

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Long Sutton Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Martock Road, Long Sutton, Langport, Somerset, TA10 9NT

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| Current SIAMS inspection grade | Outstanding |
| Diocese | Bath and Wells |
| Previous SIAMS inspection grade | Good |
| Local authority | Somerset |
| Date of inspection | 29 November 2016 |
| Date of last inspection | 14 November 2011 |
| Type of school and unique reference number | Voluntary aided 123835 |
| Headteacher | Elizabeth Reynolds |
| Inspector's name and number | Jean Welch 878 |

School context

Long Sutton Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary is a smaller than average village school with 93 pupils on roll taught in 4 mixed age classes. Since the last inspection a small pre-school has been added. The proportion of children for whom the school receives additional funding known as pupil premium (including a few service children) is higher than similar schools. The majority of children are from a White British heritage and there are no pupils who speak English as an additional language. Almost half the pupils come from outside the catchment area.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Long Sutton as a Church of England school are outstanding

- Explicit Christian values have a significant impact on behaviour and relationships in the whole school creating a positive and supportive community.
- The school's Christian ethos informs the passion and commitment of inspirational leaders who provide strong strategic direction.
- Collective worship and prayer impacts on the wider life of the school, especially on the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of the pupils.
- Being nurtured and valued as unique members of God's family, the pupils confidently express their appreciation of being members of a church school.

Areas to improve

- Develop teaching and assessment in religious education (RE) to ensure the pupils gain a deeper knowledge and understanding of key Christian concepts.
- Place more emphasis on providing opportunities for all pupils to plan, lead and evaluate acts of worship in a variety of settings, so as to develop their understanding of worship.

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

Christian values are deeply embedded as the basis of the school's ethos and there is a constant drive to improve in all areas. The values make a significant contribution to the high quality of SMSC development throughout the school community and have a positive impact on the children's learning. The children are very clear that the twelve chosen

values are based on Christian teaching and specifically the teaching of Jesus. The prominent interactive displays explain, in child friendly language, what the values mean to them, for example, 'justice' is standing up for what you believe in. These are at the heart of the pupils' outstanding appreciation of the Christian values of forgiveness and justice. As each value is explored children reflect on its meaning, creatively expressing what it means to them through poetry, drama, art and discussion. In RE this skill particularly enables the older children to respond to thought provoking questions with considerable insight. The belief that each child is unique and has God-given talents is clearly fostered through the engaging RE curriculum. One pupil explained that he changed the way he spoke to others because he now understood the Bible teaching about being kind to one another. The school's six promises are clearly linked to biblical teaching of love and respect for everyone. Consequently pupils have a growing awareness of the diverse nature of British society and of Christianity as a worldwide religion. The pupils talk passionately about their school and are proud of the promises which define them. A pupil explained, 'we have promises you can keep, if you had rules you could break them.' The high standards of attendance, behaviour and relationships are clearly linked to the Christian values of the school, resulting in pupils who are polite, care for each other and always strive to do their best in all aspects of their lives. The older pupils, in their understanding of Jesus as a friend and helper, see themselves as guides for others. They genuinely enjoy their roles as buddies to the younger children which also increases their understanding of the Christian values of friendship and kindness. In believing it is a loving Christian community, the school places high importance on developing all children's self esteem and social skills. An emotional literacy support assistant is employed to specifically address the needs of pupils with social and emotional difficulties. As a result all children do well academically, make good progress and attain standards that are in line with or above national expectation.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Daily acts of worship are noticeably central to the spiritual life of the school. Worship is explicitly Christian and honours Anglican tradition, yet is made relevant to pupils of all religious backgrounds or none. Bible stories, responses, prayers, hymns and time for reflection all contribute to the children's engagement with worship. Children say it is 'cool' to worship together. Leaders from a range of church traditions make worship memorable. The 'Open the Book' assembly, led by members of the local church community, some of whom are governors, is greatly enjoyed and valued by the children. A gift of a Bible to each child on entering and leaving the school is a reflection of the bond between school and church. In this way the children are encouraged to read at home the stories of Jesus they hear at school. The school has beneficial links with Holy Trinity church whose inspirational vicar actively supports the worship of the school community by leading worship at school and church. Parents are invited to worship every week in school and to the monthly services at church. They express their enjoyment in being involved with their children and speak enthusiastically about these times being very important in the life of the school. Festival days are planned regularly by the school community and the children participate in monthly services at the church. Through these services the children gain a good understanding of the seasons of the church year and the significance of symbols and colours used in Anglican worship. The clear focus of worship times helps the children develop their knowledge of Jesus Christ and their appreciation of the nature of the Trinity. They talk about God as father, Jesus as son and the Holy Spirit being invisible but always there. Some children have opportunities to plan and lead worship in church and in class. However, the school recognises that more children need the chance to be fully involved to make the already inspirational worship become more inclusive. Links with the local Quaker community have helped the school to become more reflective in their worship times. Children of all ages are encouraged to reflect on Bible verses around the playground and think about God's creation which helps enrich their experience of collective worship. The dedicated collective worship coordinator has developed a detailed rolling worship programme clearly linking the school's values, British values and Christian theology. The chosen themes motivate the children to think about the way they behave and relate to others in the community and the world around them. Consequently, the children are keen to support those less fortunate than themselves. Excellent evaluations of collective worship are in place and governors make efficient use of monitoring visits to highlight good practice and further develop spirituality throughout the school community. Prayer is extremely important to the school and is said throughout the day. Class prayer books are updated regularly by the children, who want them to be relevant to everyone. The school prayer station is an important focus point, where personal prayers are written to be offered later in church. The children's belief that prayer works drives their response to of the needs of others and prompts them to find ways to help.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

