

## Inspection of Anglican Schools

### Report

School:	<b>The Kings of Wessex School, Station Road, Cheddar, Somerset BS27 3AQ</b>
Status:	<b>Secondary Foundation (Voluntary Controlled)</b>
Diocese:	<b>Bath and Wells</b>
Local Authority:	<b>Somerset</b>
Date of Inspection;	<b>March 9<sup>th</sup> 2010</b>
Date of last Inspection:	<b>June 6<sup>th</sup> 2007</b>
School's unique ref. no.	<b>123896</b>
Headteacher:	<b>Mr Chris Richardson</b>
Chair of Governors:	<b>Mr Peter Lythgoe</b>
Inspector's name & NS no:	<b>Mr Andrew Rickett - 201</b>

### School Context

The Kings of Wessex is a larger than average secondary school serving a mainly rural area. The majority of students are of white British heritage. The number of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average. The school holds specialist status for mathematics, science and design and technology.

### Summary Judgement

**The distinctiveness and effectiveness of The Kings of Wessex School as a church school are outstanding.**

The Kings of Wessex is a school that fully embraces its Christian character and does so with joy and enthusiasm. Love and forgiveness are at the heart of the school's ethos and this has created a community in which everyone is respected and where people care very much for each other. This makes a positive difference to the academic achievement and personal development of the students.

## **Established Strengths**

- The degree to which students are treated and valued as individuals
- The high quality of the opportunities for students to reflect and grow spiritually
- The commitment of the school's leadership and management teams to promote the school's Christian foundation

## **Focus for development**

- Investigate the provision of further opportunities for students to use a quiet space for reflection and prayer

## **The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is outstanding in the way it meets the needs of all learners.**

Christian values truly do influence all aspects of life at this school. These are values that are firmly embedded in the culture and spirit of the school. They have become an integral part of the common language that is used by the whole school community when talking about what makes them distinctive. This was evident throughout the inspection when staff, students, governors, parents and members of the local community all spoke about the love, forgiveness and respect that make the school a special place. These are values that can be seen in the everyday life of the school and particularly in the high quality of relationships that exist between all members of the school community. The school has created an environment where students know and appreciate that they are valued as individuals and will be encouraged to develop as whole people. The development of the students' spiritual awareness is excellent. Students show a mature ability to reflect on difficult concepts and issues regarding faith and belief and do so openly, with a sense of curiosity and willingness to explore things outside their comfort zone. The emphasis on spiritual development together with the promotion of Christian values, has encouraged students to have a marked awareness of the needs and presence of others and to respond to those around them. This was seen in the many small, unacknowledged and selfless acts that make up an important part of the ethos of the school. Students feel safe and secure in the school and appreciate the efforts made by staff who 'go the extra mile' to support them and allow them to achieve their best.

## **The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding**

The impact of collective worship on the school community has been taken forward significantly since the previous inspection. It is now outstanding. What makes the developments in collective worship impressive is the way that, although they have in part enhanced the place of Christian values and principles in the life of the school, they have also made collective worship more inclusive and given it greater meaning among the students. In practical terms, collective worship has been given more time and the placing of it at the centre of the school day has increased its profile. The development of the 'Thought for the Day' and explicit times for reflection in tutor groups have been particularly successful in making collective worship more relevant to the students. This has been achieved largely through the excellent PowerPoint presentations prepared by the Christian Leader which give students the opportunity to explore the weekly theme more deeply and encourages them to reflect on the meaning of concepts such as trust or peace. Students speak very positively about

these opportunities and explain how they can help transform their views and opinions by giving them a greater understanding. For example, the current theme allowed students to question the nature of trust in relationships and for some, this made a deep impression. These opportunities are also an important part of the school's encouragement of the students' spiritual growth. The themes used in collective worship convey specific Christian messages and promote the school's Christian values. They also follow the Anglican calendar and respond to events in the world around them. The involvement of students in collective worship has been a particularly successful area of development. The regular preparation and leading of assemblies by each tutor group is a reflection of the commitment to engage students in acts of worship. These are occasions when the theme is explored and interpreted by the students themselves. The considerable time and effort given to this is a testament of their value. In addition there is a good range of visitors who lead acts of worship. They give students a wide variety of styles and varying viewpoints which is something that the students say they appreciate very much. The church is regularly used by all students at least four times a year. Students recognise that these visits to celebrate Christian festivals are an important expression of being a church school and talk respectfully of these experiences.

**The leadership and management of the school as a church school are outstanding.**

The headteacher has a very strong commitment to bringing the school's Christian character alive. He has a strong belief that the school's Christian ethos is something that has to be lived out in the life of the school and should have an impact. The support and contribution he receives from his deputy and the Christian Leader to achieve the school's vision is outstanding. Together, these key staff ensure that the school's Christian foundation thrives. The leadership of collective worship by the deputy is excellent and with the Christian Leader they are central to the successful impact of the school's Christian character on the lives of the students. An important aspect of the school's success is the support given by the senior leadership group in ensuring that students have quality time for the 'Thought for the Day' and in giving high status to the tutor group assemblies. Foundation governors are passionate and committed to the development of the Christian ethos. They have a central role in challenging the school and providing support and advice in taking the Christian foundation forward. They are very knowledgeable about the purpose of a church school and clearly grasp how it can make a difference to the lives of those in the school community. Links with the local church have continued to grow since the previous inspection and the new vicar is becoming increasingly involved in the life of the school. The subject leader for Religious Education promotes the place of RE within the school curriculum effectively and leads a department that achieves excellent results with outstanding teaching and learning. The school plays an important part in the life of the local community and reaches out as an expression of Christianity in action to national and global communities through its charitable work. Parents fully support the school's vision and are particularly appreciative that the school doesn't, 'pigeonhole their children,' but encourages their individuality within an environment where care for others is paramount.

*This inspection was carried out on behalf of the Diocese of Bath & Wells in whose area the school is set, in accordance with Section 48 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection framework used is that established by The National Society of the Church of England for the denominational inspection of church schools for all dioceses in England and Wales.*

*Your comments or complaints should be addressed to the Education Department, The Diocese of Bath & Wells, The Old Deanery, Wells, Somerset BA5 2UG. Further information about inspection of church schools can be obtained from the National Society's website at [www.natsoc.org.uk](http://www.natsoc.org.uk).*