

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Ludlow Church of England Voluntary Controlled Secondary School

The Burway
Bromfield Road,
Ludlow,
Shropshire
SY8 1GJ

Diocese:

Hereford

Local authority:

Shropshire

Dates of inspection:

21/22 May 2009

Date of last inspection:

18/21 September 2006

School's unique reference number: 123587

Headteacher:

Mr Philip Poulton

Inspector's name and number:

John Chapman NS006 and Ann Mundy NS545

School context

Ludlow Church of England School is a medium-sized 11-16 comprehensive school of 814 students serving the market town of Ludlow and the surrounding rural area. About 20% have special educational needs. The school has both Technology College (2003) and Sports College (2007) status. It aims to promote Christian values through the experience it offers students.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Ludlow School as a Church of England school are good

This is a good school with many strengths. Students are well-cared for, enjoy school life, and they achieve good standards. They are at ease in their community. There are good opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. The school's own self-evaluation is thoughtful, secure and often modest.

Established strengths

- High quality care and guidance for students.
- Visionary leadership from the headteacher and his senior colleagues.
- A strong, effective and challenging governing body.

Focus for development

- Explore students' response to the provision of worship in both tutor group and school assembly.
- Develop the role of chaplaincy in the school.
- Make what it means to be a member of a church school more explicit.

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

Ludlow School with its declared commitment to Christian values makes good provision for all learners. The prospectus affirms "a school based on Christian values which celebrates the uniqueness of each person." This is evidenced by students who feel known and cared for, and who belong to a secure and healthy environment. The tutorial system provides an effective vehicle for individual care and guidance, the fostering of good relationships across year boundaries, and the transmission of values through the time of thought, discussion and reflection at the end of each day. There are a range of on-site student support services and very good provision is made for those who have special needs allowing many to fulfil their potential. The school consciously promotes equality of opportunity and nearly all students – through conversation and questionnaire – are content and believe they attend a good school. This friendly and caring atmosphere leads to warm and trustful relationships between staff and students and gives students the confidence to take responsibility for themselves and

others. Forgiveness and reconciliation underpin the school's disciplinary system. Many aspects of school life contribute to the provision of good opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. These include worship and RE and the well-developed pastoral arrangements. Students are secure in their values though they do not necessarily see these as fruits of Christian education. Good citizenship is promoted through positive messages about other faiths and cultures and links with both the local and worldwide community. RE has a long tradition of teaching which is well-prepared, carefully taught and adequately resourced. Students are attentive and respond thoughtfully; they display reasonable biblical knowledge. Indications of the church school status include the school's name, Christian symbols at Reception and in the hall used for worship, and some good displays most notably in the library. A small chapel – if still underused – also symbolises a Christian presence. The school has an improving academic record and students feel their needs are well met.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

The school has given considerable thought to the provision and quality of its collective worship and ensures there is a *Daily Thought* based on stimulus, reflection and discussion linked to the school's values. The weekly assembly for half the school at a time is usually taken by the head or one of his senior colleagues. It seeks to explore the values, beliefs and ambitions that underpin the community and provides a link with the theme of the week and the *Daily Thoughts*. Students speak positively of their experience of the *Daily Thought* though its impact may vary between tutorial groups. Students are attentive and reverent at assembly responding positively to prayer. The Lord's Prayer is rarely used and hymns are not sung. Since assembly takes place at the end of the day it is difficult to observe the impact. The school recognises it needs to evaluate the impact of collective worship and students' feelings about greater involvement. Collective worship is seen as an activity for the whole community and all staff attend. The local incumbent – also a foundation governor – is a welcome visitor to the school whether to monitor RE, help plan worship or meet with pupils. Not a great deal of use is made of the parish church apart from the annual Christmas service held there. The major Christian festivals are marked in school and sometimes involve staff and students. The school is in the early stages of a partnership with a local minister in secular employment known by his first name rather than as chaplain. The school looks for his impact to grow particularly with an enhanced use of the chapel and the voluntary early morning holy communion. Although the major Christian festivals are observed and local priests are visible in the school, students would sense a Christian presence rather than much which is specifically Anglican. Links with other churches are valued: one has provided youth Bibles for RE and the Gideon Society distributes New Testaments each year.

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

The leadership and management of Ludlow School is one of its major strengths. The headteacher has a clear vision allied to powerful leadership skills. Thus the objectives and ethos of the school are shared by staff and communicated to students. There is a quiet sense of purpose and continuing improvement around the school. In both his written and spoken statements the head commends the school's Christian values. A strong and able governing body provides effective monitoring and challenge. Its committees and working parties benefit from far-reaching and often profound discussions. The subject link governors make regular visits, challenge teaching staff and provide reports to the curriculum committee. Foundation governors actively monitor the Christian ethos and on occasion church school status, worship and RE are placed on appropriate agenda. This could be more formalised with discussions extended to all governors. Staff feel valued and are well aware of the school's core objectives, though, as with students, any distinction between humane and specifically Christian values is not often explored. From questionnaire responses and conversations it is clear that parents are pleased with their children's personal development and academic progress and are positive and supportive. Many are unaware of, or not unduly concerned with, the school's church school status. The enrichment programme is a satisfactory feature of school life though after-school travel arrangements have an impact on provision. There is a good tradition of active involvement in the local community and of charitable work and the school values links with other parts of Europe and beyond. Students affirm the quality of teaching about other faiths and cultures and the need for tolerance. The school is well led, students are happy and achieve well and this is a seed bed for the transmission of the

school's best values.

SIAS report May 2009 Ludlow CE School, Ludlow SY8 1GJ