Linked to the school's Christian values, all aspects of RE are outstanding. RE is highly valued by all pupils who are excited and inspired by the subject. Standards of attainment in RE are consistently above expectations of the local RE syllabus. Pupils respond enthusiastically to a wide range of learning opportunities, verbalising ideas and using drama, computers and art as a way of demonstrating their deep understanding. RE lessons are creative and

contribute to the pupils' SMSC development. Well taught and often outstanding RE lessons ensure that pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other world religions is excellent. Consequently, the pupils have the confidence to compare and contrast the major faiths studied. This results in pupils who are learning to respect diversity and appreciate the way faith and religion influences the lives of people around the world. Visitors from faith communities and visits to various places of worship, such as a synagogue, broaden the pupils' view of multi cultural Britain. This establishes opportunities to teach the importance of respect and tolerance. The work of the pupils is regularly assessed and monitored by the highly skilled and knowledgeable RE coordinator. This includes work scrutiny, lesson observations and learning walks with senior staff and governors. There is a robust assessment tracking system which is being adapted to be used with the new RE curriculum units. The staff are highly skilled in assessing the subject and have regular training from the RE coordinator. As a result, they are confident in their ability to judge the pupils' progress and attainment and set relevant tasks to challenge all the children's learning, whatever their level of ability. The governors receive a RE report annually to inform them of progress and developments. The RE coordinator has accurately identified the need to develop the Christianity units in the curriculum and recognises that the new 'Understanding Christianity' materials will be an invaluable resource.

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

The headteacher and school leaders continue to ensure the school's Christian character is being maintained and strengthened since the last inspection. The reflective leadership of the school is highly effective. Its Christian character directly informs strategic planning and ensures the uniqueness of every child is at the heart of school improvement. All development areas from the previous SIAS report have been addressed and there is passion amongst leaders and staff to continually improve. The arrangements for RE and collective worship meet statutory requirements. Governors are well informed by their involvement in school activities, together with the regular reports they receive from the headteacher and RE and collective worship leaders. Christian distinctiveness is an agenda item at every governors meeting, ensuring that it has a high profile. The leaders, staff and clergy work tirelessly to ensure the school provides outstanding opportunities and experiences, so that pupils make at least expected progress and attain higher than average standards. This demonstrates their commitment to their Christian values and the impact this has on individuals and the school as a whole. The governors are open to challenges and there is a working party to discuss the implications of becoming part of a multi-academy trust. In such an event they are fully aware of the need to maintain the school's Christian ethos and have identified values and practices that will not be compromised. The school's Christian character is always covered in the induction of new staff, pupils and their families, reflecting its importance to school life. Support and advice from the diocese has been invaluable in providing high quality professional development and succession planning. Consequently, there are clear expectations for the staff leading collective worship and RE teaching has a positive impact on the SMSC development of every learner. The governors and leaders live out Christian values in the decisions they take and the way they are implemented, in particular in support for pupil premium children and those from service families. The leaders have managed the integration of the new pre-school well and it is already highly regarded by the community. Changes have been made to include these younger children in age appropriate worship times and to make them feel welcome as part of the school Christian community. School/church links are exemplary, resulting in the provision of excellent opportunities for interaction between them and with the wider village community. Parents and carers see the school as a Christian family where everyone is nurtured. They eagerly attend worship times and parent forums, even if they live outside the school's catchment area.

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