

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### St Laurence Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School

Jockeyfield, Ludlow, Shropshire SY3 1TP

<b>Diocese:</b>	<b>Hereford</b>
Local authority:	Shropshire
Dates of inspection:	21 January 2013
Date of last inspection:	25 June 2008
School's unique reference number:	123529
Headteacher:	Kevin Bryant
Inspector's name and number:	John Chapman NS006

#### School context

St Laurence, with 230 pupils in 7 classes and a nursery, serves mainly the market town of Ludlow. Its buildings date from 1992 and it has an above average number of pupils with statements of special educational need.

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

St Laurence is a very effective church school with many outstanding features. It is a vibrant learning community underpinned throughout by a sense of purpose based on Christian values. Pupils enjoy school life and achieve well. The school's self-evaluation, which demonstrates a capacity for improvement, is sound. The recommendations of the previous inspection have been implemented. There are excellent opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.

#### Established strengths

- A community based on mutual respect which fosters the personal development of all pupils
- An experienced head teacher who, together with all leaders, is committed to an education based firmly on Christian principles
- A full, varied and well-used extra-curricular programme

#### Focus for development

- Enable pupils to participate more fully in the preparation and delivery of collective worship
- Enhance pupils' understanding of prayer by giving them the opportunity to write and use their own prayers
- Encourage local church congregations to take a helpful interest in the work of their school

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

The Christian character of the school is seen in excellent relationships between pupils and teachers, the breadth of the curriculum and dedication of all who work there. These all contribute to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The Christian ethos is clearly articulated in the mission statement which emphasises the provision of "*an education of the highest quality in the context of Christian belief and practice*" and "*a school in which everyone is valued*". These principles underpin the school's daily life. All pupils feel valued and special, and they believe they have a stake in the well-being of the community. The school has a deserved reputation for helping pupils with any kind of difficulty. Pupils value the approach to behaviour and feel it makes them safe and secure. Relationships between teachers and pupils are based on trust and respect. So pupils treat others as they would wish to be treated. They are courteous, well-behaved and purposeful. They can make connections between their approach to school life and what they hear in collective worship. They have an understanding of the complexities of religious belief and of having a faith to live by. They learn to respect the beliefs and practices of others and this is supported by good teaching of other faiths, visits to various places of worship and links with an Islamic school in Tanzania. Religious Education (RE) makes an excellent contribution to pupils' spiritual understanding. The lessons are imaginatively taught and many pupils say they are among their favourite lessons. In a Year 6 lesson all pupils could apply the story of Adam and Eve to the consequences of making moral decisions and to dealing with the temptations of modern life.

Pupils show they can grapple with challenging issues, discuss them with sensitivity, and apply them to their own situations. All pupils are very familiar with the Lord's Prayer but do not see prayer as a strong feature of school life. Christian values are reflected in good quality displays of work in the classroom and public areas, and the glass mosaic cross in reception. Pupils cherish the school environment, and keep it clean and tidy. They value the buddy chair in the playground which shows a concern for those needing companionship. Running through all school life is a sense of enjoyment. This is a school with a smile on its face.

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

Collective worship is outstanding because it is highly valued, is of excellent quality and provides opportunities for quite profound spiritual growth. A well-planned programme of a wholly Christian character gives much thought to the content, the ambience and the impact on pupils. It is seen as a time for the school to build its common life. It ranges widely in content but has Christian teaching at its core. *"It helps us to know how to think and live"* said one pupil. The atmosphere in the hall is enhanced by a focus table containing a lighted candle and an open Bible. Pupils enter and leave in a quiet and reverent manner. The head always greets his pupils with *"The Lord be with you"* and receives the appropriate response. These are not empty words. Pupils listen attentively, readily answer questions, and sing enthusiastically. *"I often find myself singing the song quietly to myself later in the day"* said a pupil. The teaching of Jesus is used to develop spiritual understanding and to link into wider school values. An assembly based on Holman Hunt's painting *The Light of the World*, enabled pupils to consider the difference between knowing about faith and having a faith of one's own. Assistant heads share in leading worship and all staff are present at most assemblies demonstrating that the whole community values worship. Pupils however are rarely involved on the preparation and delivery of worship apart from at the main Christian festivals. Pupils say they like all assemblies but speak particularly highly of their Tuesday assembly with the head (*"he makes it such fun"*) and the visitors from the Acts2 team and local clergy. The school holds major services in St Laurence church. Its clergy share in school worship and pupils gain a clear understanding of the church's year and its practices.

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

The school benefits from effective leadership at all levels. The visionary and infectious leadership of the head teacher ensures that the Christian character of the school is lived out in its daily life. This vision is consistent and is supported by all leaders. There is no complacency for a desire for continual improvement underpins the vision as evidenced by the detailed post-Ofsted action plan. Christian values are shared by all and support both educational direction and spiritual purpose. Provision for RE is excellent with a good allocation of time and resources. Staff are dedicated: they put in long hours to ensure high standards of teaching, they give and receive respect, and they ensure consistent teaching of Christian values. The School Council gives opportunities to pupils of all ages to reflect on and influence school practice. Some of its members attend governors' meetings to present a report and pupils play a part in the appointment of teachers. Governors are committed to the Christian ethos and to the continuing development of the school. They have recently established a standards committee to monitor academic progress more effectively. Staff and governors share a self-evaluation day each year to identify strengths and areas for improvement. Governors' meetings begin with prayer, and foundation governors share in school worship and help embed the life of the school in the parish setting. The church is used as a resource for RE and the head likes to emphasise *"we are St Laurence School in St Laurence Church"*. The vicar is a governor and some pupils play a part in the life of the parish. Year 6 pupils are often offered the opportunity to prepare for confirmation if they and their parents wish it. Links between the church congregation and the school are not strong. Parents find the school open and welcoming. Many bring their children into the classroom each morning with the opportunity to interact with staff and the head who all know each other well. *"It is like a big family"* said one parent *"everyone looks out for each other here"*. The school arranges and supports an outstanding extra-curricular programme. Virtually every pupil is involved in an activity. Lunchtimes and after school are alive with a wide variety of activities. All pupils have the chance to learn an instrument. The school sees making a contribution to the local Ludlow community and giving an understanding of the wider world as a core outworking of its Christian values. Links with Karume Primary School in Tanzania help to develop empathy and global understanding.

