

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

St Luke's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Science and Sports College

Hart's Lane
Exeter
Devon
EX1 3RD

Diocese: Exeter

Local authority: Devon

Dates of inspection: 24th January 2008

Date of last inspection: February 2004

School's unique reference number: 113550

Principal: Mr Terry Hammond

Inspector's name and number: Mr Andrew Rickett 201

School context

St Luke's is an average size 11-16 secondary school with 942 students. The majority of students come from a white British heritage with a growing number from other ethnic groups. The socio economic background is varied and some students are from areas of significant deprivation. The number of students with learning difficulties or disabilities is above the national average. In 2005 the college became one of the first in the country to be awarded dual Science and Sports Specialist Status and opened on its new site in 2006.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Luke's College as a Church of England school are outstanding

St Luke's is a college that successfully encourages students to live life to the full. The clear message delivered is that faith is a highly relevant part of this life.

Established strengths

- A community based on the shared Christian values of care and respect.
- A commitment to developing the whole person.
- The development of a healthy body and a healthy mind.

Focus for development

- Implement procedures for students to monitor and evaluate the impact of collective worship.
- Create prayerful links between all members of the school and the church community.

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

St Luke's is at a very exciting time in its development. A number of powerful initiatives are bearing fruit and having a considerable impact on the culture of the whole community. Students in particular comment that the whole feeling of the school has changed dramatically over the last few years. There is now a genuine sense of community in which people learn and live together in an atmosphere of great respect and care. The college has made a concerted effort to achieve this current ethos and has done so by looking closely at its values and linking them far more closely and specifically to its Christian foundation. This is a community in which a great deal of pride is taken. Students see it as far more than just a place of education. They appreciate that adults care for them to a great degree and are adamant that they receive every encouragement to develop not only their individual learning but also the person as a whole. This creates very positive attitudes towards the college which are reflected by the impressive level of out of school activities that students opt for, in order to put something back into the college. The quality of relationships is very high. The structuring

of the vertical tutorial groups has helped to break down barriers between students so that there is a far greater approachability between different age groups. This has helped to create an environment in which this heightened sense of responsibility gives students a greater duty of care for one another. Indeed, students speak of the compassion that they show for one another. This was seen in lessons where, through good quality teaching, students were encouraged to appreciate the opinions of others and reflect on what they had been learning. In one lesson about the Holocaust, a student remarked that these events need to be remembered to ensure that the same things will never happen again. The specialist status of the college is reflected in the excellent provision it makes for encouraging healthy living. There is equal emphasis on the development of a healthy mind as on having a healthy body. The nourishment of the mind is evident in the many opportunities which are available for students to explore their spiritual identity. This was seen in a number of lessons where students were asked to reflect on a complex issue and try to understand it from a number of viewpoints. The College Council is an important part of the decision-making process and this is an example of how the college encourages students to take responsibility for their environment. There is a strong commitment to make use of the skills and talents of the students to reach out to the wider community. This is evident in the excellent programme which supports local schools in sports projects where students take the lead, helping to develop an awareness of social responsibilities.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship makes a significant contribution to the ethos of the college. The place of collective worship in the life of the college has made great strides forward with the college correctly identifying a changing culture within the community that places collective worship more at its heart. This has been achieved by a range of initiatives that together have challenged the students' perceptions about how they should lead their lives. Underpinning these challenges is a set of values which deliver messages directly related to Christian scripture. Collective worship has been the catalyst for doing this by successfully identifying themes which have stimulated and engaged students to reflect on some big questions. Students describe with great enthusiasm how it is making a difference to the way that they see the world and their place in it and become excited at the opportunity to discuss this further. Broad themes such as 'hope' or 'choice' offer a comfortable way in and students respond in a far more positive way as they realise that these ideas are relevant to their own experiences. These themes are introduced at weekly house-group worship and are developed in the more intimate setting of tutor groups. Time for reflection during worship is used well by the students with their response to prayer being one of respect and reverence. Students have the confidence to talk openly in worship and share their views with each other in an atmosphere of mutual respect. Attitudes are therefore changing rapidly and this is having a marked impact on the culture of the school. A dedicated worship room is regularly used by students and adults either for individual prayer or reflection or to use for group acts of worship. It is hoped to expand this facility so that parents' groups will also have the opportunity to meet here, as well as providing a space for a student Confirmation group in the near future. The college has introduced a very comprehensive chaplaincy scheme which is having an enormous impact on the lives of the students. This manifests itself in the high level of trust that has been quickly established between the chaplains and students. Students explain how the five chaplains have made Christianity more accessible not only through their important involvement in leading worship each week but also by being personally available to students for more one-to-one discussions. For example, one student recalled how the chaplain was available to have time to talk about and explore parts of the Bible. In addition, the recent introduction of a Eucharist, which was attended by staff and students, is a further reflection of the college's aim to continue working to raise the profile of its Christian character.

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

The principal is very effective in leading the college with a clear vision. He has successfully established St Luke's as a community that takes great care for each other and that fulfils its commitment to sharing its skills and talents with the wider community. He has created a

strong team of senior staff to support him in promoting this vision which is having a positive effect on the ethos of the college. The appointment of a senior member of staff with specific responsibility to lead the development of the Christian character of the college is a key role in underlining the importance of the college's foundation. The creation of this high profile post has enabled the college to make its Christian values more central to its mission. The person appointed is passionate about creating a place where people can profess their Christian faith. This was seen throughout the college when both adults and students talked openly about their beliefs and were comfortable to express views about matters of faith. The college is committed to developing this further so that it becomes a hub for both students and their families to express their faith. In addition it is hoped it will spearhead an initiative to reach out to the wider community by creating a Christian networking system among local schools. This complements the excellent work being done in relation to healthy living. The newly appointed RE Co-ordinator is very enthusiastic about developing the status of RE and is confident that the current audit will identify areas of focus which will help improve standards overall. Particularly successful is the positive impact that has been made on student attitudes as they appreciate how RE can be relevant in their lives. There is strong support from the governors who feel that the ethos of the school has been significantly enhanced. They feel that by raising the status of collective worship this has been the means to promote the college's Christian values on a more overt and successful level. To monitor this, an ethos committee has been created, comprised of staff and governors, who meet regularly to evaluate the impact of new initiatives. Links with the parish church are close. This is due to regular visits from the vicar who often leads collective worship in addition to contributing to RE lessons. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school's Christian character and speak highly of how the school equips students with a strong resilience to support their future success and make the most of their lives.

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