

Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools

Report

School:	The Kings of Wessex Church of England School, Station Road, Cheddar BS27 3AQ
Status:	Secondary Foundation (deemed Voluntary Controlled)
Diocese:	Bath and Wells
Local Authority:	Somerset
Date of Inspection;	6th June 2007.
Date of last Inspection:	December 2002
School's unique ref. no.	123896
Name of Headteacher:	Mr Chris Richardson
Chair of Governors:	Mr Peter Lythgoe
Inspector's name & NS no:	Rev Harold Stephens (NS264)

School Context

The Kings of Wessex School is a large comprehensive upper school with 1,185 on roll including 302 in the sixth form. The School is a Church of England Foundation School and specialist Technology College. The age range is from 13 to 18 – the school receives students from two middle schools, one of which is a Church of England school. There is a low number of students from ethnic minorities and the ability range on intake is above the national average. The school serves a large, prosperous rural area which contains some pockets of rural deprivation.

Summary Judgement

The Kings of Wessex is an outstanding Church of England School. The school has a long-established, integral and profoundly rooted Christian ethos nourished and cherished by all at the school. The school's vision is clear, its policies are

effective and its distinctively Christian character is at the heart of the thinking and practices of the school.

Established Strengths

- The effective and extremely well-planned provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students in the school.
- The leadership and management of the school as a Church school which provides strong, effective and visionary Christian leadership which encourages and enables all at the school to flourish.
- The capacity of the school for, and its commitment to continuous improvement through outstanding monitoring and evaluation across the whole learning community.
- The quality of outward-looking community links, including those with the Parish church and other churches at several levels.

Focus for development

- To continue with the programme to further enrich and develop the quality of Collective Worship at the school and the consistency of its delivery.
- To broaden the appreciation of students generally of spiritual and ecumenical matters.

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

The Kings of Wessex School has a strong, clear and consistently Christian ethos which underpins and informs the whole school. The values of the school and their Christian foundation are made clear to all and help to shape a school which is inclusive. The Kings of Wessex School works outstandingly successfully for all students and seeks to create a positive learning environment in which all may succeed.

There are many opportunities for students to enrich their experiences with a commitment to outward-looking community links and charitable involvement and giving. The school has embedded very effective provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students across the curriculum and many examples of creative approaches to this are found in several subjects beyond Religious Education, Citizenship and PSHE where this is strongly represented. The provision for Religious Education is a recognised strength in the school delivered by skilled teachers and with excellent results. This is enhanced by much more in the curriculum which challenges students to consider ethical and moral issues and to be able to reflect on Christian positions in relation to these.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of 6th form students is provided for through tutorial time, Collective Worship and suspended timetable days tailored to suit this age range. These have had a consistently positive impact. 6th form students lead in many areas of school life, including many extra-curricular activities and in major fund-raising activities for charities.

Multicultural education is carefully planned and effective across the school and considered to be of considerable importance although there is some room

for greater provision for students to encounter directly representatives of non-Christian faiths and non-European cultures.

The school has effective policies and practices in place which, for example, address anti-bullying imaginatively and with strong student involvement. Students feel safe, that all are treated with fairness and respect and parents commented on the influence of the school on children's long-term personal development. Many opportunities for students to be involved, to take responsibility and engage as positive citizens exist. The outstanding links which integrate policy with curriculum foci, personal reflection and leading to practical, social action are to be commended and offer a model of good, integrated practice.

Pastoral care and guidance are a great success, including for vulnerable students and those with particular difficulties or needs. Similarly, the professional and pastoral needs of all staff are well catered for. Generally behaviour is good, relationships excellent, and students are proud of their school.

Spiritual support for all is available with the help and support of the Christian Leader, the senior team and the parish priest. Provision to foster the Christian union, enable confirmation preparation and organise residential trips involving reflection and spiritual exploration are further evidence of the school's Christian character.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective Worship plays an important part in the life of the school – a vital part of its Christian life and one that many value and are influenced by. Regular Collective Worship is provided for all through acts of collective worship and "Thought for the Day" when delivered in tutor groups. Themes reflect the Christian year, issues and times important to the school and its community as well as major areas of concern, moral, social as well as spiritual. Prayer and reflection are consistent elements in worship at the school.

The thought for the day is well planned and integral to the themes for worship. Staff and students are well prepared for these as the materials are also made available on the shared area of the school's intranet. It is recognised that they do contribute to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students generally. There is a need, however, for the Thought for the Day to be consistently used by all tutors.

Students are involved with planning worship and some help to deliver/lead assemblies and some tutor time 'Thought for the Day' slots. Students also actively prepare and help lead elements of the voluntary School Holy Communion and other Church services. This is to be commended.

Whilst some of the accommodation (the gym) is not ideal, there is an attempt to create appropriate foci for prayer, reflection and worship. The Hall provides a more readily adaptable environment for worship.

Worship at the Kings of Wessex School has been extensively reviewed since the last denominational inspection. Collective Worship is effectively managed by the Christian leader who seeks to resource, support, advise and guide in order to stimulate effective and appropriate worship, plan for visitors and tutor-group assemblies. This is good. There is evidence of increasing confidence among staff and students and some very positive attitudes to some worship. Students value especially worship planned and led by their peers as well as worship led by certain effective visitors.

There is a considerable programme of worship beyond the regular Collective Worship: regular School Communion services, Church services and special assemblies reflecting the range of school, community and societal concerns and interests. The Ascension Day traditions have a particular charm!

Collective Worship at the School is a significant provider for the spiritual and moral development of all students.

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

The leadership and management of the school as a Church School are outstandingly successful. The Christian foundation and the school's ethos and values permeate the whole school and have a major impact on all who are part of its community. The great success of the school as a learning environment with its great emphasis on success for all and strategies for inclusion, reflect the consistent Christian vision of the Headteacher and School Leadership Group supported by staff, Governors, parents and students. Leadership at other levels of the school is also effective and contributes to the school's success. The leadership of Religious Education, Citizenship and for PSHE are of high calibre and programmes of study are designed to reflect and draw from the school's values and ethos.

The culture of effective, well-planned and extensive self-evaluation for improvement is firmly integrated in the life of the school. Arising from this have come the involvement of all in the maintenance and extension of high standards throughout the school

The pastoral and support provision for students, including a number with hearing impairment, is highly effective and valued by students and parents alike. Parents speak of the school's level of care, its efforts always to improve and the quality of communication with them in this process. There is an active and effective PTA. Parents are regularly consulted about aspects of the life of the school.

The school has extensive and active links with the Church at various levels and is constantly seeking to improve practice. The appointment of the "Christian Leader" has been a significant step in the school's development of its Christian character. Governance has been extremely effective in supporting and stimulating the leadership and management of the School.

It is reported that the parting words at the recent 6th form leavers' service were "*don't lament what you are leaving behind, celebrate what you are taking with you*"

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.