

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### Abbey Grange Church of England Voluntary Aided High School

Butcher Hill

Leeds

West Yorkshire

LS16 5EA

#### Diocese of Ripon & Leeds

Local Authority :Leeds

Date of Inspection: 5<sup>th</sup> & 6<sup>th</sup> April 2006

Last inspected: Autumn 2000

Unique Reference Number 108101

Headteacher: Mr Alan Key

Inspector: Dr David Sellick 148

#### School context

Abbey Grange is a Church of England Comprehensive school of 1246 pupils of whom 212 are in the Sixth Form. The school is over subscribed with intake coming from over 50 primary schools across the city with 150 or so coming from about 21 C of E schools. The admissions policy reserves a majority of places for children from practising Anglican families but also has categories for children from other Christian denominational backgrounds and from other faith communities. The Christian ethos of the school is made very clear at the time of admission and no parents withdraw their children from either Collective Worship or Religious Education.

#### Summary Judgement

As a Church of England High School Abbey Grange is a good school with several outstanding features. It attracts pupils from across the city of Leeds in the very best Anglican traditions of service to the community and Christian 'love of neighbour' regardless of intellectual ability, gender, colour, race or creed.

#### Established strengths

- Outstanding arrangements for Collective Worship
- Excellent behaviour and interpersonal relationships across all school members
- Exemplary expression of inclusive Christian commitment
- Excellent support for all pupils to achieve their potential as learners

#### Focus for development

- To ensure that Religious Studies makes its full contribution to the fulfilment of the school's Humanities Specialist Status
- To make more use of visits and visitors to further enliven R.S. at Key Stages 3 & 4
- To introduce a little more formal, systematic religious education at Sixth Form level

#### How well does the school, through its distinctive Christian character, meet the needs of all learners?

The distinctive Christian character of the school is outstanding. Pupils speak very warmly about the very friendly and supportive atmosphere from the induction programme for Year 7s to the positive decisions to remain for Sixth Form education; teachers are regarded as supportive and approachable; bullying and racist behaviour are minor and minimal. Pupils of other faiths are welcome and feel entirely comfortable and respected. When pressed for the reason "because we are a Christian school" was the frequent response from the pupils. Several Abbey Grange teachers and Leeds clergy have chosen the school for their children. In an October 2005 questionnaire Y7 parents cited most frequently 'Christian Ethos' as their reason for choosing the school. Results are higher than local and national averages; Abbey Grange was the first Leeds secondary to achieve 'Quality in Standards of Study Support' kitemark. Signage and documentation is discretely explicit in its Christian expression. There is a Chaplain who attends the school for four hours each week.

### **What is the impact of Collective Worship on the school community?**

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding. There are four strands to the worship arrangements: a) every year group from 7 to 11 attends a communion service three times a year during a school period, taken by the chaplain assisted by episcopally authorised teachers; b) twice in all other weeks Year Groups meet for Collective Worship led by Senior Leaders or Year Heads; c) on the remaining days C.W. is Form Tutor based; [b) & c) are excellently supported by a weekly 'Worship Bulletin' published on Fridays with a theme, ideas and prayer suggestions for the following week]; d) voluntary worship includes communion on Thursdays and lunch time "Cell Groups" for prayer, mostly led by senior pupils. Pupils spoke appreciatively of all these activities, including a Muslim and a Hindu pupil.

### **How effective is the Religious Education in the school?**

Overall the religious education is good. All Y11 pupils took GCSE full course in R.S. in 2005 with a 74% A\*-C pass rate. A new text book based on the QCA non-statutory framework has been adopted for KS 3 and is being well used to prepare and deliver good quality lessons with the addition of some specifically Anglican material. Some Y8 work on 'Stations of the Cross' reflected that some very good spiritual development had taken place; moral development was evident in pupils' exercise books and the classroom responses observed confirmed that the pupils, including those of non-Christian faiths, enjoyed their R.S. lessons. Marking work is satisfactory though more 'assessment for learning' might be expected to match the good oral commentary and praise. Measures are in hand for a more systematic recording of performance across whole year groups to complement the detailed records of individual teachers. R.S. is one component in the successful Humanities Specialist Status bid which promises to introduce further imaginative collaboration, both within and beyond the formal curriculum. It is hoped that this will lead to an increased uptake for AS and A2 R.S. which is currently a little disappointing.

### **How effective are the leadership and management of the school as a church school?**

As an aided school the leadership and management is good with some outstanding features. All the adults and pupils connected with the school are united in finding Abbey Grange a distinctively Christian school offering a first class education across the whole curriculum to pupils of all Christian denominations and practitioners of other faiths. Governors and senior management communicate well with the Diocesan Board of Education and with senior diocesan clergy. At least one governor is present at all staff interviews to ensure that all appointees commit themselves to uphold the Christian ethos of the school. Sixth Form pupils were very positive about their commitment to the school and expressed good awareness of the impact of religious thinking in their own lives and the wider world but there is room for more time tabled opportunities for systematic exploration of theological contributions to contemporary social, moral and political debates. This may be a way of involving local Leeds clergy and committed laity in the day to day life of the school at Sixth Form level.

SIAS April 2006 Abbey Grange Church of England Voluntary Aided High School Leeds West Yorkshire LS16 5EA