

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Laurence's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School	
Jockeyfield, Ludlow, Shropshire SY3 ITP	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Hereford
Previous SIAS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Shropshire
Date of inspection	3 July 2018
Date of last inspection	21 January 2103
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary 123529
Headteacher	Stephen Matthews
Inspector's name and number	Karen Surrall 842 (Allyson Taylor Quality Assurance 768)

School context

St Laurence's CE school is a smaller than average primary school and has on-site nursery provision. It is federated with a number of other local schools as part of the Ludlow Town Federation. The school has a strong collaboration with Burford Primary school and the two schools share an executive headteacher. The number of vulnerable children and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is around the national average. Attendance is around the national average. Almost all pupils are of white British heritage, although this varies with cohort. An Ofsted inspection in June 2018 judged the school to be good.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Laurence's as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The headteacher has a thorough understanding of the school's distinctively Christian character so that the Christian values have a significant impact on pupil's learning and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) understanding. He is ably supported by governors who have a thorough understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and the next steps to take.
- Staff who are deeply committed to ensuring that every child reaches their potential and readily give 'over and above' to achieve this.
- The school is steeped in the Christian values of creativity, trust and wisdom and these inform all aspects of school life.

Areas to improve

- Develop a more clearly stated vision for the school that is understood by all to be rooted in a Christian narrative so that this more accurately reflects the deep Christian character of the school.
- Ensure that children throughout the school are enabled to make frequent contributions in collective worship that are both planned and spontaneous, so increasing their enjoyment and engagement.
- Enable governors to engage with national Church of England guidance to inform their monitoring of aspects of church school life and so drive continuous improvement.

The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is outstanding at meeting the needs of all learners

St Laurence's values of creativity, trust and wisdom underpin all aspects of life at the school. These 'gold' values are supported by a suite of other values that are explored on a two-year rolling programme. Each of these values is underpinned by biblical teaching and is communicated to all stakeholders through the website and the weekly newsletter. As a result, even very young children are able to articulate how the values are based on the teachings of Jesus and their importance in the life of the school. All members of the school community are justly proud of the outstanding behaviour of learners. This is because all children are able to link the value of wisdom to the need for each of them to make the right choices in their lives.

The school's distinctively Christian character is at the heart of all decision making. The value of trust is integral to the work that they undertake with families. Consequently, the care and compassion given to all pupils ensures that they make good progress. Attendance has improved for vulnerable groups so their attendance matches that of their peers. The school has invested in its staff so that there is a highly effective learning mentor and a strong pastoral team. They have the time, skills and patience to work with pupils and their families. This has ensured that more vulnerable pupils make very good progress because their emotional needs are met extremely well.

The school environment is stunning and clearly celebrates the school's commitment to both the school's values and to a broad, rich and varied curriculum. The curriculum has a significant impact on the SMSC development of all learners. Adults within the school are able to talk about what spirituality means to them individually although this has yet to be shared across the whole school community.

Learners have high quality experiences across the religious education (RE) curriculum so that RE makes a significant contribution to pupils' SMSC development and to the distinctively Christian character of the school. Pupils clearly articulate why their learning in RE is important to them and find lessons challenging and interesting. They understand that learning about other faiths will help them in their later lives. A child in year 5 explained 'When we learn about other religions we can see how they are similar and different and how our values are very similar.' The school has a full programme of visits and visitors from other faiths and from across the Christian tradition. These help the children to learn more about the diversity of communities in the world. Learners are not yet fully aware of Christianity as a multicultural world faith and the school acknowledges that there is more work to be done in this area.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is seen as important to the spiritual life of St Laurence's by all stakeholders. Pupils appreciate the quiet atmosphere that greets them as they enter the worship space. They enjoy having time to reflect and their behaviour mirrors this. A child in year 4 explained that worship is 'a time to focus and think about the day ahead'. Another spoke about how worship helps everyone to think about what Jesus would do and to apply the school's values to their own lives.

