

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

### Orleton Voluntary Controlled Church of England Primary School

Orleton Ludlow SY8 4HQ	
<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Hereford</b>
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Hereford
Date of inspection	1 December 2016
Date of last inspection	23 November 2011
Type of school and unique reference number	VC 116836
Headteacher	Adam Breakwell
Inspector's name and number	Sue Blackburn 756

#### School context

Orleton is a smaller than average rural primary school with 168 pupils on roll, most of whom are from white British backgrounds. Only a small number of pupils are eligible for support through pupil premium funding. The school has a low percentage of pupils on the special educational needs register. The school is currently led by a head teacher who is also responsible for another local church school in a soft federation. The school has strong links with the local church.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Orleton as a Church of England school are good

- The leadership team provide strong leadership centred on the Christian values of respect, care, courage, teamwork, friendship and perseverance, which contribute to the significant achievement of all groups of pupils.
- The positive ethos of the school contributes to pupils' good behaviour and wellbeing.
- Positive relationships between all members of the school community clearly rooted in the core Christian values promoted by the school.
- New leadership of religious education (RE) and worship are well led and supported by the executive head teacher and governing body. They are beginning to make a significant contribution to the school's Christian distinctiveness and to pupils' spiritual development.

#### Areas to improve

- Involve the foundation governors in formal monitoring and evaluating the school as a church school in order to fulfil their role.
- Ensure the school promotes its Christian foundation to the school community through the website and in communicating with parents.
- Develop a deeper understanding of the specifically Christian basis for the school's Christian values amongst the school community, so that everyone fully appreciates why those values have been chosen.
- Raise the standard of written work in religious education books to reflect the high quality of teaching.

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

The school's vision statement clearly states the intentions of this school as child centred: 'To enable all our children to be the best they can be with no child left behind'. The high standards of achievement and attendance certainly reflect this vision. The school actively engages with parents, pupils and governors to identify the core values of respect, friendship, perseverance, teamwork, courage and care. The core values are beginning to be embedded in the life of the school and pupils could readily identify them as Christian values. Parents indicated that they were familiar with the core values, having been consulted in the process of identifying them, but were not yet confident in articulating them. Pupils could comment on these values being promoted during collective worship and they are seen in displays around the school. Some classrooms had reflection areas identified within them including opportunities for pupils to write and display their own prayers. The incumbent has worked closely with the school to develop collective worship and RE. He actively promotes Christianity in the school as a living faith. The school leadership team has encouraged pupils to be actively engaged in charity work and with local community groups such as 'The Evergreens', an elderly residents group who visit the school. The choir sings at a local nursing home. This has led to Orleton Primary School having a strong community spirit. The school benefits from support from a wide range of volunteers through its successful community links. It raises money for a variety of charities. In particular, funds were raised towards the provision of solar panels to create a 'solar library' in a school in Gambia. This was to give the pupils there light to read by and provided Orleton pupils with a glimpse of the local culture. Through this and similar work pupils are starting to gain an understanding of other cultures. The school has identified the need to raise awareness of other cultures as a development point.

Parents comment on the caring ethos of the school and that the school is 'A community school where staff go the extra mile to support their children'. The school has been on a journey to enhance its Christian distinctiveness and to improve the teaching of RE over the past two years. The RE and worship coordinator has attended diocesan training and has prioritised the subject so that staff see RE as an important part of school life. RE is taught well using the Hereford syllabus as pupils are given regular opportunities, both within the RE curriculum and more widely, to learn about and celebrate major Christian events and festivals. RE helps pupils to develop spirituality, morally, socially and culturally, through thoughtful questioning and debate. During a lesson observed during the inspection based on the teaching of Mahatma Gandhi, pupils debated in depth demonstrating a secure understanding of the Christian value of justice at the heart of the lesson. The new syllabus is focussed on dialogue and debate so that limited recording of activities can be seen in books or in displays around the school.

Pupils behave well in lessons and in moving around school. They are caring, polite and welcoming, however they do not readily attribute their good behaviour to the teaching of Jesus. Pupils say they are happy and feel safe in school. Pupils have the opportunity to learn about Christianity and other world faiths as well as developing their own spirituality through teachers' probing questions in RE. Pupils are encouraged to participate in a wide range of after school clubs and the school is proud of the many achievements in sport and music in particular.

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

A collective worship policy is in place and a worship plan clearly reflects the broad range of regular and varied worship. The school has organised regular class based worship which was an action point from the previous inspection. The worship experience observed during the inspection was enhanced with the inclusion of a small group of pupils playing their guitars led by a capable music teacher who directed the singing. Pupils in Key Stage 2 sang with great enthusiasm in response.

