

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Saint Aidan's Church of England Voluntary Aided Technology College

Cartgate, Preesall,
Poulton-le-Fylde,
Lancashire
FY6 ONP

Diocese: Blackburn

LA: Lancashire

Dates of inspection: 28th & 29th June 2006

Date of last inspection: 9th & 11th October 2000

School's Unique reference number:

Headteacher: The Rev'd Dr B A Leeson

Inspector's name and number: Mr P J Ingram

School context

Saint Aidan's is a Church of England Voluntary Aided College which serves linked parishes and a wider area of mixed urban and rural communities. Standards of attainment of students on entry to the college are slightly above the national average. The college is oversubscribed in all years except Year 7 where the number of students equates to the admission number. There is a wide range of backgrounds of students in terms of socio-economic status but the majority come from a background which is above average. The college buildings indicate clearly the college's status as a church school and buildings and grounds are attractive and well maintained. Parents give full support to the college and the learning of their children.

Summary Judgement

Saint Aidan's Church of England Technology College is a well established Anglican college in which the Christian character and its effect on students is good overall. The college has long standing strengths in its Christian ethos and collective worship and has recently taken effective action to overcome weaknesses in the teaching of religious education.

Established strengths

- The college is an ordered and caring community based on strong Christian principles which promote good relationships between all members of the community
- The marking and assessment of students' learning in religious education are good so that students know what action they have to take in order to improve
- The organisation of collective worship is good so that a meaningful daily act of collective worship takes place when school routine is changed by external examinations and other events

Focus for development

- To develop closer links between lesson planning and the scheme of work of religious education in Years 10 and 11
- To evaluate and develop further resources to support teaching of religious education in Years 7, 8 and 9.

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

The college is good in meeting the needs of all learners through its distinctive character.

Christian standards underpin the activities of the college with its Anglican foundation indicated clearly in all its publications and with Christian symbols displayed in the entrance and school halls. Although opportunities for students to lead worship were limited at the time of the inspection, students treat worship with reverence. They value the opportunities to receive the Eucharist. Students are valued individually and collectively by the staff. The head boy and head girl attend the governors' teaching and learning sub-committee and report back to Student Voice. Student Voice has representatives from each form and as a group was involved in the collation of the school aims. Relationships between students and between staff and students are good. Year 11 students mentor younger pupils who have problems. Representatives

of Student Voice attend the AGM of the local branch of the NSPCC. Charitable fund raising is well supported including sending a student to New Zealand for a sporting event. Harvest produce is taken to a local centre and students take part in Young Enterprise events. The wide range of sporting and musical activities which are well supported by students enhance their personal **development and are fully appreciated by them.**

What is the impact of collective worship on the school community?

Collective worship has a good effect on the college community. Students' response is good in collective worship which is arranged in keeping with the scheme for collective worship provided by the worship co-ordinator. The co-ordinator has provided a useful compilation of resource materials for all form teachers and for house assemblies. These make an essential contribution to the success of worship at a time when school routine is adversely affected by examinations and special events. For example, worship set the scene in house assemblies in preparation for sports' day. Students supported their houses in response to the leadership of their sports' captains and take a full part in the event. The number of students attending the half-termly celebration of the Eucharist is increasing and a high proportion of students receive Communion at the end of term whole school celebration of the Eucharist. Students work in pairs to prepare prayers for form worship and senior student proctors prepare prayers for school worship. Students enjoy the opportunities they have in contributing to and taking part in worship. They do feel that worship is a central part in the life of the school. While the school hall has Christian symbols related to worship some of the other venues for worship have no such symbols. The themes for worship reflect the Christian calendar and the needs of the personal development of students. Clergy are regular visitors to the college and lead worship and feel that their contributions are valued..

How effective is the religious education?

The effectiveness of religious education is satisfactory with some good features. Teaching and learning are satisfactory with some good features. Students respond readily to teachers' questions. For example, they display a good understanding of social and ethical problems related to racial prejudice and euthanasia against a background of Christian beliefs. Students were able to contrast Christian beliefs of heaven and hell with the Hindu belief in re-incarnation. The great majority of students are keen to improve their learning but there is a minority of challenging older students whose attitude and behaviour have been adversely affected by past staffing changes. GCSE attainment in religious education in 2005 was below the average for other subjects in the college and significantly below national averages. Parents are rightly concerned about the adverse effect of numerous staff changes on attainment in religious education. The college took effective steps in the autumn term 2005 to rectify the situation with regard to staffing. Students' work is assessed on a regular basis and teachers' comments indicate the steps which have to be taken for them to improve their learning. These comments are understood by students and they take action to complete work. This addresses a weakness identified in the previous inspection report. In all lessons and outside normal lesson time teachers support students with individual discussions and students respond well to their teachers. In the lesson on euthanasia students worked at pace in considering all the different aspects of this complicated topic but in another lesson time management was less secure so that students' understanding was not re-inforced at the end of the lesson.

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

Leadership and management of the college as a church college are good. All governors both lay and clergy are committed to the further development of the Anglican character of the college in making their appointment of the new headteacher for the autumn term 2006. The present headteacher has a clear vision for collective worship and the promotion of the college aims as an Anglican school which serves the local community. The senior management team ensures that students' learning takes place within a secure and caring Christian environment. The absence due to illness of the link governor for religious education and worship is compensated by the regular weekly visits of clergy and Chair of Governors to the college. The college co-ordinator for worship and religious education has a well

organised scheme for worship which takes into account the Christian calendar and the personal development of students. The co-ordinator has started the linking of lesson plans to the scheme of work which is now effective in Years 7 to 9 but this has not been carried through to Years 10 and 11. The review of the provision of text books for Years 7 to 9 indicates weaknesses in this provision. Support materials are provided for all members of staff who lead worship. A room is set aside as a quiet room which is used as a centre for worship on a weekly basis and for half termly celebrations of the Eucharist. The spirituality days for Year 7 students are highly valued by them. All students feel valued in response to the opportunities which are provided for them to express their views both individually and through Student Voice.

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