

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

<b>St Lawrence Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School</b>	
Preston-upon-the-Wealdmoors Telford TF6 6DH	
<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Lichfield</b>
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Telford and Wrekin
Date of inspection	15 June 2017
Date of last inspection	25 June 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary Voluntary Controlled 123496
Headteacher	Stephanie Gaskell
Inspector's name and number	The Revd Dr Jason Phillips 598

### School context

The is a small, rural primary school close to Telford and the MOD Donnington Army site. It has a rising roll. Most pupils are White British. A range of faiths are represented at the school including Christianity, Islam and Buddhism. Pupils attracting pupil premium funding for disadvantage are well below the national average. The numbers of pupils with a special educational need is around the national average.

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

- Religious Education (RE) makes a significant impact upon the character of this school, developing pupils' respect for diverse faith traditions and multicultural communities.
- The 'St Lawrence Way' positively influences relationships and behaviour choices at all levels, resulting in a happy, ordered learning environment.
- Collective worship and RE have a strong focus on biblical accounts, the person of Jesus and the Trinity so that pupils have a reference point to make moral choices.
- Provision at the school has a significant impact upon pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC) resulting in confident and well-rounded pupils.
- The 'school leadership keep the 'St Lawrence Way' as central to school improvement, bringing about effective change.

### Areas to improve

- Through regular monitoring and additional on-going training, ensure that classroom collective worship has the same rigour, variety and vitality as worship at other times in the school week.
- Ensure children have significant opportunity to develop an understanding of the elements that comprise an act of worship so they can recognise and lead these elements confidently in a range of settings.
- Ensure governors understand and use the SIAMS improvement framework with even more rigour and record evaluations and outcomes at each full governors' meeting in respect of the framework.



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

The distinctive Christian character of the school is evident in all areas of school life. It is central to the school's ethos, vision and values. Pupil and parent surveys confirm how important the Christian character is to the school. However, the school is not always as proactive in proclaiming their outstanding Christian character as they might be in public documentation. The school's Christian approach is summed up in the 'St Lawrence Way' to which both pupils and staff point as a positive influence upon their own spiritual journeys and in shaping the school as a Christian community. The school is effective in demonstrating a vibrant, contemporary expression of the Christian tradition, giving rise to positive attitudes by pupils and adults alike. Pupils are keen to talk about how they feel their school is a very safe place where everyone's beliefs are respected, learning is fun, and all the staff care about them. This results in strong trusting relationships at all levels. As a result, academic attainment has been rising over recent years and is now above national expectations. Progress for most groups of pupils is frequently outstanding. This is because teaching is at least good and often outstanding. Where cohorts of pupils or subject areas need support, the leadership have in place effective interventions to bring about improvement. The school fosters excellence through developing each child's talents and interests, supported by an impressive portfolio of extra-curricular provision. The Christian values of 'The St Lawrence Way' underpin the exciting curriculum that has resulted in a change of learning mind-set amongst pupils since the last inspection. All children now see the importance of academic learning in becoming informed, compassionate people who use Christian values to nuance judgments and decisions. Pupils' spirituality is fostered further by the forest schools provision which helps pupils develop an appreciation of and care for God's world and an awareness of God-as-Creator. Additionally, the school's promotion of the arts, such as recent art projects on St Michael the Archangel, positively develop pupils' cultural and spiritual growth. The school is distinctively Christian, yet balances this with a celebration of diversity and a respect for the inclusion of pupils of all faiths and of none. The school sensitively includes the perspectives of their pupils from Buddhist and Islamic faith backgrounds. Spiritual development is promoted extremely well in the school and particularly well in RE, collective worship and the arts. RE makes a strong contribution to the distinctiveness of this church school because it is foremost in developing the pupils' understanding that Christianity and faith shapes lives and communities. RE also makes a strong impact upon pupils' Christian knowledge including of the Trinity and the life and ministry of Jesus. Pupils' appreciation of the multicultural nature of Christianity is developed well through links with other schools such as the Quaker Naitiri School in Kenya, for example. Although some recording tasks in RE lack sufficient challenge, the standards pupils achieve in RE are very high. Further, RE develops a huge respect for diverse faith positions and an excitement in pupils to learn about the different ways people exercise their beliefs. Examples of this include recent studies on Christian and Islamic charitable-giving and respectfully comparing humanist and Christian perspectives on life. The school's compassionate, yet firm approach to attendance and behaviour results in attendance that is above the national average and behaviour that is usually excellent. Behaviour is strong because there are clear expectations and guidelines, based on Christian values inherent in the 'St Lawrence Way.' Consequently this is a happy school where pupils flourish in an atmosphere of Christian care and support.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is good**

