

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Longstone Church of England VA Primary School

Vision

To be the school of choice for our local communities where every child is nurtured, a love of learning ignited and each child shines.

Longstone Church of England Primary School is living up to its foundation as a Church school and is enabling pupils and adults to flourish. It has the following notable strengths.

Strengths

- Nurture and warmth are striking features of this caring school, whose Christian vision is rooted in its rural communities. Pupils and their families are well-known by staff who actively strive to meet the needs of individuals.
- Leadership of this village school is new and inspiring. Dedicated staff provide a stimulating, active and engaging education for all. Pupils' diverse talents are celebrated as they are encouraged to 'shine' and achieve their best.
- The broad curriculum and enrichment activities provide opportunities for pupils to flourish, igniting their potential and nurturing their talents. These experiences align with the school's Christian vision to shine, ignite, and nurture, enabling pupils to grow academically, personally, and spiritually.
- Collective worship is a regular and integral part of school life. Led by staff, pupils and the local church, it enables pupils to reflect on their own beliefs and values.
- The school is dedicated to constantly improving as a Church school. It regularly reviews its work and gathers feedback from staff, students, and parents. This feedback helps the school make changes to improve teaching and learning while staying true to its Christian values.

Development Points

- Develop a shared understanding of the language of spirituality to maximise its impact across the curriculum.
- Ensure that the curriculum for religious education (RE) includes more opportunities for experiential learning. This is to broaden pupils' understanding of different cultures and beliefs.
- Strengthen pupils' understanding of courageous advocacy and social action enabling them to make a positive difference beyond charitable fundraising.



Inspection Findings

Longstone Primary School is in a new season of growth as a Church school. The Christian vision of 'Nurture, Ignite, Shine' is central to the school's ethos. The vision and accompanying Bible verses create a strong culture of connectivity. For example, Philippians 2:15 reminds pupils and adults of their potential to make a positive impact, shine brightly and bring hope to the world. Together, these verses shape a vision of community, learning, and purpose rooted in Christian values. As a result, they guide the actions and decisions that enable both pupils and adults to flourish. Pupils are nurtured through inclusive practices, ignited by a passion for learning, and empowered to shine through their achievements. Staff work beyond their designated roles to strive for the best support and provision for pupils. The school community, including parents and governors, works together to create a space where everyone's wellbeing is a priority. The school's vision is deeply embedded, successfully preparing pupils for the next phase of their education and beyond. Committed governors provide support and take pride in being the guardians of the school's Christian foundation. They regularly evaluate their own work as part of their systematic checking of the impact of the school's vision. This strengthens their strategic decision making, and as a result, pupils and adults flourish.

The curriculum is built on curiosity with opportunities to reflect. As a consequence, this leads to pupils who are confident in their thinking. It enables pupils to enquire about the world around them, preparing them to live in all its fullness. Opportunities for pupils to thrive through a diverse range of enrichment activities are an integral part of the curriculum. These include sport, music and art. In addition, interests outside of school are celebrated as ways in which pupils flourish more broadly. No adaptation is too great to meet the needs of pupils. This ensures pupils with more complex needs thrive because they have a curriculum that is ambitious for them. Partnership with the diocese is fruitful. Recent training has been cascaded down to staff and, as a result, the teaching of Christianity is a strength. Integrating personal, moral, social and cultural aspects through prayer, worship and ethical discussions enriches the curriculum. The curriculum provides numerous opportunities for spiritual development. However, pupils lack the vocabulary to articulate how these reflect the lived-out vision.

At Longstone, daily collective worship plays a central role in enabling both pupils and adults to flourish spiritually. Each day offers a varied 'diet' of worship, which includes sessions in church, school and in the classroom. The worship schedule is well planned, ensuring that it supports the spiritual growth of pupils. Prayer is embedded into the daily life of the school. There are dedicated spaces for quiet reflection in each classroom. Prayers are shared during collective worship, mealtimes and at the end of the day. As a result, collective worship is an experience that fosters spiritual wellbeing for pupils and adults. Both staff and pupils struggle to articulate their understanding of spirituality. This gap in focused training and opportunities for meaningful dialogue limits the depth of understanding and articulation around this concept.

