

**Grey Coat Hospital Church of England Voluntary Aided Secondary Girls School**

The Grey Coat Hospital

Grey Coat Place

London

SW1P 2DY

**Diocese of London**

Westminster LEA

SIAS inspection: 16<sup>th</sup> January 2006

Previous S23 inspection: 27<sup>th</sup>-29<sup>th</sup> November 2000

URN: 101151

Headteacher: Mrs R. Allard

SIAS Inspector NS: Rev. Dr. R.W. Buckley

**Context**

Grey Coat Hospital has been a day school for girls since 1874. It has a strong Christian foundation and ethos and aims to equip its pupils to “meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century”. It became a specialist language school in 2002. The school has a diverse intake with half the pupils from ethnic minority groups. Recent changes to the admission policy provide more places for pupils from the local community.

**Summary Judgement**

The school’s distinctiveness and effectiveness as a Church of England School is outstanding.

**Established Strengths**

The school has an infectious Christian ethos which is generated by governors, parents, staff and students. The Head and Senior Management Team provide spiritual leadership with dignity and sincerity. In this school “every child matters”.

**Focus for development**

- Look at involving students more in the choice of assembly material.
- Monitor the effectiveness of the recent policy change to enter students for GCSE R.E. at the end of Year 10.
- Continue the development of daily collective worship in the sixth form.

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

The contribution of the school's distinctive Christian character towards meeting the needs of all its learners is outstanding. Every member of the school community is valued as a child of God. All stakeholders are listened to and this informs decisions. Students speak openly about their enjoyment of life and learning. They expect the highest standards of their school and are therefore its fiercest, constructive critics. Students have confidence in the way the school deals with issues such as bullying and feel supported by the school counsellor and the team of peer counsellors. They feel comforted, supported and appreciative of the way the school dealt with the major incident of the July tube bombings when they were allowed to contact parents and the school arranged for those who could not get home to spend time with a school friend in the vicinity. Some parents arrived with cars offering a shuttle service to take girls home. Staff and students commented on the way the universal acceptance of the school ethos had helped them through the tragedy of the death of a young student.

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

Worship is central to school life. Assemblies, Church Services and school based worship events have a good impact on the school and reflect not only Anglican tradition but those of other recognised denominations. There was universal acclaim for Church services. One student said "They have the wow factor!" Another remarked "Church is really great". The assembly seen during the inspection was outstanding with an input from the Gospel Choir and a talk on "Inspiration" by a member of Year 11. Several students commented that "Every element of the assembly touched me". Generally assemblies were seen as "setting you up for the day". A majority of those interviewed expressed the hope that in future they could have more input over the selection of hymns and songs for assembly. All Years appreciate the freedom to contribute to worship through music, drama and dance. Music is of a very high standard and during the period of inspection varied from a gospel choir to a performance of Britten's Ceremony of Carols. Again students have high expectations and expressed some concern that not everyone participated in singing as enthusiastically as they did! A variety of Christian extra curricular activities support the formal worship programme. The school's location has enabled students to participate in the Abbey's Millennium Celebrations and leading the procession of Bishops at the opening of General Synod.

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

Religious Education is outstandingly effective in the school. The curriculum time allocated to RE is appropriate. The staffing and resource allocation is generous. Teaching and learning is good. The monitoring system in place ensures that any deviation from this high standard is identified and corrected. Students appreciate learning about faiths other than Christianity and the way in which this is supported by the occasional assembly led by teachers of other faiths and traditions (Islam and Chinese New Year were given as examples). There is an innovative and exciting new syllabus in place for Key Stage 3. Attainment at Key Stage 4 is excellent with 90% of the Year 10 cohort obtaining grades A-C. (this compares with a Yellis value-added prediction of 61%). Standards at A and A/S level are also high. Students say that RE has always been interesting but now they are enjoying discussion and "learning in a fun way" The department is working on an assessment scheme that will reflect the progress of students whose literacy skills may limit their performance in tradition assessment procedures. The sixth form lessons are characterised by both fun and academic rigour. Students were able to identify the contribution of a number of scholars to the Design argument for the existence of God. They had a particular interest in the contribution of scientists to the teleological argument for the existence of God.

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

The leadership and management of the school as a church school from the Head, Leadership Team and Governors are outstanding. Three years ago the Governors took the brave decision to change the admission criteria for the school which is 600% oversubscribed. This was in response to the Dearing Report and reflected the school's sense of vocation to be a Christian presence in the community. As a specialist language college this has enabled places to be offered to applicants from its link primary schools. Relationships are relaxed, friendly, patient and free of shouting. There were many good examples of co-operation between students of different ethnic groups. The relationships with local churches, Westminster Abbey and London Diocesan Board for Schools help the school to flourish. Teachers feel valued and able to share professional skills. There are a number of opportunities for them to share and develop their Christian spirituality and students remark that this has a "spin off effect on us".

SIAS JANUARY 2006 Grey Coat Hospital CE VA Secondary Girls School, London SW1P 2DY