through astute questioning and foster invaluable questioning skills in children throughout school. The strong enquiry led approach through questioning ensures learning is regularly child led and has clear application to the children's lives, although the enquiry skills of reflection and evaluation are less developed. Through the children's RE books, it is clear that children value RE and achieve well. They have ownership of their next steps in learning and take on board advice through marking and feedback to demonstrate progress in subsequent work. Rigorous assessment and tracking demonstrates strong attainment and progress in RE that is at least in line other core curriculum areas. This was a focus for development in the previous inspection, and is now a real strength. The expectations placed on children are high; tasks are well matched to children's needs and provide appropriate challenge, including for the more able. Children have a secure understanding of Christianity and other religions. They are developing a clear grasp of Christian belief through an understanding of the Bible narrative. As one child put it "the Bible is important for Christians because it is full of lessons that God and Jesus teach us and that helps us in our lives". Visits to local churches, as well as places of worship for other religions help children to ask and answer questions of religion and consolidate their understanding. The impact that this has on children's understanding was exemplified by a child's observation that "it is important for us to learn about religions so that we can respect and show love to each other." Work on fairness and equality across Key Stage Two, developed through curriculum work on refugees, poverty, homelessness and how to make the world a better place, has equipped children with a great empathy for others and a desire to make a difference both locally and globally. The RE curriculum meets statutory requirements, with the teaching of Christianity given prominence. The RE subject leader, with the support of foundation governors, is proactive in supporting and challenging staff to constantly improve their practice.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is outstanding

Longstone school is well led at every level, with staff and governors sharing a clear vision for the values and ethos of this church school. Under the strong leadership of the head teacher, school staff and governors are particularly effective in linking their vision to day-to-day actions and in helping staff to build effective partnerships with the parish and their local community. Whilst the Christian values and vision impact positively on the school, they are not yet communicated clearly through the school website and other documentation. Self-evaluation is astute and accurate, with well-planned actions in place to move the school forward. The RE and collective worship subject leader works exceptionally closely with the link foundation governor to monitor progress and standards in RE. This leads directly to effective strategies for improvement, and maintains a strong focus on meeting the needs of all learners. Recent examples of this include a learning walk on spiritual reflection, RE work and planning scrutiny and pupil interviews. RE is consequently given prominence within the Strategic, Standards and Curriculum Governor committee. Foundation governors are effective in ensuring that the Christian foundation of the school is kept high on the agenda for governors. The collaboration between governors and senior leaders in gaining a clear picture of the school's performance, and their strategic vision for the school is a significant strength. High levels of support from the vicar, foundation governors, the parish council and collective worship visitors from other church organisations greatly support the Christian character of the school. Governors are proactive in deepening their relationships with both parents and the parish church council (PCC). The school is now a regular item on the PCC agenda. The parish members show a real interest in the life of the school and support the school in many ways, including through prayer. Longstone school is integral to the community and makes a significant contribution to village life, including the well dressing, village fete, agricultural shows, fell race and annual walks. High quality professional development gives staff at all levels meaningful opportunities to reflect on their priorities for development and use their strengths collaboratively for the benefit of the whole school community. This includes recent opportunities for the head teacher to support leaders in another school, bringing benefit to both schools. All three areas for development from the previous inspection have been fully addressed. The school leaders ensure statutory requirements for RE and collective worship are fully met, and the school is well placed to continue to develop and flourish into the future.