

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Hesketh Fletcher Church of England Voluntary Aided High School

Hamilton Street,
Atherton,
Manchester,
M46 0AY

Diocese: Manchester
Local authority: Wigan
Dates of inspection: 8th and 12th. June, 2007
Date of last inspection: May, 2001
School's unique reference number: 106536
Headteacher: Dr. E. Walker
Inspector's name and number: Neil Whitehead 498

School context

Hesketh Fletcher Church of England High School, is an 11-16 school with 903 pupils on roll. The school's main catchment area contains localities with significant socio-economic deprivation. The only high school in the town, Hesketh Fletcher admits a considerable proportion of its pupils from homes with little or no church contact. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is above average. Almost all pupils are White British.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Hesketh Fletcher C.E. High School as a Church of England school are good

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of the school are found in faith in action. There is an enthusiastic sometimes passionate will inspired by the Christian faith to serve the whole community and in so doing create unique opportunities for the pupils within the school to grow spiritually and with a respect for others.

Established strengths

- A well-organised and enthusiastic R.E Department, whose academic standards and aspirations are improving, and which has a significant impact on many areas of the school and the lives of individual pupils.
- The operation of the Extended School system is exemplary.
- The Chaplaincy Team work collaboratively with the Head to enhance the spiritual dimension of the school

Focus for development

- * Further attempts are required to reduce the number of non-specialist R.E. teachers. A start has been made on this.
- * Time for R.E. needs to be increased to at least the national and diocesan recommendations.
- * Environments for worship need to be examined and improved and consideration should be given to establishing a Chapel or Quiet Areas within the school.
- * Tutor group worship, now established, needs to be further monitored and strengthened.

The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is good at meeting the needs of all learners

Every member of the school is valued as a child of God. The school's provision for disadvantaged pupils is strong, for example, as evidenced in the Home-from-Home scheme and the Nurture group. The school has created wide curricular and recreational opportunities, not-the-least in the religious dimension of the school. Pupils feel that bullying issues are dealt with much more effectively than previously and that there are always members of staff, teaching or non-teaching whom they can approach with problems, in addition to the formal

system. Pupils speak of being treated with respect by most of the staff. Concerns from parents and pupils about anti-social behaviour from some pupils are being addressed systematically by the development of a new Behaviour Management system. The very large Extended School operation is an outstanding example of the school tackling community social needs and through doing this providing major opportunities for groups of students to serve others and at the same time grow personally. Examples seen on the first day were the Community Café adjacent to the local clinic and a Toddlers' Club. Good quality Christian displays in the school give prominence to the Christian faith. Pupils value the work of the Chaplaincy team. The School Council is seen by pupils to be an effective means of representation.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is satisfactory

Worship is important in school life, each pupil attending two main assemblies per week, delivered effectively by members of the ecumenical Chaplaincy team, senior members of staff, or Head of House. Supporting the main assemblies is a system of Tutor group worship, which is a two minute slot inserted into the Tutor period and signalled by the school bell. The pupils confirm that this does take place and that for some its impact in making them reflect is increasing. Although there is no official Worship Coordinator, the spiritual needs of the pupils are met satisfactorily through a programme which highlights spiritual and moral issues, placed in a Christian context, using the media of music, DVD, homily and prayer, plus contributions of various types from the pupils. The sense of individual value is emphasised in the House Assemblies, through the celebration of pupil achievement. Pupils particularly value the assemblies which focus on current issues. The termly Eucharists in the Parish Church for each House and the occasional special services introduce an additional spiritual dimension to pupils from all backgrounds. There is evidence that a number of pupils have started going to church as a result of the worship at school. The school may wish to consider creating a formal programme of worship, which links the main school events with those in the Tutor groups. The Christian character of the school is emphasised by the each Staff Briefing opening with a prayer, though staff could take a more noticeable part in the assemblies, by sitting or standing more closely to the pupils. The Drama Studio presents some difficulties as a venue for worship because of the lack of seating and difficulties of audibility

The effectiveness of the religious education is good.

Learners are enthusiastic about R.E. and parental surveys endorse the subject's popularity. R.E. is a nominated subject in the School's Humanities specialism and has high status within the school. The leadership of the subject by the Head of Faculty is outstanding. The department is well-organised and resourced, with good short and long term planning of programmes of study. Effective attention is given to pupils' learning styles and material is geared to the individual needs of learners. Academic standards are improving and AS Level has been successfully introduced to a number of Year 11 pupils. The curriculum covers Christian themes and themes from World religions. Good displays and an extensive range of artefacts add further meaning to the lessons taught. Year 10 pupils were able to identify the significance of Kosher foods in the Jewish religion, and Kosher food was present in the room. Year 7 pupils questioned the Chaplain in a meaningful way in the context of the Diocesan "Vocations" pilot programme. Lessons taught by specialists were characterised by excellent relationships, appropriate material and pedagogy, accompanied by forward-looking assessment. The department currently has seven teachers using twelve rooms. A small amount of teaching by non-specialists fell far short of this standard and marking in this context, although done regularly, was only retrospective. In this respect, the appointment of an additional specialist R.E. teacher to commence in September is a positive move. There was constant use of praise throughout all the lessons observed. Through projects and competitions such as 'Spirited Arts' and 'Faith Readings', R.E makes important and effective links with other subjects and makes it a subject which exists beyond the doors of the R.E. classrooms. It adds substantially to pupils' spiritual development in a cross-curricular way. Pupils felt that R.E. lessons "taught you respect". The curriculum time allocated to R.E. almost reaches the recommended duration.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is good

The Headteacher and the Senior Leadership Team, supported by the Governors, articulate the vision of the school at every opportunity, for example in documents and publications. There are strong links with the Deanery, the Diocese and the local Primary Schools. The Christian mission of the school is further demonstrated by the contact with Soweto, which was featured on national television; this furthermore enhances the multi-cultural approach adopted in R.E. There is strong Governor Support which is both participatory and challenging, with the Chair of Governors being especially involved. There are Link Governors for Worship and R.E. Worship is monitored by the Curriculum Committee and the local Rector advised on the selection of Examination Syllabus. There is a good level of support from parents, who find the school welcoming.

SIAS report June 2007 Hesketh Fletcher Church of England High School, Atherton. M46 0AY