Methodist Independent Schools Trust

SERVE

Spirituality, Ethos, Relationships and Values Evaluation

REPORT

Summary of findings:

Lorenden continues to be a warm, friendly school, whose values, stated as: 'We Care. We Share. We Strive. We Succeed….' are strongly reflected through the actions of staff, pupils and the leadership of the school. This strong culture reflects a highly collaborative approach that extends right from the youngest pupils through to the school's dedicated team of governors. At all levels, giving support to others, especially those who have particular needs or are younger than oneself, is seen as the right thing to do. Relationships at all levels are supportive and based on mutual understanding and empathy.

The head, supported by the governors, is strategic in his leadership of the school's educational offer, maintenance of its community and development of pupils' spirituality and character. Staff uphold the school's values and ethos as central to its purpose, with many, in discussions stating that they chose to work at the school, because of its strong ethical foundation. Parents value the school's Christian heritage for its role in shaping their children's moral growth. Pupils embrace the values and ethos through enthusiastic participation in all aspects of the school's educational, communal and spiritual life. They make strong progress, both in academic terms and in their personal development, becoming active, engaged citizens willing to offer service to make the world around them a better place.

Strengths:

- The supportive and collegiate culture that enables each child to feel included within a warm, welcoming school community.
- The strongly embedded school values, understood and adhered to by pupils and modelled by staff.
- The culture of care shown by all towards one another, and most significantly by older pupils to younger pupils.
- The provision and support for pupils' well-being and mental health and the opportunities for pupils to show leadership and take ownership of this provision.

For further development:

- Consider making greater use of older pupils to help plan and prepare assemblies led by the chaplain from Kent College.
- Continue to develop the use of enquiry led learning in Religious Education (RE), making greater use of open-ended questioning and pupil led discussions to explore topics.
- Enhance pupils understanding of each other by encouraging pupils from the diversity of backgrounds within the school cohort to share their cultures more openly with the wider school community.

Main Report

The school successfully delivers a holistic curriculum that balances academic achievement with personal, physical, and emotional development. Year 6 pupils gain significant independence as learners, willing to offer their own views in discussions, based on well-sourced evidence. Pupils are curious, motivated and achieve significant added value during their education at the school. Pupils are rational in their thinking and engage in learning with enthusiasm and show creativity. Inclusive, child-centred teaching enables those with SEND and EAL to progress in line with their peers, and more able learners are supported to make progress in line with their potential. The overall culture reflects and recognises that academic achievement is individual and so celebrates each pupil's personal achievements, rather than dwelling on collated performance compared to other school. Parents, however, recognise the school as being highly successful for its pupils, where more than 70% of pupils achieve above the national expectations for their age and a significant proportion of pupils during Year 6 pass the Kent Test for entry to local grammar schools.

There is a strong culture of mutual care; pupils feel well supported by staff, who successfully foster a sense of social cohesion and mutual responsibility. The school enables and supports pupils to recognise and celebrate diversity with empathy and critical awareness. Pupils' personal development is grounded in kindness and humility, specifically focusing on leadership, collaboration, and the ability to engage respectfully with conflicting perspectives. Pupils take pride in their own unique strengths while championing the successes and needs of others.

Pupils behave well, treating both adults and peers with respect. The use of "gems" by staff to directly acknowledge and reward pupils who act in line with the school's values is popular and effective in enabling pupils to meet the school's high expectations of their behaviour. They have excellent manners, interacting confidently with adult visitors. Through the buddy system, older pupils offer significant support to younger pupils. This is seen as a privilege and something that pupils actively and keenly want to do. The culture of service is strongly embedded.

Pupils understand the importance of lifelong physical health, with participation, enjoyment and endeavour at the heart of a sports programme that enables the whole community to engage positively. Consequently, pupils engage with sport and physical activity with high levels of enthusiasm, showing both understanding of its importance to their overall well-being and a passion for achieving to a high standard, both as individuals and members of the variety of teams the school has across the range of sports. They also understand other key ingredients to a healthy lifestyle, including diet, activity, and the impacts on health of smoking, drug use and alcohol. For example, Year 5 pupils in PSHE demonstrated a keen awareness of the harms that may arise from smoking and vaping.

