



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Bryn Offa Voluntary Controlled Church of England Primary School

Rockwell Lane
Pant
Oswestry
Shropshire
SY10 9QR

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Diocese: Lichfield

Local authority: Shropshire

Dates of inspection: 4 December 2014

Date of last inspection: 30 November 2009

School's unique reference number: 123528

Headteacher: Paul Thompson

Inspector's name and number: Allyson Taylor 768

School context

Bryn Offa Church of England Primary school is a rural school with 134 learners on roll. The headteacher has been in post since 2010. Learners come from predominantly white British families in the local area. The number of disadvantaged children and those with additional needs is below the national average. In recent years achievement has been above national average. The school has links with three rural churches.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Bryn Offa as a Church of England school are good

- The school's commitment to the Christian values of friendship, respect, honesty and forgiveness leads to good personal development and behaviour for pupils.
- A shared vision of nurturing every child as a child of God results in consistently good progress in academic subjects.
- The commitment of leaders and staff towards developing Christian distinctiveness.
- A rich, creative curriculum which is referenced to the values of friendship and respect.

Areas to improve

- Embed formal systems of monitoring so that leaders evaluate more effectively the impact of Christian distinctiveness on learning.
- Ensure leaders make more explicit the Bible origins of the school's vision and values.
- Provide regular opportunities for pupils to plan, lead and evaluate acts of worship to enhance their spiritual development.

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

The Christian character of Bryn Offa has developed since the last inspection. The revised vision statement and aims make clear that Christianity provides a moral code for all members of the community. This vision shapes how the school plans to maintain and improve its current good standards as well as become an even more distinctively Christian community. Bryn Offa is an inclusive church school where learners are nurtured and enabled to flourish. Adults provide exceptional levels of care for each child. This strong, holistic approach to nurture ensures that the majority of learners make good progress in academic tests, sometimes from low starting points. Values which underpin the daily life of the school are expressed as broadly Christian, although this is not clearly communicated in policies and on the website. Adults and learners talk about their core values as Christian, but are less sure how these relate to Bible teaching. The impact of these values, however, is evident in the positive relationships and good behaviour across all ages. In addition to excellent care shown by adults towards learners, there is a culture of older learners supporting their younger colleagues. The focus on specific values, like friendship, helps learners to work and grow together in a harmonious and respectful manner, appreciating the gifts each has been given. One learner said, *'Everyone is equal, everyone is welcome here.'* The school sets ambitious targets and is prepared to go the extra mile to ensure learners meet their academic potential. All adults are committed to meeting the individual needs of learners. Those interviewed spoke warmly of the impact of the Christian character in helping them to reflect on how to best do this, illustrating a strong spirit of Christian service. The curriculum is exciting and offers depth of study through extra-curricular activities and visits, often focusing on other countries and cultures. This helps develop respect for others. Learners have some understanding of Christianity as a world faith, although this is an area the school is aware needs further development. Learners demonstrate greater knowledge of Christianity than other faiths and clearly appreciate the opportunities to attend church for services and special events, most recently to mark remembrance. Religious education (RE) is popular and well-planned to meet the needs of learners. It is taught weekly and also interwoven into cross-curricular topics so that learners have a deeper understanding of themes explored. Much RE is delivered through role play, story, discussion and practical activities. This allows learners to express their own developing opinions in a creative way. As a result of the imaginative way RE is taught, the subject makes a good contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of learners as well as reflecting the Christian character of the school.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Members of the school community place importance on collective worship and describe how it helps them work and grow in faith together. Whole school worship is planned to reflect some teachings of the Bible and the main events in the Christian calendar. The headteacher liaises with the incumbent, members of the local church community and a youth worker to lead worship which is flexible to meet the needs of the school. A sense of setting the scene and gathering for worship is instilled through imaginative use of images and music. As a result worship contributes to the excellent behaviour seen in all classes. Themes pertinent to learners are explored, often to support charitable fundraising and raise awareness of those in need of help in our society. Visitors from charities are invited to talk about their work. This contributes to the spiritual and moral development of those in the school community and encourages learners to take action in fundraising to support others. Learners enjoy the range of worship and express a wish to play a more regular, active role in planning and leading worship. Responses to worship show that this is a special time of the day where learners celebrate together. At the time of the inspection, adults and children describe worship as assembly, although there is an understanding among staff of the difference between these terms. The prayer spaces in each class are used for quiet reflection. Learners would appreciate more time to use them at the end of the day. The school is blessed in the support of the incumbent, and other members of the local churches, in delivering worship which learners describe as, *'giving us time to think about our place in the world.'* Prayers are said during worship and at other times of the day. This helps learners develop a personal relationship with God. The school celebrates some Christian festivals in church. Such visits are explicitly acts of worship rather than performances. Learners talk about God and Jesus, but have more

limited understanding of the Holy Spirit as an integral part of God in the Christian faith. Foundation governors attend special services and worship in both school and church so they are aware of current practice.

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

Leaders ensure that all members of staff share the vision for the school. The vision statement and aims, reviewed this year, reflect the Christian foundation. These statements are shared with parents and the local community through the school website, which is currently being refreshed. The headteacher works with dedication to promote the distinctiveness of the school as a church school. As a result, the aims and development plans for the school are now related to aspects of Christian distinctiveness. Leaders and members of staff describe how the shared vision supports them in their deeply held commitment to serve and nurture those in their care. One governor said, *'We care so much because we love.'* There is sound evaluation of the standards achieved by learners and what the school needs to do to maintain and improve these. Formal systems for governors to evaluate worship and religious education are in place, but not sufficiently embedded to provide the evidence needed to direct future improvements. There is progress on the areas for development from the last report, although providing for greater active involvement of learners in worship and increasing governors' involvement in monitoring are areas which the school is yet to fully prioritise. Due to the commitment of leaders, worship, RE and the wider curriculum are informed by the shared Christian vision. Leaders ensure that the newly appointed coordinator for RE is given support in fulfilling her role. She demonstrates an infectious enthusiasm for the subject and colleagues welcome her guidance in delivering the locally agreed syllabus. The learning environment is rich in displays celebrating learning in RE. Links with the local churches and the diocese help the school to grow as a church school. The school and churches support each other with prayers and displays created in school and used in the churches. Leaders state their wish for even closer relationships with the churches and local community. Parents hold the headteacher and staff in high regard and state that the relationship between school and church is growing. One parent governor said, *'this school provides a beacon for the future so our children have a sense of their purpose in the world and can find strength in God.'*

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