

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

St Edward's Royal Free Ecumenical Middle School

Parsonage Lane,
Windsor
SL4 5EN

Dioceses: Anglican: Oxford, Roman Catholic: Portsmouth

Local Authority: Windsor & Maidenhead

Date of inspection: 4th October 2007

Date of last inspection: January 2002

School's Unique reference number: 110086

Name of Headteacher: Mr Rod Welsh

Inspectors: Gillian Allison NS 142 Jacqueline Davies

Context

St Edward's Royal Free Ecumenical Middle School is a joint Anglican and Roman Catholic school serving the town of Windsor and adjacent villages. The school is oversubscribed. A significant number of the pupils are from Christian families. The majority of pupils are from relatively affluent backgrounds, with some from small areas of deprivation. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is small. The school has recently gained specialist arts status.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Edward's Royal Free Ecumenical Middle School as a Church of England and Roman Catholic ecumenical school are good.

The Christian ethos is strengthened by the richness of Anglican and Roman Catholic tradition. This is translated into the everyday life of the school because there is shared understanding of Christian values which underpin the mission.

Established strengths

- The success of the 'Our School' project in drawing the whole community into affirming the school's mission
- The excellent relationships which affirm Gospel values
- The support of local clergy which models the ecumenical Christian ethos
- The importance of prayer in the life of the school
- Assessment in religious education which supports pupils' learning

Focus for development

- Review the religious education syllabus with support from the Anglican and Catholic dioceses
- Evaluate the impact of church school ethos on all stakeholders
- Put in place appropriate planning and training for collective worship

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

The Christian ethos is central to the life of the school. Pupils flourish because there is a shared commitment to school aims rooted in Christian values. Induction for new pupils is carefully designed to communicate these values, so that they quickly settle into the community. Retreats in Years 5 and 8 are a distinctive feature of the church school and play an important part in establishing and reinforcing the ethos. Pupils enjoy school, characterising it as 'friendly and welcoming'. The commitment to every learner is seen in the focus on raising standards. Relationships are very good because the aims are translated into care and respect for every individual. Pupils trust adults and feel they can turn to them with any concerns. Behaviour is excellent. Pupils have a strong sense of right and wrong, holding very high expectations of themselves and others. They respect one another's views and are interested in the lives of others. All children are given and readily accept responsibility, which supports good personal development. They feel their views are listened to and that they can influence the life of the

school. Spiritual development is excellent, because it is nurtured through so many aspects of school life. Prayer is embedded in school life and is very important in supporting spirituality. Pupils speak with confidence and insight about the place of prayer in individuals' lives and in the life of the community.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

The prospectus statement on worship highlights its importance. Worship is organised for the start of every day; timing which the school council requested and which helps the community prepare for the day ahead. Careful planning ensures variety in content and style of delivery. Records are kept but lack evaluation to develop the most effective worship strategies. The school does canvass views about worship but evaluation is not yet systematic. Anglican and Catholic traditions in worship help pupils realise the first of the school's aims, "to enable greater understanding of Christian teaching and values and how to apply them in everyday life". This tradition is enriched by contributions from the local clergy who regularly lead worship and jointly organise school celebrations in their respective churches. During the inspection pupils responded appropriately in whole school worship, at ease with the experience. They speak positively about worship in hall, church and classroom. They appreciate the high quality audio visual materials used in the hall and the many opportunities for active participation in worship. Pupils understand the value of worship, for themselves and for the school community. Their prayers and contributions to worship reflect good spiritual and moral development. . Pupils speak positively about prayer time in tutor groups at the end of the day. "It calms the day." All staff participate in worship but there has been no recent training to support staff leading worship.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

RE is valued by all stakeholders and is seen as an important area of school life. It is allocated 7% of curriculum time and appropriate levels of staffing to support good subject development. Teaching and learning are good. Work is well planned, so that there is a balance of learning about and from religion. Pupils recognise the relevance of religion to their own lives. RE makes a valuable contribution to spiritual and moral development, as evidenced in the 'Our School' project sculpture in the entrance lobby. Well paced lessons and varied activities stimulate learning. Behaviour and attitudes to learning are good. Work in books is carefully executed and presented. In the lessons observed pupils engaged with the tasks and made progress in learning. Standards are good. Well developed tracking procedures show that achievement compares well with core subjects. Assessment practices are comprehensive, with opportunities for peer and teacher assessment. As a result teachers have a clear understanding of what has been learnt and they adjust their planning to reflect this. Marking is consistent, with prompts and questions to develop understanding. Pupils understand the link between targets and levels in RE, so that they can judge their progress and move forward. The coordinator, encouraged by the leadership, has made progress in revitalising the department. The scheme of work is out- of- date and this is limiting the development of high quality RE. However, the school has identified the need for review and has the capacity to make effective improvements.

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

Members of the school and wider community understand the Christian vision at the heart of the school because the leadership communicates this distinctiveness so effectively. The 'Our School' project has drawn the school together in forging the vision, so that pupils and adults identify with its application. There is clarity in the newly established Senior Leadership Team about church school leadership. Recruitment and induction for new staff and governors emphasise the Christian character. Governor meetings begin with prayer and every term begins with staff reflection revisiting the values. RE and collective worship is a priority, given generous time and resources. Self evaluation is well established. Foundation governors lead the focus on church school ethos, with positive support from the whole governing body. The impact of religious education and collective worship is evaluated through observation, and through consultation with the School Council and the parent focus group, SERFERS. Governors have identified the need to extend evaluation to better inform strategic planning about church school distinctiveness. The school is very well supported by local Roman Catholic and Anglican clergy, whose positive collaboration models the Christian foundation of the school. . Wider parish involvement enriches

school life; for example, a parent-led prayer group gives spiritual support The community enjoys the support of bishops from both dioceses and their visits strengthen the ecumenical school. Dioceses give practical advice and support, especially on buildings and admissions. Recently the school has taken advice on RE but has not yet sought the full range of support and training offered by the dioceses.

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