

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Lydney Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School

Address	Bream Road, Lydney, Gloucestershire, GL15 5JH			
Date of inspection	4 June 2019	Status of school	Voluntary Controlled	
Diocese	Gloucester	URN	115635	

Overall Judgement	How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?	Grade	Excellent
Additional Judgements	The impact of collective worship	Grade	Good

School context

Lydney is a primary school with 213 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is above national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above national averages. The school is part of the Severn Federation of Schools and became a teaching school in October 2018.

The school's Christian vision

'Learning together with minds that think and hearts that care'

We are creative Church schools learning together in inclusive, inspiring and nurturing communities where all children and adults are valued and achieve their best. 'The greatest of these is love' (1 Corinthians 13)

Key findings

- Lydney is led by a leadership team that passionately articulates how the school's Christian vision drives the actions of the school. It is clearly understood by all that this vision has a direct impact on the life outcomes of both pupils and families.
- The progress pupils make from their starting points is excellent because the school has used its vision to ensure an inspirational curriculum where expectations are high. The curriculum has been expressly designed to meet the needs of this hard-pressed community. It raises aspirations in innovative and imaginative ways so that pupils and families 'expect more' and achieve their best.
- The planning for collective worship lacks coherence, resulting in times of worship that do not routinely build on previous experiences.
- Staff care deeply about ensuring that every child is inspired and nurtured so that they can achieve their best. All understand this vision to be underpinned by the love that they have for one another.

Areas for development

- Strengthen the work of the school so that pupils may more readily see their own role as advocates for change, both in their own community and further afield. Enable pupils to understand how they can challenge injustice and inequality, as well as show compassion, when they raise money for good causes.
- Ensure that there is a high degree of challenge in all religious education (RE) lessons so that pupils are enabled to critically reflect on their own knowledge and understanding through the posing of 'big questions'.
- Underpin the good practice that is found in all times of worship with more detailed plans so that staff and pupils are confident that worship routinely supports pupils' spiritual development throughout the school.

How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?

Inspection findings

Lydney is an exceptional school that has, over the last five years, developed its work so that it truly does reflect every aspect of its vision. Even younger pupils are able to explain how the way the school inspires and nurtures them is based on love. They understand that this reflects the way that God loves them. All pupils at Lydney make very good progress, often from very low starting points. Senior leaders are highly ambitious for their pupils and have created innovative ways to ensure pupils are inspired to achieve their best. Determined to extend their achievements beyond the federation to other schools within the Forest of Dean, they have become the first teaching school within the area. 'In this way we can help pupils in other schools to be inspired and to achieve', explained the executive headteacher. The motivation for this is understood by governors, staff and parents as a direct outworking of the vision.

The federation truly supports each school to become their best. Governors take their duties seriously so that difficult decisions are taken with the well-being and future of pupils and their families at their heart. Governors know the school well. They have addressed the development areas from the last inspection so that pupils now feel empowered to lead worship and greatly value times of prayer and reflection. Governors share their expertise willingly with other schools, and articulate how this is a result of their Christian vision. Monitoring of the Christian effectiveness of the school, collective worship and RE is thorough. It clearly informs the strategic development of the school. However, next steps are not routinely recorded so the impact of actions taken sometimes lacks precision. Governors have taken bold financial decisions so that the pastoral needs of both pupils and families are met. Parents speak in glowing terms of ways in which the school supports vulnerable pupils so that they achieve 'beyond my wildest dreams', socially and academically. The school recognises that for the vision to be a reality for many pupils, their emotional needs must first be met. The appointment of a pastoral worker, the 'listening post', has ensured that pupils who struggle daily are routinely nurtured. This has led to marked improvements in the learning behaviours of vulnerable pupils so that they achieve well. She works closely with the inclusion lead so that a wide variety of families, including refugees, are able to access early help. Staff show their love for their community on a daily basis. They transport pupils to school, give money for food and personal resources, as well as supporting them through a variety of crises. In this way the vision is lived out daily. Families feel valued and nurtured, secure in knowing that the school is helping them all to achieve their best.

Staff are highly valued for their expertise and the way in which they care for the whole child. A well-planned induction programme ensures that all staff understand their responsibilities to the vision and values of the school. All staff are expected to lead collective worship and recent training has brought a renewed sense of vigour to class worship times. These are now highly regarded by the pupils, who plan and lead them on a weekly basis. Centred around a theme chosen by the pupils, there is plenty of time for prayer and reflection. Prayer is important at Lydney. Pupils have asked the governors to explore the possibilities of worship outdoors. This is supported by the close partnership of clergy from both the Anglican and Methodist churches. Pupils enjoy writing prayers and these are used in worship times and discussed in small groups with the curate. Pupils value prayer, both at school and at home, seeing it as a way that 'God helps people when they need it'. Recently installed worship areas in each classroom are enabling pupils to access times of quiet and reflection.

Collective worship is valued by all. It enables pupils to understand how the school's values reflect the life of Jesus. Pupils enjoy learning about the Bible through regular visits from the *Open the Book* team from the local churches. Pupils readily acknowledge how the school's vision and values make a difference to life at school and in their own lives. Themes are not always developed in sufficient depth to foster the spiritual development of pupils because collective worship planning is very informal. The key elements of Anglican worship are present, including responses and the lighting of three candles, although there is no reference to the church calendar.

The school raises money for many different charities, some of which are nominated by pupils. They arise from personal experiences and concerns about the environment. This reflects the school's vision to develop 'hearts that care'. As yet, pupils do not raise these funds in response to a sense of injustice or inequality, simply as an act of compassion.

The curriculum of the school has been devised with the school's Christian vision at its heart. Highly creative, it inspires pupils to achieve their best in a wide variety of ways. Staff are recruited so that they can contribute to this. Stunning art work around the school is a testament to the creativity that abounds. With five curriculum drivers at its heart, the school is seeking to develop the whole child, academically, socially and emotionally. One driver is the spiritual development of the pupils. The school is moving towards a common understanding of spiritual development so that pupils' experiences can be deepened as they move through the school. This too reflects the school's vision.

The RE curriculum is in the middle of a rethink. The school has begun to use the *Understanding Christianity* resource alongside the Gloucestershire syllabus. Teaching of the basic tenets of major world faiths ensures that pupils understand how to be tolerant and to have respect for other people's beliefs. Pupils do not have sufficient time to critically reflect on issues of faith and meaning because expectations are not high enough. Recent diocesan training has enabled the RE lead to raise expectations so that RE more accurately expresses the school's vision 'to achieve their best'.

Pupils behave well because they understand how the school values flow from a vision based on love. They speak warmly of a staff that 'never lets you down' and 'who expect the best of you'. Senior leaders are very well aware of the challenges that face the pupils and families of the school. They are rigorous in challenging stereotypes and prejudice, both through discussion and the curriculum. It is a school that delivers its vision on a daily basis to some of the most hard pressed families in the country. It offers aspirational trips such as the Year 5 sky-diving experience and the Year 6 visit to France. It is a point of honour for the executive headteacher that every child takes part in these. 'We are here for every child' she says. This is how they have built an excellent church school where all are respected and treated with dignity, so fulfilling their deeply held Christian vision.

Executive Headteacher	Rachel Dare
Inspector's name and number	Karen Surrall 842