



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



 The **Methodist Church**

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

The King's Church of England School

Regis Road
Tettenhall
Wolverhampton
WV6 8XG

Previous SIAMS grade: Outstanding

Current inspection grade: Outstanding

Diocese: Lichfield

Local authority: Wolverhampton

Dates of inspection: 12 & 13 March 2015

Date of last inspection: March 2010

School's unique reference number: 131547

Headteacher: John Allin

Inspector's name and number: Lyn Field 151

School context

The school opened as a Church of England school in 1998 under the Fresh Start programme. It is a smaller than average 11-18 secondary school accepting students from across the city. Far higher proportions of students than usual are from minority ethnic backgrounds with nearly half from faiths other than Christianity. More than double the national average count towards extra funding for pupil premium support and speak English as an additional language with an increasing number from Eastern European families. Attainment on entry to Year 7 is lower than average. The school building was completely refurbished in 2012 with a Faith Centre at its heart.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of The King's School as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The inspirational leadership of the principal is motivated by his personal faith and is instrumental in the creation of an inclusive and harmonious Christian community.
- Students learn to flourish in a multi-faith community because the distinctively Christian values of the school shape their understanding of diversity and difference in society.
- The school lives out the mission of the church by reaching out to the vulnerable in society.
- Highly effective systems, especially for daily worship and for tracking students' progress and spiritual development ensure that the progress in establishing the school's Christian character is sustainable.

Areas to improve

- Leaders to share their excellent practice more widely with other schools, especially in how a distinctively Christian vision enhances the life chances of vulnerable students
- Increase students' appreciation of faith issues across all curriculum subjects by identifying common themes and opportunities for joint delivery

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

There is a clear and explicitly Christian approach to teaching and learning. This has a direct and life-changing impact on all students, but particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds or those with deep-seated needs. It starts from the premise that every child is unique and created in the image of God so is taught and cared for with this in mind. Consequently, pastoral support is exceptional and staff go well beyond what is required of them even when students reach university. This is matched by sophisticated systems for tracking students' progress so that they have the best chance of success. Standards at A level continue to rise. At GCSE, disadvantaged students do better than similar groups nationally and the previous dip in some subjects is set to reverse this year.

The core Christian values of the school (forgiveness, empathy, respect, responsibility) are central to the management of behaviour and attendance. Forgiveness is properly understood to involve repentance and redemption. In spite of the number of challenging students arriving mid-year, exclusion and persistent absence are both reducing and punctuality is improving. 'Forgiveness is crucial' said one student. 'It sits above other values and holds relationships together. We value and accept each person for who they are, there is no judging.' Consequently, the school is a harmonious and inclusive community where racism or any form of prejudice is almost unknown.

Students' spiritual, moral and social development (SMSC) is outstanding because the school's Christian character adds an extra dimension to curriculum planning. It frees teachers of all subjects, but particularly the visual and performing arts, to tackle topics that might otherwise be missed. A telling example is Year 11 drama work on Frankenstein where students face the moral dilemma of perfection and a creator God. RE strengthens these discussions by ensuring that students have a secure knowledge of biblical teaching and religious language to make informed contributions.

However, opportunities for joint working on common themes for the benefit of staff and students are missed. The range of activities outside of lessons, from Christ the King days and Choirs in Reflection to a multi-cultural fashion show and the school 'farm' complete with goats and chickens, is impressive. It broadens students' horizons and celebrates diversity whilst still addressing the emotional needs of specific groups. The move to a house system with vertically organised tutor groups is universally popular. It better reflects the nature of family and church life and leads to a high level of care that bridges age groups.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

The school website is exceptionally clear in explaining how worship is distinctively Christian whilst embracing students and staff of all or no faith background. It reads *We are inspired by a welcoming, inclusive and hospitable God who makes time and space for everyone* and this is exactly what is achieved through worship. The striking Faith Centre stands symbolically at the heart of the school. It is used daily by students of all faiths because constant attention is given to ensuring that their different prayer needs are fully met. The importance of faith is powerfully expressed in the celebration of the Eucharist because it is spoken of as *being together in worship* rather than *worshipping together*.