The school's commitment to nurturing empathy and social justice encourages pupils to develop a deep sense of compassion for others. This is demonstrated through initiatives such as the buddy system between Year 6 and Reception, charity fundraisers and the learning council's charity involvement. Through the 'SMILERS' curriculum, pupils have opportunities to reflect on their lives and engage with ethical issues. They are motivated to support causes beyond the village, reflecting a strong desire to create positive change in the world. These include participation in activities such as cake sales, enterprise weeks and prayer led charity collections. Additionally, the school's pupil worship council empowers pupils to take an active role in developing the spiritual life of the school. The pupil parliament and worship council engage pupils in shaping their community. This reflects the Christian values of service and stewardship. Pupils often lack clarity on promoting justice beyond themselves and understanding their role as agents of change.

The RE curriculum is designed around key inquiry-based questions. As a result, pupils are 'ignited' to explore and reflect on profound theological concepts. Pupils enthusiastically engage with drama and art in RE lessons. This integration enhances critical thinking and deepens their understanding of Christianity. These creative approaches



align with the expectation for high quality, engaging RE that develops pupils spiritually, morally, socially and culturally. However, the RE curriculum currently lacks sufficient opportunities for interfaith dialogue and experiential learning. This limits pupils' understanding of global religions and life in a diverse and multi-faith world. All teachers receive regular training to deliver high quality RE, effectively supporting the school's Christian vision. The new headteacher has shown proactive engagement with the school's Christian ethos. His direct involvement in teaching religious education (RE) has further embedded the vision into everyday practice. This leadership has significantly inspired staff and pupils to deepen their understanding of Christian values. It has also enhanced the distinctiveness of the school's Christian character.

Condensing RE into 'RE weeks' previously limited opportunities for sustained and deeper learning. To address this, the school has recently transitioned to teaching RE weekly. Consequently, this allows for consistent exploration of themes, enhanced knowledge retention and deeper understanding of key concepts. Separate RE books to track pupils' learning progress over time have also been introduced. This provides a more consistent flow of ideas and fosters deeper engagement with the subject. The use of questioning prompts pupils to think and lessons offer a safe space to discuss differing views. Assessment outcomes demonstrate good progress. Governors actively support and evaluate the RE curriculum. This drives continuous improvement, ensuring a rich and balanced curriculum that promotes knowledge, understanding and respect.

The relationship between the local church and the school is highly valued and further strengthens the sense of community. Staff are happy and fulfilled because the school fosters a caring community, prioritises wellbeing and provides meaningful development opportunities. Pupils benefit from the stability this brings. Leaders model Christian values of love, generosity and kindness, ensuring that these principles are lived out every day. These values underpin the school charter, which helps to promote positive behaviour. One pupil said, 'We don't have grudges here, and are good at saying sorry and forgiving.' Responsibility is taken very seriously with pupils recognising the importance of being a good role model. Pupils take on many roles within the school, including collective worship leads. These pupils have had an impact in strengthening the distinctive Christian character of the school. Other pupils take on the role of playground buddies. They say, 'We are a Church school so it's good to take care of each other.' Pupils say that they can approach any member of staff if they have a concern or worry because, 'We are respected and know they will help.' This strong sense of community, rooted in Christian values, ensures that every member of the school feels supported, valued, and inspired to contribute to the flourishing of all.

Information

Address	The Cross, Great Longstone, Bakewell, Derbyshire DE45 1TZ		
Date	26 November 2024	URN	112887
Type of school	Voluntary Aided	No. of pupils	94
Diocese	Derby		
Headteacher	Mark Knight		
Chair of Governors	Sophie Stephenson		
Inspector	Paulette Osborne		