

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Long Marston Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School			
Address	Station Road, Long Marston, Tring HP23 4QS		
Date of inspection	26 March 2019	Status of school	VA primary
Diocese	St Albans	URN	117459

Overall Judgement	Grade	Good
How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?		
Additional Judgements		
The impact of collective worship	Grade	Good
The effectiveness of religious education (RE)	Grade	Good

School context

Long Marston is a primary school with 138 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is below national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is below national averages. A new chair of governors has been appointed since the last denominational inspection.

The school's Christian vision

Rooted in God's love, we rejoice to learn and respond to challenge

Key findings

- The dedicated headteacher, staff and governors work together in a caring, supportive environment to ensure all adults and pupils, including the most vulnerable, flourish. This accepting family community is 'rooted in God's love, rejoices to learn and responds to challenge'. Currently, there is no specific biblical reference in place, owned by all, which underpins the school's vision and new strapline.
- The intrinsic partnership between church and school continually nourishes the spiritual journeys of staff, pupils and their families.
- Pupils confidently use prayer and reflection in daily life and are deepening their understanding of key Christian beliefs as part of the big Christian story. However, pupils' experience of different traditions within Christianity is limited.
- Collective worship and religious education (RE), seen through the school's Christian vision, are enabling pupils to look beyond themselves and respond to local and global needs.
- Exemplary relationships support good behaviour across the school, showing dignity and respect.

Areas for development

- As part of the school's ongoing journey of school improvement, enable all members of the community to articulate the biblical underpinning of their school vision.
- Deepen pupils' encounter with the rich diversity of Christianity to extend their knowledge and understanding of this worldwide living faith as part of their cultural heritage.

How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?

Inspection findings

In this respectful and accepting Christian family environment, everyone works together to ensure 'God's love is all around in everything they do at school.' Whilst Long Marston's vision and values have recently been reviewed, the whole school community readily articulate what their school vision means to them. This small school knows the value of being rooted in God's love, rejoicing to learn and responding to challenge. The website notes a biblical basis to each value but, currently, there is no specific biblical reference, owned by everyone, underpinning their vision and new strapline. Governors and staff on the 'our school as a church school committee' (OSAACS) ensure regular review and monitoring takes place. Church school development is therefore always on the agenda as the school continues its onward journey. Staff and governors benefit from training and support. All areas from the previous inspection have been addressed. The intrinsic partnership with All Saints Church, through its vicar, nourishes the spiritual journeys of the whole community well. Pupils proudly say how much they use and 'love the Lord's Prayer book' which their vicar made for them.

Being 'rooted in God's love' is central to the way in which each individual pupil is valued as a child of God. Within a safe, secure environment and regardless of ability, pupils can put roots down, flourish, enjoy and achieve. The multi-faceted and inclusive vision ensures any curriculum decisions made, support progression for all pupils so they thrive. 'Rejoicing to learn' enables adults to learn alongside pupils within a broad and balanced curriculum, as seen since adopting the 'Understanding Christianity' resource. Any specific barrier to learning is identified so 'no child is left behind'. This takes place within a spirit of trust and compassion, as well as high expectations, where very good relationships prevail. This results in several success stories where not only vulnerable pupils, but also their families, have been supported in their learning so all benefit. One pupil praised the support of staff and friends, saying, 'God's really helping me with my work.' All pupils make good progress and flourish and sometimes this is better than national expectations across both key stages.

Pupils take on different leadership roles and make positive choices which benefit the local community and further afield. For example, true to their vision, they respond to challenge and help provide food parcels for the local emergency night shelter. Inspired by themes in collective worship and RE, such as justice, they look beyond themselves. They show concern for plastic pollution by writing to companies, to help make a difference. Their global charity work has included toilet twinning and the Bishop's Harvest Appeal. The recent world book day's fundraising activities helped provide books for Africa.

The school's ethos 'respects others as they are'. This comment from a parent typifies the strong culture of pastoral care and wellbeing at Long Marston School. Pupil roles, such as house captains and 'ultimate planners' for collective worship are well established. More recently, three well-established pupil 'rule makers' have been appointed, helping promote justice in the playground. Fresh starts are positively extended to all within a culture of forgiveness and reconciliation.

Celebrating difference and diversity is well embedded at Long Marston, not least through its annual diversity week. The dignity and value of each person are upheld in this small school where everyone is known by name. Parents affirm the headteacher who is always there, listening to the children and valuing them for who they are. There is a strong sense of community where everyone enjoys its 'family feel which is quite encompassing'. This extends to the pupils where older ones look out for younger ones. Newsletters celebrate a myriad of events which involve and engage the local community.

Inspiring and inclusive collective worship which is prayerful and meaningful is an integral part of daily school life for pupils and adults. As one pupil put it, 'We pray a lot every day.' Another said, Prayer is quite significant for me. It makes me feel that today's going to be good.' Reflection in worship enables pupils to take time to stop and think which pupils find 'calm, relaxing, and a break from work'. Whilst the ultimate planners (UP's) are responsible for planning and leading worship every fortnight, other pupils are involved in its evaluation. Any pupil or adult can 'do the evaluating clipboard' as all viewpoints on worship are valued. The ultimate planners are also keen to train up younger ones to take on their roles. As one UP put it, 'Even if they're not so confident, they might be really good at it.' Stories from the Bible and those of the saints, such as St Alban, inspire pupils for everyday living. Parents value the services at All Saints Church to celebrate Christian festivals through the year.

RE at Long Marston has a high profile and provides a safe place to critically reflect and meaningfully explore beliefs. It supports spiritual development very well. RE homework often has a focus on values and family groups made Easter gardens for the well-used class reflection areas. RE is very well led and resourced, with clear priorities for action. A focus on the same faith annually across the school enables greater depth of knowledge and progression. It also supports the programme of visits and visitors very well, linking cultures as well as ethos and faith, helping 'build a world picture'. For example, pupils say they recently learned a great deal from a Jewish rabbi. Staff and pupils have particularly grown in the depth of their learning in Christianity, with the use of the 'Understanding Christianity' resource. Even the youngest pupils describe Jesus in their own words as the 'Lamb of God'. Pupils explain incarnation and salvation in their own words very well, speaking of Jesus as 'the bridge between the creator and earth'. One pupil explained how Christians believe that, 'Everyone has sinned and wandered away from God's example. Jesus sacrificed himself for the good of the world and to save others.' Older pupils use strategies they have previously learned to explore new parables and Jesus' teaching about the kingdom of God. However, pupils' encounter with the rich diversity of Christianity, to extend their knowledge and understanding of different expressions of this worldwide living faith, is currently limited. Pupils affirm RE is important in a Church school and helps them to live out their vision. Pupils explain 'being rooted in love' as the Christian belief in 'God's love for you, no matter what', and of their excitement to learn. They also know how important it is to improve in their work and 'challenge yourself and be the best you can'.



The effectiveness of RE is Good

Inspired by the school's vision to rejoice to learn and respond to challenge, the quality of teaching and learning in RE is consistently good. Monitoring and assessment of RE is in place. Assessment is accurate, with standards in RE in line with, and sometimes above, other core subjects. All pupils make good progress and flourish academically and spiritually in RE, including the most vulnerable. High expectations for all ensure the more able pupils also thrive, and excel in their thoughtful written work.

Headteacher	Clare South
Inspector's name and number	Lizzie McWhirter 244