The worship table provides a focal point for worship and pupils are involved in lighting a candle during worship time. A cross is displayed in the hall and in some classrooms. The worship coordinator, supported by the leadership team, has a passion and drive to make worship the best it can be and has worked hard to raise the profile and effectiveness of worship in school. The school has organised a worship committee, led by the RE and worship coordinator, and formed of a group of pupils who are actively engaged in planning and leading worship on a regular basis. There are clear links between school values and themes in worship. As yet there is limited impact of this on pupils' spiritual development. A range of visitors such as Olympic athletes and people from national charities have inspired pupils who commented on their interviews with a number of visitors. Pupils are engaged in evaluating worship on an annual basis. The comments received relating to worship reflected a mixed view of worship whereby some pupils in the past found worship overly long and to an extent boring. The school has acted on this feedback so that worship is having a more positive impact on pupils and they comment that they enjoy participating. The leader for collective worship has a clear focus for improvement and the many changes and improvements that she

has initiated during the past two years have been documented and evaluated. This includes the introduction of separate Key Stage worship which has enabled pupils to access worship at a more appropriate level for their age. Pupils say they now enjoy participating in worship and most recent evaluations reflect a higher level of engagement and enthusiasm for worship.

Parents are welcomed to join pupils in church based worship during the year and say that these events are well supported. The local church is used for worship during key festivals during the year and two local groups are also engaged in delivering worship on a regular basis. Pupils commented that they particularly enjoyed worship led by the Open the Book and Acts 2 groups based on stories from the Bible. Governors have monitored collective worship but have not been engaged in formally evaluating worship or its impact on the school community. There are a few prayer spaces, and displays of prayers written by pupils in some classrooms. The worship committee made prayer boxes for each classroom and pupils are given opportunities to write and read out their own prayers. The recent competition that was organised to illuminate a copy of the Lord's Prayer for display enabled pupils to explore the language and deeper meaning of the prayer.

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

Orleton has been on a journey over the past two years to raise standards and improve the quality of teaching of RE and increase the effectiveness of collective worship within the school community. The appointment of a coordinator for RE and collective worship has been pivotal in making significant improvements across the school. Her clear and impassioned leadership, supported by the leadership team and governors ensure RE and collective worship are a central focus for improvement planning. In lessons observed during inspection pupils were actively engaged in debate and were able to discuss underlying values relating to the lesson. All stakeholders have been engaged in school improvement and were consulted in the identification of the school's core Christian values. Leaders live out and promote the values of the school, which are becoming embedded in school life. These values are promoted in displays in school as distinctly Christian but are not promoted as well in the wider school community.

Strong leadership has helped to drive forward improvement throughout the school. Progress and achievement for all groups of pupils is outstanding and attendance is high. There is an effective working relationship between the head teacher, collective worship and RE coordinator, governors and the head of school. The leadership team are fully aware of what they need to do in order to improve. School leaders have managed to bring about significant improvements recognised by the clergy, school governors and parents. A shared prayer day and the establishment of a pupil worship committee, who plan worship twice a week, are recent improvements which have enhanced the Christian ethos of the school. Foundation governors have been consulted on actions taken and have actively engaged with school leaders to support school improvement. They have regularly visited the school and have been involved in the life of the school. This has included developing their role in self-evaluation through observation of worship and regular meetings with the collective worship and RE coordinator. Currently there is not a more formal system of evaluation in place. Impact statements for worship and RE are shared with governors and form a central focus for whole school improvement planning. There has been a change in the foundation governors in the school and currently there is one vacancy.

Areas for development from the previous SIAS inspection have been met. The partnership between school and home is strong. Parents value the support that their children receive. They believe their children are safe and well cared for. Parents say that teachers have a personal touch and they address any concerns promptly. The incumbent has supported the school by working with school leaders in the teaching of RE and in leading worship in school. Recently he was involved in leading worship relating to the Trinity to enable pupils to gain a deeper understanding. Training for church school leaders is taken seriously and the school has invested in diocesan led training to support the leader for worship and RE. There are links with other denominations through the Pentecostal Acts 2 group who regularly perform in school. The school has excellent links with the wider community and actively engages with a range of community groups who offer their help voluntarily as a result. The head teacher is also the executive head teacher of another church school and is supporting another. Shared training and approaches have benefitted all of the schools involved. This includes approaches to worship and sharing resources.

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