

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Long Ditton St Mary's Voluntary Aided Junior School

Address Sugden Road, Long Ditton, Surbiton, Surrey, KT70AD

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

Overall grade **Good**

The impact of collective worship **Good**

The effectiveness of religious education (RE) **Good**

School's vision

To inspire children to be confident, courageous and compassionate within a community that enables them to flourish academically, socially and spiritually.

Loving learning, Loving one another, Loving God
Matthew 22³⁶⁻³⁹

Key findings

- The headteacher has embedded the secure Christian vision in a very short time and this is leading to rapid, positive change. She is transforming the school for the better, ensuring that the vision has a daily impact on school life.
- Long Ditton St Mary's vision encompasses everything the school stands for, exemplified by the new vibrant curriculum. This is empowering pupils to be confident, self-assured learners.
- Robust leadership at all levels, driven by the school's vision, inspires a culture of success based on love and aspiration, thus enabling all to flourish.
- The close link with the church, notably through the rector of St Mary's church, is a strength of the school. This effective partnership is enriching the worshipping lives and spiritual development of the whole community.
- The new religious education (RE) subject leader has a clear action plan in place, prioritising ongoing improvement in RE. The school has rightly identified the need to moderate pupils' work with other schools.

Areas for development

- Embed a more global dimension and knowledge of diversity. This is in order to broaden pupils' experiences of people from different backgrounds, faiths and cultures from their own and enhance the on-going journey of school improvement.
- Ensure the high expectations of RE are maintained and monitored by undertaking moderation of pupils' work with fellow professionals beyond the school.
- Deepen pupils' knowledge of St Mary after whom their school and local church is named, to support their spiritual journeys.

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

It is obvious as soon as you enter Long Ditton Junior School that this is a vibrant, loving community where each individual pupil is valued as a child of God. The Christian vision, together with the values of love, respect, compassion and aspiration, is making a meaningful contribution to school life. Since the previous denominational inspection there have been significant changes in staffing and governance, including the headteacher, appointed in April 2020. Undoubtedly, over the last two years, the school has been on a journey which has seen considerable improvement. Much has been achieved, despite the disruptions of Covid 19. For instance, since her appointment, the headteacher has worked rapidly to establish an aspirational curriculum. This links unambiguously to the school's Christian vision of 'loving learning'. The highly effective governors are passionate about the school. They oversee the monitoring of all aspects of school life exceptionally well, giving particular priority to RE and collective worship. They make bold decisions based on the vision. For instance, by waiting for the correct candidate before appointing the new headteacher and by showing care and compassion to families during the Covid pandemic. The admissions policy is inclusive, welcoming all of different faiths or none, echoing the vision well.

Effective partnerships underpin the vision and invigorate the life of the school. For instance, valuable links have been made with other schools, especially within the Ember Learning Trust. The school works closely with parents and carers, ensuring a well-supported relationship with families. A strong partnership also exists with the Diocese of Guildford. Staff, clergy and governors have all benefited from effective training. Governors report back after every training session so all can learn from these experiences and move forward together. Consequently, there is a keen awareness of current thinking in church school education.

The vision is understood well by pupils who apply it to their learning through the school's new creative curriculum. This encourages pupils to be courageous and take risks. As a result, there is a real love of learning at the school and pupils flourish academically. Because the majority of pupils are White British, the school adjusts the curriculum to include diversity. However, opportunities for global links have been limited since the pandemic, so pupils' understanding of Christianity in other countries or other denominations are not yet fully developed. Celebrating success is pivotal. This can be seen in the weekly celebration assemblies. Pupils receive certificates for living out the vision and values and these are greatly appreciated by all. A parent shared how the school provides challenge for their child. 'They know her and understand her. She has really thrived on that.'

There is a good shared awareness of spirituality across the school. Opportunities to experience awe and wonder are presented through daily reflection times and encounters with nature such as gardening and forest school. This spiritual growth is evidence of the outworking of the vision to flourish socially and spiritually, captured effectively in class reflection books. Most pupils are unaware of the significance of St Mary, after whom the school and church are named.

High quality relationships permeate the school community and there is a strong sense of love and collegiate support. 'When I speak of St. Mary's, my voice smiles and my eyes brighten', one member of staff wrote. This characterises the school community's positive spirit, where all are respected and loved. The school is particularly effective at ensuring the good mental wellbeing of pupils and staff through initiatives such as growth mindset, mindfulness and dedicated wellbeing weeks. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. When disagreements occur, they are often able to resolve them without adult intervention, reflecting the vision and values.

Pupils are motivated by their school vision and values to make a difference in their community and further afield. For example, they recently wrote to their local MP asking him to help them in their campaign to reduce plastic. Dominic Raab responded and agreed to visit the school to discuss the matter with them. Year 4 pupils led a campaign to change the speed limit on the school road. This environmental work is important to pupils, inspiring them to learn to love and care for one another. The school's vision can be seen in its support for many local and national charities, including the East Elmbridge food bank and Brain Tumour Research.

The strong partnership with St. Mary's church enriches this Christian family, nourishing the spiritual lives of all. The rector's weekly involvement in worship and his chaplaincy are invaluable. Patterns of worship are varied across the week. This includes class-based worship, where pupils gain from frequent opportunities to plan and lead worship themselves. During worship, both pupils and adults are uplifted by the music, reflection, stories and prayers. At the time of the pandemic lockdown, worship was live-streamed, enabling parents as well as pupils to benefit from acts of

worship. Because the Eucharist is celebrated in school, pupils have a good knowledge of Anglican worship and traditions. Pupils talk articulately about how the daily acts of worship help them to treat others with dignity and respect. Visits to the church for festivals throughout the Christian year touch the lives of pupils and parents. As a result, the whole school community flourishes spiritually.

The school is developing a curriculum in RE that clearly expresses the school's vision to enable pupils of all abilities to reach their potential. Pupils are increasingly confident to ask questions and engage in debate around 'big questions', This is because staff are now using the Understanding Christianity resource. The new RE leader has undertaken training with the diocese. She has used staff training time well to support and encourage teachers to use the new resource effectively. This, together with the syllabus agreed within the Diocese, enables pupils to develop a good knowledge and understanding of a range of faiths.

Whilst the school is clearly on the path to excellence, the relatively new team have not yet had time to fully establish a reputation for leading innovative and imaginative practice with a wide range of schools locally and beyond.



The effectiveness of RE is Good

Long Ditton St Mary's has established a clear curriculum plan for RE. The standard of teaching is good. Pupils, including the disadvantaged, make good progress against expected standards. This is in line with other core subjects. The new RE leader monitors and evaluates the subject effectively. Because of Covid, moderation with other schools has not taken place in recent times. Pupils enjoy RE, with all groups of pupils flourishing academically in this subject.

Contextual information about the school

Date of inspection	28 February 2022	URN	125180
Date of previous inspection	30 January 2015		
School status	Voluntary Aided	NOR	224
Diocese	Guildford		
Headteacher	Sarah Martin		
Pupil profile	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 is below national averages.		
Additional significant information	A new headteacher has been appointed since the last inspection. The majority of pupils are White British.		
Inspector's name	Jenny Earp	No.	288