

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Hutton Church of England Voluntary Aided Grammar School

Liverpool Road

Hutton

Preston

PR4 5SN

Diocese: Blackburn

Local Authority: Lancashire

Headteacher: Mr DP Pearson BA

Inspection date: 8th-9th March 2006

Date of previous inspection: 26th-29th September 2000

Inspector: Mr PJ Ingram

Context

Hutton Church of England Grammar School is a four form entry boys' comprehensive school in the 11-16 age range with a mixed sixth form. There are 788 students on roll with 175 boys and girls in the sixth form. The school administers its admission policy with integrity, the policy being appropriate to the status of the school. The attainment of students on entry to the school is above national averages and the majority of students come from a background which is high in terms of socio-economic status. Parents give full support to the work of the school and the learning of their children.

Summary Judgement

Hutton Church of England Grammar School is a developing Church of England School in which the Christian character and its effect on students are at present satisfactory overall. The school has long standing strengths and now has the capacity for considerable further improvement due to its present good leadership and management.

Established strengths

- The school is an ordered and caring community based on strong
- Christian principles as exemplified by the good relationships between all members of the school community
- All pupils take GCSE religious education and achieve high standards.
- Focus for further development
- The management of the daily act of collective worship.
- The development of the assessment of students' work in religious education in keeping with national standards based on the school's existing good practice.

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

The school is satisfactory in meeting the needs of all learners through its distinctive Christian character. Christian standards underpin many of the activities in the school but the Anglican foundation of the school is not explicitly displayed with Christian symbols in the entrance hall and places of worship. Students are well behaved and students feel that the very occasional acts of bullying are quickly and effectively dealt with by teachers. Relationships between students and staff and between students are very good. Although opportunities for students to take a lead in worship were limited at the time of the inspection, these opportunities were readily taken and all students treat worship with reverence. Throughout the school, students of all attainments take a full part in religious education lessons and are successful in their learning. The personal development of students is promoted by the many clubs and societies, for example, the Christian Union, the several choirs and orchestral groups and the wide range of sporting activities. The Sixth Form council and the developing school council give opportunities for students to participate in the life of the school.

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

Collective worship has a satisfactory effect on the school community. Students' response to collective worship is good when they are provided with good opportunities but these opportunities are not present throughout the school. There is a useful compilation of source material of themes, readings and prayers for use in collective worship but the Christian calendar is not fully represented in yearly planning. Half school and year assemblies give support and challenge to students. The local Vicar and the headteacher jointly commemorated the recent tragic death of a Year 7 student and this was greatly appreciated by everyone. This demonstrated the developing partnership between the school and the local church community. During worship in a Year 10 assembly students closed their eyes to imagine that they were blind and the stillness had a profound effect on them. However not all tutor group time is used effectively for worship and real opportunities are missed for prayer and reflection in small groups of students. None of the venues for worship have appropriate Christian symbols which identify the school as an Anglican school. Students do take part in year worship by reading prayers and passages of scripture. Students joining the school in the sixth form are prepared to make contributions to upper school assembly in this respect. Students enter and leave worship in an orderly manner with teachers in attendance. There is no provision at present for the celebration of the Eucharist.

How effective is the Religious Education in the school?

The effectiveness of religious education is good. Students develop a good understanding of the Christian faith and a respect for the beliefs of other world religions. Students have a good attitude to religious education with behaviour in lessons good. In all classes there were good individual interactions between teachers and students. Students in a Year 7 class considered miracles in the life of Jesus. All students contributed to the lesson by listening attentively to individual readers, being confident to express individual views and then taking part in group activities. Writing skills were of a good standard and class discussions were recorded in continuous prose. A Year 8 class considered the foundation of the Sikh religion leading to pupils developing their ideas on the rights that human beings should have. Learning in this lesson was good and promoted by suitable questions provided by the teacher. More senior students displayed a good understanding of modern social and ethical problems by considering the life of Martin Luther King and the impact that his life and death had on the civil rights movement in the United States. Another class was challenged to think about the beliefs concerning life after death in different Christian groups and other world religions and students responded with sensible comments including one making a link with Christian baptism. Comparatively small numbers of students study religious education on a regular weekly basis in the sixth form.

Students studying religious education as an AS and A level subject make good progress in understanding the philosophical basis of religious belief and the contributions that beliefs make to resolving ethical problems. All teachers have good subject knowledge, plan work appropriately to the needs of students, use good question and answer technique to introduce a topic and for GCSE courses have a good method of assessing students' work.

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

Leadership and management of the school as a church school are good. Governors and senior management of the school have recently developed a coherent approach and commitment to developing the Anglican character of the school within the context of the local community. The newly appointed headteacher has a very positive vision for the school which gives full support to its Christian ethos. This corrects a basic weakness identified in the previous inspection report. The senior management team ensures that students' learning is provided within a secure and caring Christian community. Students have the confidence to bring problems to their teachers and all students including those who joined the school in the sixth form value the friendship of other students. Governors welcome the opportunities provided by the headteacher to be fully involved in the leadership of the school. The chairman of governors is fully informed of school policy and the local Vicar, who is a foundation governor, has been fully involved in the design of furnishing of the new building extensions to the school. There are firm proposals to establish a room for worship, prayer and a place for reflection. This room will be available to groups from the local parish church. The teaching of religious education for all sixth form students will be strengthened by the introduction of a week's study conference in the next summer term. The weaknesses in collective worship are being addressed by senior staff and local clergy so that all members of staff have good support from senior colleagues. Despite recent changes of teachers of religious education, standards of students' learning are good due to strong leadership by the head of department.

SIAS March 2006 Hutton Church of England VA Grammar School Preston PR4 5SN