Consequently, all students and staff participate without their personal beliefs being compromised in any way. This was captured in the memorial service for a Muslim student to which members of all faiths contributed. The themes chosen for worship focus on re-telling the Christian story and reinforcing the biblical teaching on values. Students of all backgrounds, therefore, have a secure knowledge of the church year, the place of Jesus, and of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Leaders challenge everyone present with the implications of Jesus' teaching for everyday life and this frequently motivates the whole community in social action. Faith is openly discussed so students are knowledgeable about the different traditions in which their friends worship and the breadth of tradition within the Anglican church. Form worship is efficiently monitored by senior leaders and this indicates the high profile given to the spiritual wellbeing of the school. A significant development since the last inspection is that an impressively high proportion of staff take their turn in leading worship or the period of reflection in staff briefings. Students are equally involved in both leading and evaluating worship. However, it is the impressively simple yet powerful structure of daily form time prayer that is leaving a lasting impression on students. A reflective liturgy based on the school prayer was prompted by the introduction of the house system. It provides a marked contrast to the

constant stimulation of lessons and the high points of the Eucharist and weekly house worship. This daily event provides students with an important tool for making use of prayer in their own lives. Students believe that, whatever the pressures or tensions they may be experiencing as individuals, this shared time of daily prayer brings everyone closer together in the silence.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

RE is an effective department because in addition to having a passionate and very knowledgeable practitioner at its helm, it operates within a 'Zone' (faculty) where the line management of the senior leader is excellent. This combination means that the progression of students onto appropriate pathways is tightly managed. Potential fast track students are identified at an early stage and those who do not find learning easy are placed in classes where the group dynamics maximise their chances of success. Exemplary systems track students progress at regular intervals and from every possible angle. This process is monitored by both the head of house and the vice principal so no-one slips through the net and prompt action is taken where necessary. Consequently, students make rapid progress from often low starting points in Year 7 and half of the current Year 9 classes are already on track to exceed some challenging targets. Attainment at GCSE is above schools nationally and better than most other subjects in the school, with a significant number of students reaching higher levels. This positive trend continues at A level where take-up is high and attainment matches the national picture.

Teaching is consistently good and often outstanding because it consistently addresses the needs of different groups. Lessons are 'scaffolded' in small steps to help students grasp new material. There is a relentless focus on religious language (including spelling) and visual imagery is skilfully used to help students from all cultures express spiritual concepts. Teachers operate very effectively as a team. Resources are produced jointly and adapted to suit different groups, so new members of staff following the Teach First programme are well supported. The curriculum is constantly evolving as it plays a key role in shaping students' positive attitudes to differences of faith and gender in society. The A level course now includes a unit on sexual ethics and this is given an accurate historical perspective. All sixth formers enjoy an entitlement to RE through annual conferences on topics that prepare them for life. The most recent theme was 'Matters of life and death – What matters most?'

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

As a direct result of the inspirational and determined leadership of the Principal, a distinctive and uncompromising Christian vision is lived out in every detail of the school's work. This creates a cohesive community for many students who otherwise experience little cohesion in their lives. The re-design of the building reflects this vision and acted as a catalyst for significant and sustainable changes to the structures for leadership, worship and pastoral care. Governors plan strategically and their decisions are consistently informed by the school's Christian mission to the community. Governors know exactly where priorities lie and keep a close eye on the factors that sustain the Christian character of the school. They have a totally inclusive approach to admissions that fully reflects the Church's mission to society by reaching out to those who may not be accepted elsewhere. Leaders have established highly effective systems to manage and monitor the implications of this. Collective worship and RE have a high profile and play a key role in ensuring the Christian model for a multi-faith community works successfully. It fully reflects part of the vision: *How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in harmony Psalm 131*. Although the Head of Ethos and RE makes excellent use of local and national training, there are limited opportunities for senior leaders to expand their skills by sharing their experience of implementing a distinctively Christian vision with other schools. Senior staff have created an excellent framework to support the planning and monitoring of SMSC. It is just one example of how the school's work has been enriched by the work of the chaplain. He is highly valued for his insight into the school's development and the theological dimension he has brought to the clarity of its vision. The numerous partnerships with the church, the adjacent special school and community organisations are very successful and mutually beneficial.