



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Long Ditton St Mary's Church of England (Aided) Junior School

Sugden Road,
Long Ditton,
Surbiton
KT7 0AD

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Diocese: Guildford

Local authority: Surrey

Date of inspection: 30 January 2015

Date of last inspection: December 2009

School's unique reference number: 125180

Headteacher: David Gumbrell

Inspector's name and number: Glyn Willoughby 637

School context

Long Ditton St Mary's Junior is a smaller than average school serving the local community. The majority of pupils are of a white British heritage whilst the percentage from ethnic minority groups is above the national average. The proportion of pupils who trigger additional government funding and with different levels of special needs is above the national average. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The headteacher and deputy have both been appointed since the last inspection.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Long Ditton St Mary's Junior as a Church of England school are good

- The vision and leadership of the headteacher, supported by staff and governors, in embedding the Christian values and the sense of community at the heart of the school.
- The impact of the nurturing Christian ethos, cultivated by staff, on the personal development of pupils.
- The evident impact of Christian values that provide pupils with a strong moral compass and developing humility and compassion.

Areas to improve

- Involve the whole school community in evaluating how distinctive Christian values develop spirituality and underpin the promotion of the Christian ethos.
- Expand the role of pupils in the collective worship programme to increase their involvement in planning and leading worship.
- Embed the system for the assessment of religious education to inform planning so that pupils know how they are progressing.

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

This is a welcoming and nurturing Christian community that lives out its mission statement. Since the last inspection, a set of core Christian values has been distilled that includes Friendship, Responsibility and Compassion. The impact of each one can be seen in the high quality of relationships between pupils and staff, characterised by a genuine sense of community. The emphasis on Christian values helps pupils, with the aid of quality displays (a focus arising from the previous inspection), to develop a growing vocabulary to discuss their meaning. Pupils confidently recall Bible stories explaining the meaning of different values and the impact on their lives. They enjoy school where 'you can build really good friendships' and value their 'helpful, kind teachers'.

Parents recognise the impact of the values on their children. One explained how the school's values have helped her children 'become acutely aware of a sense of moral compass that influences their approach to relationships and learning in developing humility and compassion'.

The headteacher's positive manner and approach is well supported by staff. Their inclusive demeanour boosts self-esteem, inspiring pupils to become confident learners increasingly able to discuss their thoughts and ideas. The majority of pupils of all abilities make good progress in achieving results broadly in line with schools nationally. The strong emphasis upon meeting the needs of disadvantaged pupils improves their self-esteem and learning behaviour. This enhances their future chances as a result of the understanding, friendship and support from staff and fellow pupils.

Pupils gain a growing understanding of their role in local and global communities through involvement in a wide range of activities, such as sport and music concerts, and initiatives to help others. The effective link with a school in Uganda enriches spiritual and cultural growth and awareness that Christianity is a multi-cultural world faith.

Events such as Pentecost Pause Day illustrate the way in which religious education and collective worship combine to make an important contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school now plans to evaluate how Christian values develop spirituality and underpin the promotion of the Christian ethos.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Worship is outstanding because it inspires a high level of spiritual and moral reflection and pupils can explain its significance for them personally. Pupils and staff regard worship as being at the heart of school life because it models what the school stands for as an inclusive community. Staff are actively involved in the programme so messages from worship, particularly Christian values, are followed up throughout the day, thus reinforcing its importance to the whole community.

The well planned programme underpins the school's Christian ethos because it is linked to core values and allows pupils to deepen their knowledge and understanding as each value is studied through stories, many from the Bible.

This was evident in the worship observed as pupils were fully engaged and enjoyed participating as the headteacher explored the meaning of the value of Responsibility. Time given in worship to reflect and respond to what they hear deepens an understanding of what Christian values can mean in their daily lives. Pupils speak of the importance of prayer and it 'gives you time to think about how you can be kind to other people around the world'. The secure relationship built up between school and church has created a safe, trusting 'family' environment in which pupils of different faiths become inspired to look after each other.

Familiar prayers and hymns enable pupils to take an active part and the school plans to further develop these opportunities. Visits to the parish church to celebrate Christian festivals help

build this familiarity and with, events such as Easter Pause day, develop a growing understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Worship is led by a range of visitors, visiting clergy and other faith leaders which enriches pupils' experiences.

Governors meet with pupils as part of the process to monitor its impact and inform future planning. The school's capacity to maintain high quality collective worship is strong.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Standards of attainment for the majority of pupils are in line with those attained in other core subjects, which are broadly in line with national expectations. Pupils of all abilities, including those with additional educational needs, make good progress in religious education throughout the school.

A robust system to monitor and track assessment data has been developed since the last inspection. Pupils are increasingly involved in assessing their own progress as the whole school marking policy is implemented, enabling them to reflect on their performance and how to sustain good progress. When fully embedded this will provide an effective system for measuring pupils' progress against the two attainment targets, learning about religion and learning from religion. This was a focus arising from the previous inspection and is being effectively addressed as subject co-ordinators recognise the need to continue to embed the arrangements across the school.

Observations confirm the quality of teaching is good because teachers use their skills and experience to create effective learning environments enabling pupils to make progress. In a lower school lesson to compare the Hindu and Christian creation stories and an upper school lesson to explore ways of enabling people in countries with environmental problems to develop sustainable projects, imaginative use of resources combined with focused teaching promoted effective learning. Targeted support, enhanced by teaching assistants, enables pupils to have a growing understanding of the Christian faith and to make links to Christian values and other faiths.

The upper and lower school co-ordinators play a significant role in developing subject expertise across the staff team in making a strong impact upon spiritual growth and academic progress. In this nurturing environment pupils acquire a vocabulary through which they can learn to discuss difficult concepts in increasing depth and develop higher level skills.

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

The headteacher, supported by governors and an enthusiastic staff team, has a clear vision for the school based on distinctive Christian values. This is shared by all members of the school community including parents who speak warmly of the difference it makes to their children's lives. They describe how staff engender a 'family' environment in which they feel encouraged to contribute to school life. Within this inclusive environment, teamwork is a strong feature and staff feel valued and respected and inspire the high expectations of behaviour and trust that are characteristic of the school.

Well led by the chair, governors support the school very effectively. They have a clear overview of the school's strengths and self-evaluation is accurate as a result of effective monitoring procedures. They have a good understanding of where further improvement is required and the actions required and promote the importance of the school's Christian character in creating an ethos which supports effective learning. Although the embedding of a process to evaluate the impact of the Christian vision on the achievement of all pupils is at a relatively early stage, the leadership recognise the need to secure this area. Governors have a clear view of the importance of supporting the headteacher in actively encouraging

professional, spiritual and personal development. This is demonstrated through the effectiveness of professional support and guidance for all staff and governors as leaders in a church school. There is strong and visible support from the Diocese.

Staff who lead RE and worship recognise the need to enhance their impact across the school community and on the learning experience of the pupils.

A strong partnership with the church has been sustained through an interregnum. A wide range of local and global community links and partnerships, such as the link school in Uganda, enthuse pupils with a genuine sense of pride in their community and helps them empathise and develop as compassionate, caring young people.

The school meets the statutory requirements for collective worship and religious education.

SIAMS report, January 2015. Long Ditton St Mary's Church of England (Aided) Junior School, Sugden Road, Long Ditton, Surbiton, KT7 0AD.