

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Laurence School

Address Ashley Road, Bradford-on-Avon, BA15 1DZ

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

Overall grade **Excellent**

The impact of collective worship **Excellent**

School's vision

Jesus said, "for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:21)
Our vision and practice are inspired by the narrative of St Laurence, who stated that 'People are the church's treasure' when challenged by the Prefect of Rome. In our practice you will see where our heart is. We care, we inspire, we succeed.

Key findings

- The school's Christian vision that 'People are our treasure' is absolutely central to its work. It is understood and acted on by all members of the school community. As a result, pupils and staff flourish and see themselves as responsible for one another's flourishing.
- Courageous advocacy is a strength of this excellent school. Pupils care deeply about their community and their world and act confidently to be agents for positive change.
- Vulnerable students flourish because they are given excellent support. This clearly demonstrates that the school's vision that 'People are our treasure' is lived out when it is most important and most costly to do so
- School leaders and governors take all opportunities to promote the school's Christian vision, which is fully embedded in the life of the school. Despite the school's admirable inclusivity, the outward affirming of the school's Christian distinctiveness as a Church of England academy is not always sufficiently strong.
- Collective worship is invitational, inspiring and inclusive. Pupils play a central role in the planning and delivery, which means that it is treated with great interest and respect by all. The content is developing rapidly and a sense of awe and wonder is evident despite the restrictions imposed by the pandemic.

Areas for development

- While maintaining the school's inclusivity to pupils of all faiths and none, to be even clearer about the school's Christian distinctiveness as a Church of England academy.
- To ensure that, as in person collective worship is resumed, the school promotes an even greater sense of awe and wonder that this facilitates.

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

St Laurence School's vision that 'People are our treasure' is deeply understood and cherished by all members of the school. It acts as the lifeblood of this transformational Christian learning community. The school's commitment: 'We care, we inspire, we succeed' is understood and strongly communicated as an outworking of its Christian vision.

School leaders measure success by the flourishing of members of their community. The success of a disadvantaged pupil in securing an appropriate apprenticeship or working independently at a complex coursework task is the cause of no less celebration than the more conventional achievements in terms of the school's impressive academic performance in public examinations. In this supportive and celebratory environment, pupils treat each other with dignity and respect and feel encouraged and empowered to be the best person that they can be. Even though most pupils are of White British heritage, this sense of belonging and empowerment embraces all, including those from other backgrounds.

At the instigation of the headteacher, decisions by leaders and governors are constantly tested against the school's vision. As a result, all members of the community know that they are treasured by the school. Leaders and governors willingly take decisions that they know to be costly in terms of time and resources to ensure that both adults and pupils, are provided with generous support to aid their flourishing. This was particularly evident during the pandemic.

An attitude of selfless care permeates the work of the staff. During lockdown and since, staff have consistently 'gone the extra mile' to ensure that pupils, particularly the most vulnerable, have been given the best possible support. The impact of this has been so profound that pupils talk about the school community being stronger as a result of Covid. The return to face-to-face education has, according to many pupils, given new energy to the school as a place of hope and committed social action. Many examples of this energy are reported in the impressive school magazine, 'Connect'.

Pupils understand and welcome the fact that they have a responsibility to treasure their peers. Impressively, pupils are fully aware that 'people are our treasure' does not stop at the school gates. Courageous advocacy is a particular strength of the school. Pupil led initiatives have involved significant changes to the catering arrangements to reduce the school's waste and important financial and practical contributions to charities that provide humanitarian support. These initiatives are routinely both initiated and led by pupils, who are prompted and empowered to do so by the school's Christian vision and culture.

Collective worship is the motive force for the school's commitment to courageous advocacy. Important ideas are sown in collective worship that subsequently become significant initiatives for social action. The themes for the year are chosen following extensive surveying of pupils' concerns and priorities. These are then carefully mapped by the head of collective worship and his team of student collective worship leaders. Bidding and sending prayers are written by pupils. Pupils, staff and local clergy are all involved in leading the weekly theme and are asked to cover topics that they care about. Pupils value this variety and the fact that each act of collective worship is delivered with conviction by a person who is invested in the theme. Each act of collective worship is deliberately inclusive, invitational and woven through with appropriate biblical material. 'Breathing time', which forms part of collective worship, ensures that all members of the St Laurence community can pray or reflect on a daily basis. With good reason, pupils greatly value collective worship and see it as relevant to their lives.

The school's vertical tutoring system supports the school's Christian vision, as younger pupils work closely with and are nurtured by Sixth Form students. Sixth Formers lead on valuable and effective initiatives to promote dignity and respect for all (such as the St Laurence Genders and Sexualities Alliance) as well as outward facing charitable activities. Younger pupils learn eagerly and grow into leadership roles. The support offered by Sixth Form students to younger pupils is further strengthened by the school's peer mentoring scheme. This offers well-planned, targeted additional support for identified pupils and is enthusiastically offered and gratefully received.

Parents are enthusiastic in their gratitude for the way the school has promoted both the flourishing and the spiritual development of their children. They particularly value the school's impact in helping its pupils to grow in compassion and its willingness to let each young person develop in the way that is best for them. They are confident that their own

children are treasured by the school and provide concrete examples of how this has made a difference in their children's lives.

All subject departments are clear that they are responsible for supporting the school's Christian vision in the manner and content of their teaching. Opportunities for pupils to ask 'big questions' are provided across the curriculum, particularly in science, history and religious education (RE). In addition, the school's vision that 'people are our treasure' is woven explicitly into curriculum plans across all subjects and informs discussion in subjects as diverse as careers and geography. As a result of this approach, pupils, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, make strong progress in their learning and grow into confident and compassionate people. Pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) receive appropriately targeted additional support and know that they also are treasured by the school.

The school's RE provision meets the Church of England entitlement. Most pupils follow a GCSE in RE in KS4 with an alternative qualification available for the small minority for whom GCSE is inappropriate. In KS5, students can opt for an A level in Philosophy and Ethics, while a core syllabus is available for all. The head of RE and collective worship provides innovative support to other RE practitioners across Salisbury Diocese and beyond, which is greatly valued.

As a result of its shared Christian vision, which is deeply embedded in the life of the school, St Laurence School is a transformational community for staff and pupils. This is evident in all the work of the school but seen most clearly in the commitment of pupils to live out 'people are our treasure' through courageous advocacy and social action inside the school and beyond.

Contextual information about the school

Date of inspection	16 March 2022	URN	137057
Date of previous inspection	12 June 2015		
School status	Academy in Single Academy Trust	NOR	1404
Name of MAT/Federation	N/A		
Diocese / Methodist District	Salisbury		
Headteacher	Tim Farrer		
Pupil profile	The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is below national averages.		
	The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with national averages.		
Additional significant information (if needed)	St Laurence has been a Church of England standalone academy since 2011. It has a dual foundation comprising both the Diocese of Salisbury and the Lord Fitzmaurice Educational Trust. The current headteacher took up post at the start of 2021. Almost all students of are White British heritage.		
Inspector's name	Andrew Wilcock	No.	C1918