



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Lydiard Millicent Voluntary Controlled Church of England Primary School

The Butts, Lydiard Millicent, Swindon, Wiltshire, SN5 3LR

Previous inspection grade: Outstanding

Current inspection grade: Outstanding

Diocese: Bristol

Local authority: N/A

Date of inspection: 7 March 2016

Date of last inspection: 3 February 2011

School's unique reference number: 126337

Headteacher: Carly Luce

Inspector's name and number: Margaret James 698

School context

Lydiard Millicent VC Academy is a smaller than average primary school situated in the village of Lydiard Millicent. It serves both the village itself and the surrounding area and many families choose to travel in order for their children to attend the school. Conversion to academy status took place in December 2015 at which time the school joined the diocesan multi-academy trust (DBAT). The headteacher has been in post since March 2015. Before this, she was deputy head. The school buildings are four years old and are set in extensive grounds.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Lydiard Millicent VC as a Church of England academy are outstanding

- All members of the school community demonstrate notably high levels of reflection with regard to leadership, decision making, daily actions and personal and spiritual development leading to a depth of thought that impacts positively on school life.
- Children are reflective and eloquent when considering issues of life, learning and their development as holistic spiritual human beings.
- The whole school community shares an impressive understanding and appreciation of a distinctively Christian approach to education.

Areas to improve

- Capture the distinctively Christian vision for the school into a form of words which both promotes Lydiard Millicent's distinctively Christian character and preserves its unique identity into the future.
- Ensure that curriculum content reflects the school's distinctively Christian character to bring this aspect of learning into line with the existing approach to learning behaviours.
- Involve children fully and independently in the planning and leadership of collective worship in order to increase their sense of ownership and enhance their spiritual development.

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

The teaching of the Christian faith and the values which emerge from this are the guiding principles for all those involved in the Lydiard Millicent school community. Both staff and children have an impressive understanding of ways in which their school is driven and shaped by the example set by Jesus in the New Testament and children regard Him as a role model. They describe ways in which they always try to live according to His teaching, for example by forgiving both others and themselves for wrongdoings, and appreciate the importance of making amends for hurts they might have caused. Children are very polite, respectful of the needs of others and increasingly independent in their thinking and actions. They apply their extensive knowledge of Christian values and teaching to everyday situations and decisions in a reflective and thoughtful manner. Respect, forgiveness, a generosity of spirit and a consistent focus on the needs of 'the other' thereby characterise daily life at the school for both children and adults. Children are happy to be there and demonstrate an easy acceptance of others, regardless of differences of culture or beliefs. A commitment to enabling each individual to flourish in all ways – academically, spiritually and personally – is reflected in how school staff and leaders seek to remove barriers to learning for all. This focus on the needs of the individual is starting to have a positive impact upon children's academic achievement as well as on their ability to think deeply and consider big questions of the meaning and purpose of life. The explicit and high profile linking by all staff of the school's Christian values to learning behaviours enables children to understand how these values help them to learn effectively. Although the school has embedded a well-understood approach to spirituality and spiritual development into these learning behaviours, this does not yet have a direct impact upon the content of the curriculum. Religious education (RE) is a strength of the school. It is well-taught as an engaging and exciting subject and makes a notable contribution to children's freedom and creativity of thought. Teaching of Christianity is a particular strength and results in children having excellent knowledge both of Bible stories and their meaning and relevance to everyday life.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

The high quality of collective worship at Lydiard Millicent ensures that all members of the school community have an excellent understanding of the Christian teaching which underpins the values. Not only do they understand this in theory, but they are consistent in their living out of these Christian values in action, both in and out of school. Even the very youngest children describe and identify Christian values and explain the detail of Christian teaching and Bible stories. Acts of worship are led by staff, governors and members of the local church thereby enabling development of leadership at many levels and ensuring consistent high quality provision. Children are active participants in worship and lead the evaluation of the impact of worship on the school community. They do not, however, take independent responsibility for the full planning and leadership of acts of worship. Worship is cherished as a reflective and spiritual time and this ensures that it has a prominent place in the life of the school, thereby enhancing the impact which both the messages and the experience itself have on individuals. Christian festivals are celebrated in conjunction with the church and this further strengthens the already close and mutually beneficial relationship between the two communities. Children's understanding and explanations of the Christian belief in God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit are deeply thoughtful. For example a Year One child described how the Holy Spirit is 'God the Father and God the Son brought together'. Children's understanding in this way is encouraged by a consistent focus through reflection on Christian teaching combined with an emphasis on children thinking creatively for themselves. Prayer is an intrinsic part of the school day with formal and informal opportunities to pray and reflect offered in a variety of ways, both inside the school buildings and in the spiritual garden. Consequently, children's understanding is deep and their expression of this is articulate. Explanations from children of all ages that prayer is a time of talking and listening to God, for saying thank you and sorry, and for asking for 'things that matter in life, like courage and forgiveness', demonstrate the depth of their understanding.

Leaders of collective worship are not satisfied with the status quo, however, and continually look for ways to improve both the quality of provision and the positive impact which worship can have on all members of the school community. Changes are regularly made in the light of feedback and these have already ensured that the spiritual nature of worship is preserved and enhanced.

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

All school leaders share a clear and distinctively Christian vision for the school as a church school. The recent work carried out on updating the wording of this vision has been effectively and wisely led by the headteacher along with the RE and collective worship leaders. Their focus on developing a vision statement to effectively and unambiguously communicate the essence of the school's Christian character to the wider community is intended to secure this vision and the school's unique identity into the future. The decision for the leaders of Lydiard Millicent to take on leadership of a new Church of England academy from September 2016 has been carefully and strategically taken in the light of an excellent understanding of the needs of both school communities. An understanding of being an effective learning community through an explicit and distinctive Christian character is the vision which sits at the heart of all decision making. Governors know the school very well. They have an impressive understanding of this vision both strategically and in practice in the everyday life of the school and they secure the impact of it through rigorous and regular monitoring, challenge and evaluation. The headteacher is an inspirational leader. Her unrelenting commitment to the school being a distinctive and effective Christian learning community ensures that there is consistency of high quality provision across the school. Her belief in empowering members of staff as well as the children ensures there is a focus on developing the skills of each individual. As a result, Lydiard Millicent is a school community in which all are enabled to flourish as unique individuals made in the image of God and in which all needs are regarded as being of all equal importance. High quality leadership is also seen in RE and collective worship. Both are very important aspects of school life and provision and impact of both make a significant difference to the school's Christian distinctiveness and effectiveness. Parents are an important part of the school community. Their views are welcomed and valued and their support for the school as a church is well-informed. The church is regarded by all as being an intrinsic part of the school community and relationships between the two are strong and beneficial to all. The vicar is regarded as a leader in the school and he plays an important role in the pastoral and spiritual life of the community. There are close links between the school and DBAT. These links are appreciated by the headteacher and provide an additional means by which the school's distinctive Christian character can be enhanced and maintained.

SIAMS report March 2016 Lydiard Millicent VC Academy, SN5 3LR