

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### Unity Church of England Voluntary Aided College

Trinity Avenue  
NORTHAMPTON  
NN2 6JW

#### Diocese: Peterborough

LA: Northamptonshire

Dates of inspection: March 13<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup> 2006

Date of last inspection: 2000

School's Unique reference number: 9284103

Headteacher: Mrs Sharron Goode

Inspector's name and number: Michael Asquith Reference: 317

#### Summary Judgement

Unity College admitted its first students in September 2004 following re-organisation of schools across Northampton. Much has been done during these eighteen months to establish a firm Christian ethos in Unity College, and there are places where this is very evident. There are, however, a number of areas of concern which the college needs to address.

#### Established strengths

The appointment of a half-time, non-teaching chaplain who spends so much time alongside both staff and students is to be commended.

A developing, strong Christian ethos underpins Unity College, yet followers of other faiths are able to adhere to their faith with integrity.

The Principal has a strong definite vision for Unity College supported by the governors

The priority given to collective worship and its growing impact on the whole school.

The appointment of a new, strong Head of Religious Education with effect from September 2006 demonstrates the emphasis by the school in this area.

#### Focus for development

The College is currently still emerging as a church school. The unique Christian ethos associated with a church school is shared with the governors and with pupils in the lower years, however little positive effect has pervaded many of the upper years. The college should therefore look to promote its Christian ethos amongst the more senior pupils.

Religious Education is poor. There needs to be a full review of the Religious Education department; the schemes of work, appropriate resources obtained of good quality and the teaching and learning within RE needs to be rigorously monitored.

Consideration should be given as to whether it is appropriate for RE to remain part of the Humanities faculty. Assessment of each student must be on-going and should lead lesson planning. Gifted and talented students should be appropriately stretched enabling each student to reach their potential.

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

Through its distinctive Christian character the college is meeting the needs of the students. There is a good Christian ethos developing at Unity College, which is looking to support with mutual respect and understanding all members of its community. The Chaplain has worked hard to promote the Christian ethos of the college with integrity yet respect for everybody. This is very evident in Key Stage 3 students, but not so much within Key Stage 4. There are good links with the local community, many of the churches around Northampton, and with Fairfield Special School opposite to Unity College. The Chaplain has encouraged good practice to enhance the Christian ethos within the college and students appreciate the care and respect they are shown. The prospectus emphasises the strong Christian ethos that underpins Unity College. Students are very appreciative of the Christian ethos of the college feeling that the teachers are very supportive of them. The students are keen to improve the college and are supportive of activities that do so.

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

Collective worship overall is satisfactory; its impact on the whole school is developing well especially when led by the Chaplain, assisted by other members of staff or outside speakers when worship is good. Students respond well to such occasions, for example Key Stage 4 pupils listened in silence and awe as one member of staff

led an excellent act of worship about something very personal. The Chaplain leads worship in a genuine and caring way with integrity, acknowledging the many beliefs [and none] of those at the college, yet at the same time not compromising the Christian faith. A candle is lit during the act of worship, though more should be made of this as a focus. A chorus playing as students enter creates an appropriate calm atmosphere. Students are given the opportunity for quiet reflection or prayer during worship. A weekly theme together with areas for exploration is provided by the Chaplain; this is then used in registration groups, where worship varies from being good to inadequate. A college Eucharist is held on Wednesdays at the end of the afternoon and is attended by a few staff and fewer students. There are good relationships between the Chaplain and the followers of other major world faiths, for example together with a Muslim teacher a multi-faith prayer room is being established. The governors' worship committee is developing appropriate monitoring strategies.

#### **How effective is the religious education?**

Religious Education is inadequate. Currently there is only one specialist teacher of RE, whose timetable also includes another subject. The staffing of RE is inadequate; over 20 teachers teach RE across the college; it is taught in split classes in years 8 and 9 and as part of a humanities block in year 7. Greater priority should be given to the staffing of RE and it should be timetabled as a distinct subject within year 7. A new Head of department has been appointed for September; under her strong and experienced leadership RE will be greatly enhanced. Four lessons of RE were observed. Of these, one was deemed to be a good lesson; here the teacher was exploring a new concept by getting the students to understand the rationale behind discrimination and racism before moving on to study Martin Luther King. 50% of lessons were inadequate; here instructions were not clear and pupils were bombarded with worksheets. Teaching lacks pace and is often life-less. Additionally not all lessons included a plenary. The more able students were not stretched and there is insufficient on-going assessment of pupils other than the college reports. Audio-visual resources used were poor and failed to grasp the attention of the senior pupils. Where teaching is inadequate students are not engaging with the subject and there is little respect for the teacher or the subject. This is very evident for Key Stage 4 where students have failed to grasp the value of RE. Little positive leadership is given by the Humanities faculty of which RE is a part. With no current Head of RE there is no development of the subject, indeed there is regression. The college follows the QCA syllabus for RE, not the Northamptonshire Agreed Syllabus [which has been adopted by the Peterborough Diocese].

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

The leadership and management by the Principal, senior management team and governors of the college as a church college is good. The Principal has a strong definite vision for Unity College. Governors regularly visit the college, and report their observations to the governing body. There is a governor attached to the Humanities faculty. The senior management team are supportive of the college's Christian ethos and are looking to establish good practice throughout. Appropriate policies are in place, and the Christian ethos is embedded in the college's documents and promoted well; however this vision is still not shared by all the students. The management team are realistic of their achievements to date, and have identified many of the weaknesses within the college.

SIAS report March 13<sup>th</sup> & 16<sup>th</sup> 2006 UNITY COLLEGE, Trinity Avenue NORTHAMPTON NN2 6JW