

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

| Ludlow Church of England Academy | |
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| The Burway, Bromfield Road, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1GJ | |
| Current SIAMS inspection grade | Good |
| Diocese | Hereford |
| Previous SIAMS inspection grade | Good |
| Date of academy conversion | 1 April 2017 |
| Name of multi-academy trust | Bishop Anthony Educational Trust |
| Date of inspection | 4 May 2017 |
| Date of last inspection | 26 th March 2012 |
| Type of school and unique reference number | Academy (former Voluntary Controlled) 144435 |
| Headteacher | Philip Poulton |
| Inspector's name and number | Mark Cooper 425 |

School context

The school is an 11-16 school in the heart of a rural community. It has currently 632 students mainly from a white British background. The school is one of two which Ofsted deem to be in a significantly deprived area. The school has recently had to make significant staffing reductions due to budgetary constraints but despite this a new religious education (RE) teacher has been appointed to enhance this area of the curriculum. Since the last inspection the school lost the support of its chaplain. The school has recently become an academy as part of Bishop Anthony Education Trust (BAET).

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

- The priority that the school places on the wellbeing of its students that reflects its values of care and removing barriers.
- Pupils' behaviour and the quality of relationships between pupils with their peers, staff and other adults that reflect the school's value of consideration for others.
- The opportunity that pupils have to reflect upon worship themes through their Friday pledge that impacts positively on the way they consider ethical and moral issues.
- The robust evaluative systems that are in place ensuring that all students fulfil their God-given potential.

Areas to improve

- Re-evaluate the school's core Christian values so that they become even more explicitly linked to the Bible and continue to have impact on students.
- Provide opportunities for pupils to continue to develop their spiritual awareness and understanding through prayer and personal reflection.
- Provide governors and teachers with appropriate training that will continue to develop and deepen their understanding of the school as a Church of England school.

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

There is a strong sense of togetherness and cooperation amongst students and staff that ensures the school's vision, 'Excellence Together', is realised. The headteacher and teaching staff are resolute in ensuring that all students strive to meet their God-given potential. This is having a positive impact on student achievement and their personal wellbeing and development. The relationship between students and teachers is very good. Teachers are approachable and are very good at dealing with any worries or concerns that students have. Teachers 'go the extra mile' and they value the opinions of their students. The care and consideration that students have towards one another give a strong sense of the school being a family. A recent student to the school commented she has settled into the school, been welcomed by her peers, and made friends quickly. Students' care and concern extends towards their teachers. This is illustrated by students designing and creating a reflection garden as a memorial to one of them. This shows that the school's Christian character and values are having a direct impact on students' lives, attitudes and relationships. Students' behaviour is good and there is a sense of calm and purpose across the school. There is hardly any bullying and when there is it is dealt with swiftly and effectively. Students are safe and the school is good at teaching them that actions have consequences. Moral, social and cultural opportunities for students are comprehensive and well-mapped across the curriculum. Students have limited opportunities to explore their spiritual awareness through prayer. Students encounter a range of moral and ethical issues in subjects other than RE. An example is in English where students consider the ethics behind animal testing through persuasive writing. Some students connect this to how people should respond to God's creation and protect it. Opportunities to explore moral and ethical issues are enhanced through the debating society. This helps students to listen to, and consider, different points of view. Themes in worship develop students' knowledge of what is happening in the wider world, for example the Syrian crisis. The Friday pledges help students to respond personally to such issues from a religious perspective. Students have a good understanding of the importance of helping others through charity work. They are proactive giving many examples of what they do such as fundraising for Red Nose Day, Children in Need and the Alzheimer's society. Some students understand that their charity work is a direct response to Jesus' teaching to 'treat others as you would want to be treated.' Students' understanding of diversity in society is good. They learn about other faiths in RE which helps them to understand the importance of acceptance and tolerance. The personal, social, health education (PSHE) curriculum also contributes to this. Students in Key Stage 3 (KS3) develop a good understanding of the life and teachings of Jesus. Studying his life and teachings helps students to see moral and ethical issues from a Christian perspective. The head of RE has undertaken the 'Understanding Christianity' course and is building this into the RE curriculum. This is already having a positive effect on KS3 students. It is intended to eventually impact on all students by deepening their understanding of key core Christian concepts.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is well-planned and resourced. Teachers concur with this and feel it helps them to deliver worship effectively. For some staff worship helps them to understand a current issue in the news from a religious perspective. Students have a variety of ways to experience worship and explore a mixture of human and Christian values within it. The majority of students value worship. The act of worship observed during the inspection gave pupils the means to deepen their understanding of the value of trust. This was explored through a biblical story and a current issue in the news. Some students like this approach as it helps them to understand the value in a deeper, meaningful way. A recent worship focusing on Syria helped some students to empathise with those caught up in it. This then led them to think about how they could help. Worship is encouraging students to have social concern for others less fortunate than themselves. For some it gives them an opportunity to explore their spiritual awareness and, 'find their inner self and connect with others on a spiritual level'. There are opportunities for quiet reflection but time for this is limited. Students talk positively about worship themes based on Christian values. Recent worship themes on hope and faith helped them to believe in themselves and gave them the determination to work harder and achieve. The Friday pledge gives students the means to reflect on how worship themes impact on their lives. This helps some students to consider how they can become a better person, to seek improvement and stop having doubts. Some struggle to connect how the Christian value links to a biblical teaching or the life and teaching of Jesus. Others found it difficult to distinguish between the school's core Christian values and other values reflected upon in worship. The importance of the Trinity within the Christian faith is understood by some students. The lighting of a candle during worship helps students to appreciate Jesus as 'the light of the world'. The centrality of Jesus as the Son of God within the Christian faith is understood by some students. This is stronger with KS3 students. This is reflected in their understanding of the importance of Easter and Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. Some understand that this brings about forgiveness of sin and as one student said, 'anyone can find their way to God and be forgiven'. The school has recently acquired the help of a Christian youth worker and it is

