

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

St George's Church of England High School

Cherry Tree Road,
Marton,
Blackpool
FY4 4PH

Diocese: Blackburn

Local authority: Blackpool
Dates of inspection: 21st January 2011
Date of last inspection: 5th and 6th November 2007
School's unique reference number: 133638
Headteacher: Mrs Elizabeth Warner
Inspector's name and number: John Wilson (99)

School context

St George's is an average sized school which became a church school in 2002 and which continues to serve its local community. This is a part of Blackpool with significant social and economic deprivation, resulting in the proportion of students eligible for free meals being higher than the national average. The school is designated as a specialist Business and Enterprise College and has gained the Healthy Schools standard.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St George's CE High School as a Church of England school are outstanding

Since the previous inspection St George's has made outstanding progress in developing its Christian character. The improvements have been planned effectively and monitored rigorously. Students confidently discuss specific Christian values and identify their importance in school life, where they exert a distinct influence on the excellent relationships and behaviour.

Established strengths

- Christian values are recognised by all stakeholders as firmly underpinning all aspects of school;
- Students take a leading role in spiritual development;
- Students' spiritual, moral and social development is outstanding and strongly promoted through religious education and collective worship

Focus for development

- Develop students' cultural awareness, particularly in relation to national and global communities.

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

Specific Christian values are at the heart of students' personal development at St George's. They speak knowledgeably about the fifteen gifts, derived from the National Society's website on Christian values, and about how these affect life in school. Relationships are excellent and based on mutual respect. Students' behaviour around school is exemplary and characterized by Christian love, peace and justice. They interact with consideration and sensitivity, reflecting very high levels of moral awareness. This is also evident in their wide range of support for local, national and global charities. Social development is also of a very high order. Students compete to take on a range of roles within school and the locality and carry them out responsibly. The senate is an effective body for representing their views and for bringing about change in school. Students play a leading part in promoting an outstanding standard of spiritual development, which is a specific role of the student senate. Each tutor group has its spiritual captains who are effective in promoting the theme of the week through

classroom displays and class worship. A number testify to becoming either more spiritually aware or more religious through taking on the role. Spirituality days have proved to be a successful way of developing this aspect of school life and ensuring that a wide range of subjects contribute to spiritual development. The school environment also reinforces student and staff awareness well through displays and crosses around school and in every classroom. An increasing number of students and staff are also involved in the Christian Union and some have been confirmed. Cultural development is good and improving. The school is improving resources for art, music, dance and drama and has presented the Blackpool Passion to primary school children. Students' multicultural awareness is also improving, mainly through their work within Religious Education.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Worship has become a natural and effective way of expressing the school's Christian values and many aspects of its life. Since the last inspection both staff and students have grown considerably in their confidence to lead and express themselves through worship. This is because of high quality training provided initially by the Diocese and taken on by local clergy and school staff. Worship is inclusive and linked to the curriculum and school life in general through regular focusing on the fifteen gifts or Christian values. Students enjoy worship because it is presented in a lively, creative and contemporary way, linked to the curriculum and often employing music and video. They also appreciate the space it gives them to reflect on important questions and concepts. Prayer has become more important and pervasive since the last inspection, both at times of worship and as a means by which students can express their deepest thoughts and concerns at any time through using the prayer box. Few students come from church-going families so collective worship is very successful in improving their spiritual sensitivity and religious understanding. Their experience of Anglican traditions is understandably less developed but the school has started celebrating the Eucharist and is moving sensitively in increasing this aspect. Worship is comprehensively planned, thoroughly monitored and evaluated with students playing a major part in all these aspects. This reflects the new worship policy and also demonstrates a considerable improvement since the previous inspection.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

Religious education (RE) provision and impact have improved considerably since the last inspection. Standards are rising and, at present, students overall are exceeding their targets. Their attainment is broadly in line with other core subjects in school, similar to English and outperforming mathematics. This is partly a result of teachers' and their own dedication to revision classes. Students are well aware of their individual targets and of how to improve, because teachers provide very good feedback through marking and comment. The department's tracking system is exemplary. Excellent support is given online through 'rebook', a forum to support learning. Students make good progress in individual lessons because the activities are very well planned to cater for a variety of learning styles and are well paced. Students also achieve well over longer periods of time and their learning about religions and learning from religion are equally effective. Many students comment that religious education is their favourite or best lesson because learning is fun. They appreciate how well they learn from debating with the freedom to express and justify their views. They also realize the extent to which RE develops their attitudes, pointing out their growing respect both for Christians and for other religions. Some of this has come about through visits made to Blackburn Cathedral and the local Church, to the Hindu Temple in Preston and to the Blackpool Mosque. Students gain considerably from ongoing communication with members of the RE department, not only through 'rebook' but also through the effective use of student learning consultants, who contribute their ideas about the subject to assist in monitoring and evaluation. One effect of their involvement has been an increase in kinaesthetic learning and the use of interactive whiteboards. Religious education also contributes strongly to promoting the school's Christian character through involving the PAIS team and supporting the Christian Union. Its strength is such that it has been and continues to be very successful in training new RE teachers.

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

The governors and senior leaders are committed to developing the school's Christian ethos so most of the improvements described in the other sections of the report are ultimately due to the considerable investment of resources they have made. They have increased the time allocation for RE to three lessons every two weeks in Key Stage 2 and to four, shortly to be five, hours at Key Stage 4. This has enabled the school to create a larger and strong RE department. The school has made very good use of diocesan support in improving collective worship, largely through empowering students as spiritual captains to become leaders in delivering the Worship of Worth programme. The regular training the students receive is ongoing witness to the emphasis placed on promoting the school's Christian character and the commitment to spiritual development. Local clergy and churches play a full part in supporting these developments and, along with other governors, assist in monitoring their effectiveness. Teachers are appointed in full recognition of their part in supporting the Christian ethos and they and students speak clearly of how Christian values strongly and overtly enrich the school community. The headteacher and deputies are required to be practicing Christians and the role of the deputy headteacher with responsibility for spirituality is crucial to driving and monitoring the improvements. The school has also benefited from the work of a chaplain but, such is the strength of St George's, his move elsewhere has been seized as an opportunity for everyone to take more responsibility in sustaining and developing the Christian ethos. The school has become a place where students in particular are confident in talking about their beliefs and proud to declare their faith.

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