

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Longford Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Main Street, Longford, Derbyshire, DE6 3DR

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Derby
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Derbyshire
Date/s of inspection	9 February 2017
Date of last inspection	12 January 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary 112835
Headteacher	Philip Searson
Inspector's name and number	John Horwood 177

School context

Longford Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School is a small, rural, village, primary school where pupils are currently taught in three mixed-age classes. The vast majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds and the proportion of disadvantaged pupils is below average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. There have been a few staff changes in recent years. The current headteacher has been in post since September 2011 and qualified as a local Leader of Education in January 2016. He currently teaches for part of the week. The church is situated 1.1km from the school.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Longford Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The Christian values that the school promote underpin every aspect of its work and provide a secure foundation for pupils' lives.
- An outstanding learning environment created by dedicated and caring leaders and staff to ensure the well-being and academic achievement of every pupil.
- Every aspect of the school involves pupils, staff, governors and parents being consulted and involved as much as possible which is reflected in the outstanding relationships and the mutual respect within the school.
- The strong partnership of the school with the local church community supports pupils' understanding of the Christian values of faith, hope and love whilst providing them with a range of opportunities for collective worship.
- The school's mission statement 'Time to Learn, Time to Care, Time for Fun' is fundamental to the school's success. Staff set good role models for pupils and ensure that they support the school's mission statement which in turn has led to their strong academic achievement and excellent personal development.

Areas to improve

- To further support pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through providing more links with other schools where pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds.
- To provide a wider range of visits and visitors to further develop pupils' knowledge of variations in the Christian church.
- To ensure continuity of provision by preparing for the forthcoming changes in the church leadership.

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

The Christian values of love and care are seen as an embedded part of provision right from the start of the day. Parents and pupils all arrive at the school gate to be welcomed by the headteacher or another member of staff. Even the few pupils who initially show reluctance to be separated from their parent are soon welcomed by their school friends and walk into school together. Pupils confidently talk about the Christian character and values in the school and how they have learnt to be respectful and support others if needed. Whilst a few pupils have had personal or behavioural difficulties in the past, they have received support to overcome them. One pupil proudly explained how following this support he is now able to help others. Pupils who had joined the school from other schools were able to describe how the Christian character of this school is evident in the caring and friendly environment which is promoted by all adults and supported by the pupils. Pupils and parents described how pupils provided care for other pupils, through their own initiative, in the recent accident involving their school coach. Parents recognise the outstanding Christian ethos within the school which, in their view, results from the Christian values being fundamental to the provision and not 'an add on'. As one parent stated, 'The school would not be the same without the church part'. The promotion of love and care is evident throughout the school and leads to excellent relationships and support. This also results in the good behaviour and regular attendance at school. The strong faith and determination of the headteacher are supported well by all the adults in school. Staff identify that being united, valued and consulted enables them to support the pupils through excellent relationships and understanding. They know that pupils respect adults who in turn respect them. The outstanding behaviour of pupils result in an excellent learning environment where every pupil is able to make good progress and be well-prepared for moving to the next stage of their education. Religious education (RE) is seen as important by staff and pupils. Pupils find lessons both exciting and challenging. RE lessons also provide excellent opportunities for pupils to explore beyond the national curriculum whilst developing their writing and discussion skills. The visits to the local church supplement the opportunities to handle 'special objects' and often lead to the sensation of 'awe and wonder'. Christian values provide strong support to pupils in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. School leaders are aware of the lack of diversity within the school and are overcoming this through partnerships with other schools both local and further afield. For example, pupils exchange letters with their pen pals in a Canadian school. Pupils are aware of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith. However, leaders acknowledge that more could be done to increase their awareness and are looking to develop a partnership with an international church.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

