

**St Lawrence Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary**

Shrewsbury Road  
Church Stretton  
Shropshire  
SY6 6EX

**Diocese: Hereford**

Local authority: Shropshire Council  
Dates of inspection: June 2<sup>nd</sup> 2009  
Date of last inspection: February 27<sup>th</sup> 2006  
School's unique reference number: 123468  
Headteacher: Mr R Langford  
Inspector's name and number: Mrs A Mundy NS 545

**School context**

St Lawrence Church of England Primary School is situated in Church Stretton, South Shropshire and has 252 pupils on roll. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.

**The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Lawrence CE Primary School as a Church of England school are good**

A school aim states that St Lawrence is committed to the development of all its pupils through the provision of a high quality education and a caring school community based on a Christian ethos. All the pupils, governors, parents and staff interviewed about the school spoke warmly about the positive relationships in school, the exceptional care for the children and the wide range of spiritual, educational and social experience that the school offers. Pupils are familiar with the local church and church members, who play a valuable role in linking church and school.

**Established strengths**

- A strong Christian family ethos fostered by the leadership of the head teacher and staff.
- Pupil's attitudes and behaviour.
- The way in which the school cares for and nurtures individuals.

**Focus for development**

- To initiate a whole school discussion on the aims, policy, plans and resources for collective worship, ensuring a specific Christian content and focus.
- To establish a robust strategy to monitor and evaluate the impact of collective worship on the school community.
- With the support of the diocese, to access training in leading and managing collective worship.

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

Based on aims which are related to Christian values, the school makes good provision for pupils of all abilities. Policies are rooted in Christian values and are implemented in the day to day life of the school. The 'St Lawrence Way', drawn up in consultation with pupils, sets out clear expectations for standards and behaviour, including 'we work to display attitudes of patience, sensitivity and calm in all we do.' Parents speak of the school as being happy and secure. They like the ethos of a Church of England school. Any concerns raised are dealt with promptly and effectively by school staff. The breakfast club was described as 'a microcosm of the relationships in school, it's like a family sharing breakfast together.' The

school is highly effective in developing the whole child as an individual. Pupils enjoy school and have positive expectations of themselves. There are numerous opportunities for pupils to explore other cultures and the beliefs of others through well constructed schemes of work and a strong, thriving link with Chihangu Primary School, Tanzania. In one Key Stage 2 religious education lesson pupils were fascinated as they listened to a Sikh visitor explaining what would happen during her marriage ceremony in three weeks time. The school promotes moral and social values within the curriculum, collective worship and other activities although these are not always explicitly Christian. There is good co-operation between pupils who actively support each other, particularly through the highly effective school buddy system. Conflict and disagreement is resolved fairly and with compassion, clearly reflecting Christian principles. Pupils feel that they are listened to and that their views are taken seriously. Governors, staff and parents speak highly about the leadership and management of the school, there is a good working atmosphere and mutual consideration. Symbols and images on documentation, signs and uniform now clearly communicate the Christian foundation of the school. There is a positive response to collective worship, although pupils commented that times of worship were often based on personal, social and health education themes rather than being explicitly Christian in nature. The 3:16 after school club, run by adults from the parish church, uses Scripture Union materials to 'encourage pupils to have fun, play games and learn about Christian life along the way.' The pupils think about 'big questions' such as, do we know the Bible is true, did Jesus have to die, why can't you see God? This year church and school were involved in partnership in the 'Easter Experience', which explained the Easter story in a highly visual, practical way. One team member commented that 'the children asked so many questions we could have gone on for another hour.

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

Worship occupies a secure place in the life of the school. Acts of collective worship throughout the week have been imaginatively structured to ensure a wide variety of experience and contributors, although there is no structure in place to monitor and evaluate the impact of collective worship and there is little distinction made between assembly and collective worship. A weekly 'thought for the day' in each Key Stage 2 class enables children to reflect on and discuss issues important to them, although there is not always an explicitly Christian content. A variety of visual focuses are used during worship which often includes prayer and reflection. The collective worship policy states that music, drama, discussion, stories, reflection and prayer and adult and child led times should be elements used in collective worship. Pupils don't always have the opportunity to sing during worship and rarely use the Lord's Prayer. The school's own self evaluation identifies the need to build up collective worship resources and the continuing need to implement systems which enable pupils to be more involved in planning and responding to collective worship times. Adults from the parish church make a good contribution to collective worship, using 'Open the Book' materials to dramatise Bible stories once a week. A member of the school council explained about 'a wonderful group from the parish church called the Storytellers.' These practical sessions are very popular with pupils and leave a lasting impression. Major festivals of the church year are celebrated in the local church, including the Year 6 Leavers' Service which is particularly appreciated as a spiritual occasion when pupils are able to reflect about growing up and moving on.

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

The quality of leadership contributes significantly to the success of the school. The headteacher is described as consistent, persistent and insistent in his promotion of Christian values throughout the school community. He ensures that all children are secure in a well-ordered, calm, purposeful and harmonious learning environment that is based on and reflects Christian values. Foundation governors promote the meaning of the Christian status of the school through their work as members of the governing body. Religious education and collective worship are seen as important in the school. Staff are included in collective worship times. All staff feel involved and appreciated and relationships between all members of the school community are good, reflecting the values which are consistently promoted and reflected in behaviour and discipline. One member of staff commented that teaching at St Lawrence is 'effortless, the children are confident and ready to learn.'

Parents feel that the school has a special quality that enables pupils of all backgrounds to flourish as individuals. There is good contribution from clergy and the church community to school life.

SIAS report June 2009 St Lawrence CE Primary School, Shrewsbury Road, Church Stretton, Shropshire. SY6 6EX