Collective worship is a positive experience at this school, much valued by pupils and adults alike. It is a time to be still, to be in the presence of the divine and to be a Christian community together. For the school, it is a time to celebrate human achievement as well as to place before God the sadness of human experience such as the recent bombings in Manchester and London. Through collective worship, pupils gain a good grounding in biblical knowledge, the person of Jesus and the Holy Spirit. This gives them a moral compass to work by because pupils have a reference to exemplify the 'St Lawrence Way' and the Christian values inherent in that way. St Lawrence's Church is used weekly for collective worship. Together with the support of the popular rector and the modelling of Anglican practices such as 'the Grace', pupils gain a good knowledge of the Anglican tradition. This is enhanced further by a marking of the times and seasons of the church's year such as Pentecost, Easter and St Lawrence's Day. Pupils have increasing opportunity to contribute to planning and leading collective worship, which they appreciate because it enables them to be actively involved. Collective worship is not yet outstanding because pupils and their parents do not recognise the same rigour and vitality in classroom collective worship as they do at other times in school. This is exacerbated because pupils have only a limited knowledge of the elements that comprise an act of collective worship. Consequently, they do not feel Wednesday's and Thursday's acts of worship have the same significant impact. Governors and staff monitor and evaluate collective worship, bringing about improvements to provision and impact. However, Wednesday's and Thursday's acts of collective worship have not been evaluated with the same rigour. Prayer and reflection are important aspects of school life, both formally and informally across the school day, which children use to support them at times of need. The children really appreciate the re-vamped quiet garden as a space and opportunity to reflect and pray. It is illustrative too of the significance the school gives to prayer and reflection. The school extends this dedication to reflection in its approach to mindfulness, which has a positive impact upon pupils' spirituality.



However, the school leadership have not made clear the positive links between this approach and Christian prayer, Christian reflection and Christian meditation. This is leading to confusion for some pupils and their parents about the links between mindfulness and a Christian perspective. Collective worship positively influences pupils' spiritual and moral growth. This is because it encompasses an awareness of the diversity of the human experience. It contributes greatly to pupils' ability to engage positively with the issues of the modern world as well as with mystery and faith perspectives.

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

Building upon a good Christian foundation, the headteacher has incrementally and sustainably improved this church school since the last inspection. The headteacher leads the school with a clear Christian vision. Her summary of this vision is encapsulated in the 'St Lawrence Way', formulated by a range of stake-holders including the children. The 'St Lawrence Way' is based upon a range of biblically based values such as forgiveness and caring. Staff and the small team of governors support the headteacher in communicating this vision, leading the way through actions, not just in words. The headteacher's Christian focus shines through in every aspect of her work, with the focus always on the well-being of the pupils. Further, the headteacher and governors bring well-deserved encouragement to the staff team. The staff and governors follow and support the headteacher's lead with immense commitment. The Christian love and support given to every pupil and staff member releases their potential. The whole community benefits from the fact that the 'St Lawrence Way' and its Christian values, are not just written about and painted onto walls but are lived out by staff and pupils day-by-day. The impact made by the school's Christian vision is secured by detailed, efficient and strategic planning. This is open and honest, with governors ready to challenge when appropriate, for example, upon the progress of specific cohorts of pupils. Issues raised by the previous inspection have been tackled appropriately. The school meets statutory requirements for RE and collective worship. The governors are proactive in ensuring the long-term continuity of this school, for example, in their careful ongoing negotiation on federation status with a partner church school. Future leadership in church schools is promoted through excellent teamwork, good delegation and high-quality in-service training such as the involvement in 'the Understanding Christianity resource'. This also includes the effective support and development of the RE and collective worship leaders, enabling them to develop the quality practice at the school. The leadership of the recently retired RE lead, now supporting as a governor for RE, has hugely influenced RE through her enthusiasm, expertise and appropriate monitoring and evaluation. This has led to rising standards and the impact of RE upon the distinctiveness of the school. However, governors do not use the SIAMS improvement framework with sufficient rigour when making judgements and to focus improvement. Partnerships and relationships with other local schools, the diocese of Lichfield and the community at large are strong and mutually supportive. Most parents rightly appreciate the openness and warm hospitality of staff and the beneficial sense of Christian community the school offers their children.

SIAMS Report June 2017 St Lawrence CE(VC) Primary, Preston-upon-the-Wealdmoors Telford TF6 6DH