Worship is led by different groups throughout the week and the Acts 2 assemblies, led by people from local churches, are particularly enjoyed by all. This is because they are encouraged to participate more at these times. The worship committee has thoroughly enjoyed taking responsibility for planning and leading worship times. They have benefitted from the close partnership with Burford School. Both groups of children have shared good practice and visited each other's school, so these children are excited and inspired by what they have achieved. The school is well placed to take this further so that children throughout the school can plan and lead times of worship more frequently. Regular monitoring by school leaders, governors and the worship committee have identified where improvements are needed and changes have been made.

Collective worship is planned meticulously so that it usually includes biblical stories and enables the children to make links between the stories, the school's values and their daily lives. Children are inspired to take action in the service of others. This included the 'Walking with the Wounded' initiative and the children have also raised funds for the NSPCC. At present, the children do not set these actions in their Christian context.

Learners have an understanding of some Anglican practices and are aware of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Worship often includes teaching about the person of Jesus and children understand the importance of Jesus. They describe Him as someone 'who made miracles happen' and 'who teaches people about God'.

The school has regular prayer weeks, where learners are encouraged to explore different types of prayer and to make prayer relevant to their daily lives. One child described prayer as 'always having God near us'. They enjoy writing their own prayers and some of these are displayed for all to share in the hall on an interactive prayer wall. Each class has a reflection area where the school's values are displayed. Children are encouraged to use these areas for quiet contemplation and prayer. The school does not have a shared understanding of how prayer and reflection enables pupils to develop in their own spiritual journey. This means that some children do not see the relevance of prayer to their lives away from school.

The school is developing an area of the school grounds as a spiritual garden. The whole school is part of the school council, through an interactive computer program. It was through this body that the idea of a spiritual garden was

conceived, agreed and is now in the final stages of execution. An impressive new bench, carved with the words of the Lord's Prayer, makes a very special focal point for this area.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is outstanding

St Laurence's is highly secure in a vision of itself as a school serving its community through the Christian values of creativity, trust and wisdom. This vision was written by the children and truly reflects the heart and soul of St Laurence's. These values are clearly articulated by pupils of all ages as having biblical roots. When visiting St Laurence's, the school's vision is central and expressed in many creative ways, often referencing their biblical origins. This is not so obvious on the school website or in recently reviewed policies which do not clearly articulate the Christian roots of the values which are at the heart of the school.

The gold value of creativity shines through the school's very broad curriculum which enables pupils to flourish so that they can make the most of their God-given talents. All the children were particularly proud of the display in the hall, which depicts the story of Creation. Every child in school contributed to these stunning pictures. The school excels at many sports and is resolute in enabling any child who wishes to represent the school, whatever their needs or difficulties, to do so. In this way the school ensures that all feel welcome and included in its many ventures and successes.

The care and attention to all pupils and their families ensures that relationships are strong. Parents value the open-door policy of the school and readily acknowledge the difference that all staff make to the lives of their children. This is especially true for more vulnerable pupils and the work of the learning mentor, together with other staff, has a significant impact on pupil wellbeing.

Governors have a strong understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and have supported the school well while the headteacher has undertaken an executive head role with another school. This has enabled other staff to increase their capacity for leadership so that they are now a confident, forward looking team ready for the challenges ahead. The RE lead and collective worship leads monitor their areas well so that areas for improvement are identified and prompt action is taken. The school meets statutory requirements for these areas. Governors monitor the school regularly although this does not always lead to planned improvements and monitoring of the school's distinctive Christian character is, at times, too superficial. This is because governors are not aware of policy documents such as *Valuing All God's Children* which would help them in their work.

St Laurence is a school at the heart of its community and partnerships with other local schools are strong. The school is constantly seeking ways in which to broaden pupils understanding of different communities although this is a work in progress. The school has strong links with the diocese and this has been mutually beneficial.

St Laurence's is a school with clear, distinctively Christian values which are celebrated throughout the school. They have a real impact on all areas of school life and drive the work of this outstanding church school.

SIAMS report July 2018 St Laurence's CE (VC) Primary School Ludlow SY3 ITP