

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### **Sir Thomas Boteler Church of England Voluntary Aided Comprehensive High School**

Grammar School Road,

Latchford

Warrington

WA4 1JL

### **Diocese of Chester and Liverpool**

Warrington LEA

SIAS inspection: 28<sup>th</sup> June 2005

Previous S23 inspection: November 2000

URN: 133672

Headteacher: Mr John Sharples

SIAS Inspector NS#99: Mr John Wilson

### **Context**

Sir Thomas Boteler CE High School changed from community to voluntary aided status in September 2002. It serves two wards in Warrington experiencing considerable socio-economic disadvantage but increasingly receives pupils from Christian families living in other parts of the historic county of Cheshire. There are approximately 650 pupils on roll but numbers have increased in recent years. Very few pupils come from ethnic minority communities and the number of those eligible for free school meals is above average. The school is planning to apply for specialist humanities status.

### **Summary Judgement**

Sir Thomas Boteler Church of England High School is making very good progress in developing as a voluntary aided school with an inclusive philosophy and practice.

### **Established strengths**

- the work of the governing body and a significant number of staff and pupils in promoting, developing and reviewing the school's Christian ethos;
- the high quality of student care;
- the contribution of worship, religious education and a number of other subjects to pupils' spiritual and moral development;
- the leading role students are increasingly taking in worship and charity work.

### **Focus for development**

- continue to develop understanding of spiritual development and its inclusion in teaching, learning and worship throughout the school;
- review the mission statement in the context of the school's Christian foundation;
- continue to increase the time at Key Stage 3 for religious education and its status throughout the school

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

How well does the school, through its distinctive Christian character, meet the needs of all learners? Relationships at Sir Thomas Boteler are very good with pupils speaking of the high quality of care and respect experienced from staff and each other. There is a very strong commitment to the local community and to inclusion, whatever the pupils' faith background, ability and personal qualities. Outstanding emphasis is placed on supporting pupils with particular learning needs and the majority of students make satisfactory academic progress. The school makes a good impact on the pupils' spiritual moral, social and cultural development through both curricular and extra-curricular provision. Consequently, most pupils feel valued. Behaviour is good with both pupils and parents feeling that the school deals effectively and quickly with any misbehaviour. Several members of staff talk of school values in Christian terms but the school needs to continue to raise the awareness of its Christian foundation amongst pupils and parents and to ensure its prominence in policies and practice. In response to a pupil's death his friends suggested making a peace garden as a lasting memorial. This continues to be maintained by pupils and used as a place for quiet reflection and prayer.

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

Collective worship makes a good impact on school life. Acts of worship are held each day for all pupils, whether in year groups or in tutor groups, and are well attended by staff. Pupils have made a very good contribution to the school prayer book by writing prayers; others have been contributed by staff and friends of the school. Collective worship makes a good contribution to understanding Anglican traditions by following the church year with a number of special services held at the Parish Church. Worship in school is frequently liturgical, introducing the whole community to Anglican practice and prayer; the Lord's Prayer is also displayed prominently at the school entrance. Valuable experience of leadership is shared amongst pupils, staff, chaplain and other clergy. The fortnightly Eucharist is well attended and appreciated by pupils and staff. It is held in relatively informal surroundings pending the planned development of a chapel. The school provides good opportunities for prayer and writing prayers and for periods of reflection during some lessons and in free time. Pupils talk of enjoying and benefiting from school worship, particularly when they are actively participating.

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

Religious education makes a good contribution to school ethos and to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Sir Thomas Boteler has improved the subject's effectiveness by allocating more time at Key Stage 4 and appointing a second member of staff so that the department now has two well qualified, experienced and able teachers with good subject knowledge. Lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives and with a variety of differentiated activities. Pupils engage in activities to promote good understanding of religions and learning from religion. Discussion and interaction of ideas and beliefs play a prominent part. Pupils enjoy religious education and take an active part in lessons. Assessment in relation to pupil expectation in the QCA levels, including self and peer assessment, is practised but need further embedding. Standards are satisfactory and show some signs of improvement. Teaching the short course GCSE to all pupils from September 2005 is a good development but further opportunities need to be sought to provide more time for the subject in Key Stage 3 to at least put it on a par with history. It is also necessary to continue to enhance the status of religious education, for example, by seeking every opportunity to benefit the subject from the impact of becoming a specialist humanities college.

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

The governors, headteacher and senior staff have provided very good leadership in moving the school from community to voluntary aided status. They have managed to develop a distinctive Christian ethos whilst maintaining commitment to the local community and to working alongside other Warrington schools. Several people have been appointed to key roles, such as the chaplain, who commits half his time to school, and the head of religious education, who leads many developments in ethos and spiritual development. These two work very well together, planning and putting initiatives into practice. Chester and Liverpool Dioceses, along with local churches, have supported the school's development very well as has the neighbouring Anglican secondary school in Chester. The governors have made a good evaluation of the success of changing status and defined further developments to enhance the school's Christian ethos.

Governors held a joint conference with the other Chester Diocesan Church of England high school, which has had an Anglican foundation for some twenty years. This meeting has worked to their mutual benefit, encouraging Sir Thomas Boteler to realise the amount of progress the school has made and helping to set future priorities.

SIAS JUNE 2005 Sir Thomas Boteler CE VA Comprehensive High School, Warrington, WA4 1JL