The high profile of collective worship ensures that it is central to school life. All pupils and staff, regardless of their faith, attend collective worship. Staff set very good role models for pupils and provide them with support and the promotion of Christian values both in class and during collective worship. The areas for improvement in collective worship, identified during the previous inspection, have all been addressed. The school website and newsletters now clearly identify the priority given to collective worship. The involvement of pupils and other stakeholders in collective worship is now embedded into school life. Every pupil has involvement in the daily collective worship and pupils enthusiastically participate as members of the worship team who play a key role in the planning and leading of collective worship. This gives them confidence and opportunities to support the development of their own spiritual journey. The close partnership the group has developed with the local rector gives them a greater understanding of the Christian faith. The improvement in worship has been supported well by the rector and the diocese. The pupils themselves asked for training on delivering worship and this was provided by the diocese. The planning of collective worship follows the structure of 'gathering', 'engaging', 'responding' and 'sending' which gives pupils an understanding and expectation of Christian traditions. Pupils are confident to discuss how they write their own prayers and join in with prayer during the day. They demonstrate a growing understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit and can describe the relevance of their Trinity candle in collective worship. Pupils are given excellent opportunities to reflect on concerns and problems around the world and to pray for them. This helps them grow in spiritual confidence. Through their high level of involvement in collective worship both in school and in the church pupils gain a good understanding of Anglican belief and practice. Most collective worships have a strong link to the Bible and many involve biblical stories. Through visits to other churches and visitors from the wider community, pupils' understanding of the variations of practice within the Christian church is increased. However, this is an area the school leaders are continuing to expand through more visits and a wider range of visitors. Pupils overwhelmingly confirm that they enjoy collective worship and can remember some past worships and the impact they had on them. They appreciate the opportunities that they have for prayer and this respect for prayer and reflection builds pupils' personal spirituality and nurtures their personal faith. The foundation governors take a strong role in monitoring the impact of collective worship. They frequently attend collective worship and the size of the school enables them to know the pupils well. Other members of the governing body are kept informed of the effectiveness of collective worship and attend occasional collective worship throughout the year, especially those celebrating Christian festivals. The importance of collective worship is reflected by the headteacher coordinating it. However, to support

pupils' spiritual journeys, he works with pupils to give them more responsibility and ownership of collective worship. This is leading to a more child-friendly content to the collective worship which then improves the impact on all the pupils. Parents see collective worship as an integral part of the school day and they welcome the involvement they have in church services. The whole school community talks excitedly about when they walk to church, usually across the fields wearing their 'wellies'. This not only provides a different type of event to make the occasion special but has an impact on the spiritual understanding of the pupils and the adults. School leaders ensure that the local Christian community is able to support the pupils' understanding of the importance of God and Jesus through collective worship. However, leaders are aware that pupils would benefit from an even wider range of experiences linked to other denominations and faiths.

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

The headteacher, staff and governors are excellent role models for pupils as they promote and live out their vision for the school which is rooted in Christian values. They are committed to promoting a love of learning and the very highest academic expectations as well as developing the individual character of pupils to have a confidence to live a happy and fulfilling life. They ensure that every pupil benefits from a rich education which promotes self-confidence and a healthy mind and body. The whole school community acknowledges that the impact of the school's Christian character is exemplified in both pupils' academic achievement and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Governors confirm that being a church school is fundamental to their vision and to school improvement. This is reflected in the school improvement plan which contains a priority item to improve the quality of provision as a church school through Christian distinctiveness, collective worship, RE and leadership and management. School records confirm that the progress of this is monitored regularly by the governing body. Staff and governors identify the strong links between collective worship themes and the RE themes. The headteacher consults all stakeholders during preparation of the self-evaluation documents. This ensures that everyone knows the school well, understands its future leadership needs and plans to meet them. This has led to diversifying the role of the headteacher to include using his expertise to support other schools whilst increasing opportunities for other staff by appointing a deputy headteacher to lead during his absence. The very strong partnership with church leaders is enabling plans to be made for the local Christian community to provide ongoing support for the Christian character of the school after the forthcoming retirement of the rector and the likely interregnum. Parents are seen as an integral part of the school and they are welcomed every morning when they bring their children to school. Their strong support for the school was confirmed by the Ofsted inspector at the recent inspection, as well as during this inspection. Parents know and trust both the school and church leaders. They strongly view the school as a place that provides excellent education for their children within a safe and caring environment. They are especially pleased with how staff have developed the values of love and care in their children so that they can provide mutual support. There are strong links to members of the diocese who ensure that the needs of a small school are met. They maintain close contact and provide training and support as the need is identified. This included the RE adviser responding quickly to the first-ever request she had received from pupils to give them training on leading worship.

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