Pupils are able to talk, to an age-appropriate extent, about their emotions, and are successfully learning how to regulate their actions and responses. The school's pastoral support is thoughtful and tailored to meet each pupil's emotional individual needs so far as is practically possible at school. Pupils and staff understand how to maintain good mental health, for which the school's support is both continuing to develop and excellent in scope. Pupils understand how to recognise the signs that either they or someone else may need additional help to maintain or restore their well-being. This strong awareness is supported by the provision of spaces where pupils can find peace and quiet such as the sunken garden and also support, such as in the new Well-Being room. This strong provision has been rightly acknowledged with a National Wellbeing Award from Microlink UK.

The school has a strong community spirit that reflects love, warmth and welcome. This open-minded, non-judgemental culture, imbued both with the importance of service, and the need to respect the rights of others, flows from staff and leaders to the youngest pupils, bringing a cohesion and oneness to all the

school's collective endeavours. This ensures all are included and can find fellowship and belonging. As a result, pupils are active citizens and offer willing service to support others both within their own school community, such as younger pupils and staff, and beyond. For example, in the lead up to Christmas, the Well-Being and Mental Health Ambassadors helped to organise a collection of toys which they then delivered to the Salvation Army in Faversham to provide children's presents for families in need.

Staff and pupils understand the important roles they play in keeping one another safe, creating a strong protective culture, that ensures they are all well looked after. In discussions, pupils were clear that they feel listened to by staff and their views are valued. They were able to identify a range of ways they could raise concerns, should they arise, and have confidence that when there are issues, staff listen and respond appropriately. Leaders maintain a high level of vigilance and ensure that all safeguarding related procedures and staff training are kept up to date.

The focus in the curriculum on global matters gives pupils a broad outlook on life, with a clear focus on making a positive contribution, whilst also participating and engaging in the life of the local community. The strong partnership with a French school, that brings all pupils into contact with their students at least annually and allows Year 6 pupils to spend a day immersed in French culture gives pupils real life experience of using a foreign language and managing in a different culture. This successful provision, rightly acknowledged by a British Council Award, could be developed even further by encouraging greater exploration of the diversity of cultures that already exist within the school community.

The school successfully marks significant events and anniversaries such as VE day, when pupils were brought together with care home residents who shared their real-life experiences of the Second World War. Pupils actively engage with the environment, both through curriculum activities, such as Forest School, and by choosing, for example, to visit the sunken garden or helping in the school allotment, showing a collective passion for protecting and enhancing the natural world around them.

The school fosters a Christian ethos that promotes kindness, integrity, and service, led by staff who encourage spiritual exploration and development. School assemblies are warm and inviting, reflecting the school's Christian foundation, whilst also enabling all pupils to participate with integrity, regardless of their own religious background. Pupils and staff engage actively during assemblies, participating with enthusiasm and interest. The weekly services, led by the chaplain from Kent College Canterbury, are eagerly anticipated by pupils, and these help to support the school's celebration of key annual festivals, such as Easter. Whilst pupils are involved to some extent in delivering these services, such as in the lighting of candles, pupils could be even more involved in the planning and preparation, to help to ensure services are appropriate to the age range of pupils within the school.

The curriculum successfully supports pupils' spiritual, ethical, and philosophical growth. Pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of Christianity and other world faiths, through teaching that encourages pupils to reflect on and the explore the characteristics of faith and ethics. Pupils enjoy exploring philosophical questions and teaching often encourages pupils to question, challenge and explore new ideas through debate. Creativity in all its forms is nurtured and encouraged to give pupils a variety of opportunities to express themselves emotionally, for example, through music, drama and art. Pupils are thoughtful about spiritual matters, recognise there are aspects to life that transcend the material and can express enjoyment and appreciation for aesthetic and creative endeavours. Pupils are given space and time to be reflective, both in lessons and during breaktimes, for example in the sunken garden and the developing Well-Being room.

School and visit information:

School	**Lorenden School**
Address	Painter's Forstal, Faversham, ME13 0EN
Age range	3-11
Head of School	Richard McIntosh
Date of SERVE visit	Tuesday 10th March 2026
SERVE Visitors	Katrina Handford (Head of Kent College, Pembury) Matthew Lovett (MIST SERVE Co-ordinator)