

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS)

<b>Laddingford St Mary’s Church of England Primary School</b>	
<b>Address</b>	Darman Lane, Maidstone, Kent ME18 6BL

### School vision

**“Welcoming everyone, building foundations, leaving no-one behind”**

We value every member of our community, offering a joyful, nurturing environment, meeting the needs of individuals through an ambitious and inclusive curriculum for all. Following the example of Jesus as The Good Shepherd, and drawing on the parable of The Lost Sheep, we ensure that no-one is left behind by providing the skills needed for lifelong learning in a changing world.

### School strengths

- The school’s Christian vision and accompanying values are lived out by pupils and adults. They form the basis of good relationships at all levels and have provided stability through a time of change.
- Pupils and adults are part of a strong community where each one is valued as a unique child of God. The centrality of nurture generates a community with a collective determination that no pupil should be left behind.
- Reflection in collective worship helps pupils think deeply about how they can live well together following the example of Jesus.
- The curriculum provision is effectively supported by outdoor learning within forest school. It provides exceptional experiences to foster skills in problem solving, perseverance, teamwork, and individual confidence.
- The religious education (RE) curriculum is well sequenced. Pupils engage enthusiastically and record their learning in a range of creative and inclusive ways.

### Areas for development

- Develop a shared understanding of spiritual development. This is to enable the spiritual flourishing of all.
- Broaden opportunities for pupils to engage in social action in order to actively challenge injustice.
- Build on existing partnerships, with other schools and the Diocese, to strengthen and develop RE leadership.
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the RE curriculum to develop a greater understanding and appreciation of world faiths and worldviews.

## Inspection findings

The Christian vision at Laddingford St Mary's is at the heart of the work of the school. It is well established and a lived reality. It has been a guiding light during a period of recent change. Nurture is embraced in this highly inclusive environment. Within this diverse community, pupils and adults understand the vision in terms of the parable of the Good Shepherd. This means that adults work determinedly to help every pupil feel a unique and special part of the school's welcoming environment. It also underpins the desire that 'no one should be left behind'. The values of love, joy and peace underpin the work of Laddingford. Furthermore, they form the basis of positive and caring relationships across the school. Governors know and understand the specific needs of pupils and their families. As a result, this informs their strategic planning and challenge that they offer. However, their monitoring of the impact of the school's vision and the effectiveness of RE is less rigorous.

The school's curriculum reflects Laddingford's Christian vision. Ensuring that 'no child is left behind', staff carefully consider how each child can be engaged in their learning. The result of this is that teachers are planning exciting starts to lessons and topics. For example, pupils were enthused by the re-enactment of a crime scene following a book read in literacy. Alongside this, pupils are encouraged to enjoy the discovery of finding out information for themselves. This creates pupils who are eager for knowledge and aware of the wider world. The vision in action is supporting pupils with special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Great care and love are shown to pupils. Adults are skilful at providing individualised support. Because of this, pupils are well supported in school. Strong partnerships with other schools assist the professional development of staff. In particular to enable them to effectively promote the delivery of a curriculum to meet the needs of the more able.

Activities beyond the classroom, including within the outdoor environment, provide rich learning opportunities for all pupils. Forest school provides a rich and unique experience. Pupils build their own sense of self-worth as they embrace challenges, as well as develop perseverance, teamwork skills and confidence. Extra-curricular events serve to widen pupil horizons beyond their immediate environment, such as theatre trips to London. There are occasions to incorporate spirituality within the curriculum. Spontaneous moments of 'awe and wonder' are regularly embraced. For example, a recent hailstorm allowed time to appreciate this act of nature and stimulate discussion and learning. However, there are few planned opportunities to develop spirituality across the curriculum.

Collective worship is a special time of the day, drawing the school community together. It gives the school's all-encompassing Christian vision its firm foundation. All are included in the invitation to be inspired by Christ's example. This impacts positively on pupils' behaviour. They recognise the importance of not leaving others out of games and are developing skills in making positive choices. Pupils in the school are knowledgeable about bible stories and can relate them to their own lives. This was typified in the examination of Micah and the linked theme of justice. This enables pupils to confidently consider the importance of everyone having a safe place to live and the need to help each other. As a result, this inspires a happy and caring school community. Joyful singing in worship is an expression of the Christian vision. Times of reflection and the use of 'big questions' during worship deepen spirituality for all. For example, pupils were asked to reflect upon the Last Supper and how they would feel about making difficult decisions. At other times themes have enabled pupils to consider how they gain strength from each other, by 'lifting our burdens' together. Staff equally value the 'precious' moments of reflection and time to be still. Partnerships with the church clergy, and in particular the shared building with the church enrich worship.

Inspired by the Christian vision adults model love within their interactions. Pupils follow this example and treat each other with respect and kindness. There is a collective determination to nurture each individual as a unique child of God. This is seen in the kindness extended to parents, responding to their specific needs and circumstances. It is also evident for pupils with nurture provision in the ‘Hobbit room’ or through the range of timetable adaptations. These enable pupils to feel safe and settled in the school environment. Pupils are confident in resolving friendship problems. A recent study by the whole school on peace helped pupils reflect upon the power of forgiveness. This impacts on the creation of a compassionate and caring school.

Pupils are eager to follow Jesus’ example of caring for the needs of all. They do this in many ways, illustrated in roles such as library monitors or older pupils supporting younger ones. Pupils demonstrate a desire to meet the needs of others. One child exemplified this by bringing in frog spawn for their peers. They did this to brighten up the school and to support the learning journey of pupils in other classes. Pupils have been inspired to be agents of change by supporting foodbanks at Harvest or supporting the local Christmas fair. Other pupils have worked on their own initiative to undertake activities, such as litter picking, to improve their environment. However, there are few opportunities for all pupils to understand injustice and undertake social action beyond the local environment.

RE plays a central role in the school in enabling pupils to deepen their knowledge and understanding of a range of religions and worldviews. Lessons engage and enthuse pupils in their learning, embracing opportunities for role play, drama and artwork. The exploration of enquiry questions enables pupils to reflect more deeply on the relevance of faith in their own lives. For example, reflecting on the bible story about Zacchaeus pupils were able to articulate things they regret and why. In this way pupils are given freedom to express their own opinions and are valued for this. Consideration is given to the sequence of this knowledge and most pupils can share this in an age-appropriate way. At present insufficient monitoring within RE restricts the capability to develop the teaching of world faiths and worldviews. The Diocese are supporting the training of staff and are at an early stage of strengthening the leadership of RE. A local network of schools is assisting staff to develop their subject knowledge and gain confidence in the delivery of themes.

The inspector findings indicate that Laddingford St Mary’s Church of England School is living up to its foundation as a Church school.

Information			
Inspection date	20 March 2024	URN	118637
VA/VC/Academy	VC	Pupils on roll	73
Diocese	Rochester		
MAT/Federation			
Headteacher	Lucy Clark		
Chair	Kate Owbridge		
Inspector	Mark Talbot	No.	C.23/24