hoped that his work with students will enhance and develop their Christian awareness and understanding. The incumbent visits the school on a monthly basis and conducts some acts of worship. Students value the opportunity to gather as a whole school community to celebrate Christmas at St Laurence's church. RE helps to strengthen the connection and relationship between the school and church. A visit to St Laurence's church in Year 7 develops students' awareness and understanding of the Eucharist and other forms of Anglican practice. A reflective area in school is in the process of being redeveloped in order to provide a safe, quiet space for student personal reflection and prayer. Currently the school does not provide sufficient opportunities to enhance and develop further pupil's spiritual awareness through prayer and quiet reflection.

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

The vision 'Excellence Together' and values are driven forward by the headteacher and his deputy. All members of the school community support this. Student's individual leadership skills are developed through the vertical tutoring system. Students show their Christian concern for others within their tutor group. For some this empowers them to take responsibility and demonstrate care for their peers and younger students. Student leadership is also developed through the opportunity to plan and lead some worship. This was a development point from the last inspection which has been met. There is a good working relationship between the headteacher and the governors. They ensure that the academic, wellbeing and personal development of students are at the forefront of whatever they do. The foundation governor for RE and worship is proactive and ensures that any concerns are voiced at the full governors' meetings. There is a good working relationship between the headteacher and incumbent of St Laurence's church who is on the governing body. The incumbent provides spiritual and pastoral support to both students and staff. The headteacher is supportive of the continued development of both RE and worship. He has appointed a specialist RE teacher to enhance and strengthen the RE curriculum. This is having a positive impact with a number of students keen to study RE as a full GCSE course from September 2017. In addition, through the leadership of the head of humanities, worship is revitalised and has a positive impact on the way students perceive it. The development of the evaluation processes with stakeholders from the last inspection has been met. The evaluation of the vision and Christian distinctiveness is now part of a weekly monitoring process by senior leadership team (SLT) with students. The loss of the school chaplain has meant limited support to reinforce the schools Christian distinctiveness. The recent appointment of a church youth worker is intended to address this. The diocese has provided support for the head of humanities to understand the statutory inspection of Anglican and Methodist schools process. This support does not yet extend to the governors and remaining teachers. The diocese has given support to the headteacher and governors during the conversion process to academy status and becoming part of BAET. Joining BAET is giving opportunities to strengthen existing relationships, sharing resources and expertise.

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