

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### **Agnes Stewart Church of England High School Voluntary Aided Secondary School**

Cromwell Street

Leeds

LS9 7SG

#### **Diocese of Ripon & Leeds**

LEA: Leeds

SIAS inspection: November 1-2 2005

Previous S23 inspection: 1998

URN: 108099

Headteacher: Mervyn McRory

SIAS Inspector NS 146 : Sue Foster

#### **Context**

Agnes Stewart CE High School is situated near the centre of Leeds. It is a small 11-16 school with above average proportion of students with special educational needs. A significant number of students are eligible for free school meals. In recent years the school has admitted an increasing number of asylum seekers, including many who have English as an additional language. In 1999 the school was placed in 'Special Measures' by Ofsted. It was regularly monitored by HMI until 2003. At this stage it was taken out of that category but was still considered to have 'Serious Weaknesses'. In 2005 the DfES, Education Leeds and the Diocese of Ripon & Leeds formed a partnership arrangement with Garforth School. As a result a new leadership team was put in place to effect rapid improvements. The Executive Head, Acting Head and Acting Deputy Head have already had a significant impact on standards and behaviour. This will facilitate a smooth transfer to the new Academy that will replace the school in September 2006.

#### **Summary Judgement**

Agnes Stewart school is inadequate as a Church school. It has not yet fully developed its distinctiveness and effectiveness because insufficient attention is given to worship, religious education and spiritual development. There has been a lack of vision and leadership at all levels about what it means to be a Church of England school in the community which it serves.

#### **Established Strengths**

- Students are well cared for.
- There is a clear focus on improving standards.
- The Chaplain and Faith in Schools team provide strong pastoral support.

#### **Focus for development**

- Staff and governor training on all aspects of being a Church school
- Improve standards in RE across the school
- Enhance the staff's understanding of the purpose and value of collective worship and improve the experience for all students

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

The school, through its distinctive Christian character, satisfactorily meets the needs of all learners. The school is working hard to ensure the learning needs of all students are effectively met. Recently, accredited vocational courses have been introduced and have proved to be a successful addition to the curriculum for older students. Most learners feel that the school values them as individuals. The Acting Headteacher promotes a Christian vision of **care and achievement** for all. Students know what is right and wrong and behaviour is good. Opportunities for spiritual development are ad hoc and largely unplanned. Without a whole school commitment there is significant inconsistency. Relationships are positive and there is a calm and purposeful atmosphere in which students can learn. The School Council provides the school with valuable feedback on student perceptions and is able to influence some decisions. The strong partnership with the Leeds Ecumenical Faith in Schools team enhances opportunities for students to encounter a living faith from a broad Christian perspective.

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

The impact of collective worship on the school community is inadequate. The school devotes insufficient attention to worship, which as a result is not valued by most students. Statutory requirements are not being fully met due to a lack of consistency in both year group and classroom worship. There are no effective systems in place to plan, monitor or evaluate collective worship. The weekly voluntary Eucharist draws effectively on links with the local Anglican community. Ecumenical links are exploited by the Faith in Schools workers but these have only limited impact. The organisation of worship now needs greater cohesion and leadership in order to counter learners' ambivalent attitudes to worship.

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

Provision for religious education is inadequate. The school does not give a high enough priority to religious education as a core subject. There is insufficient curriculum time allocated in both key stages. The subject leader has not been sufficiently supported to fulfil his role especially since the acquisition of significant additional responsibilities within the senior leadership team. Although standards at GCSE are well below national figures, the success rate of the 2005 cohort was significantly higher in RE than the school's overall rate at A\*-C.

Students in KS3 are working at or below their expected levels. There is a heavy reliance on worksheets and low level tasks with little challenge and limited progress made. Students, however, overwhelmingly enjoy RE! The subject leader is well qualified and enthusiastic but his other responsibilities are taking him away from developing the subject in a way that is required in a voluntary aided school.

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

Leadership and management of the school as a church school is inadequate. There is little evidence that the school's leaders have devoted sufficient attention to the distinctive Christian nature of the school over recent years. The current Headteacher and his team are keen to create a Christian vision. As the school is soon to close, there is little opportunity to effect the changes needed. There is no whole school approach to collective worship or spiritual development and the school improvement plan makes no reference to any of the distinctive elements of this school. Learners and staff recognise that Christian values contribute to the school's ethos but few can articulate how the school is distinctively different from any other school. Foundation governors have largely been unsuccessful in challenging the school to focus on its distinctiveness.

SIAS Nov 2005 Agnes Stewart CE High School Voluntary Aided Primary School, Leeds. LS9 7SG