



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
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The **Methodist Church** 



DIOCESE OF
BATH & WELLS

National Society Statutory Inspection
of Anglican and Methodist Schools
Report

The Kings of Wessex Academy

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.



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National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

The Kings of Wessex Academy

Station Road, Cheddar, Somerset
BS27 3AQ

Previous SIAMS grade: Outstanding

Diocese: Bath and Wells

Local authority: N/A

Dates of inspection: 9th March 2015

Date of last inspection: 9th March 2010

School's unique reference number: 136783

Headteacher: Chris Richardson

Inspector's name and number: Derek Holloway 93

School context

The Kings of Wessex Academy is a larger than average 13-18 Academy with 1179 students on roll. It converted to academy status in June 2011. It serves a large rural catchment area of approximately 200 square miles. Most students are of white British heritage and almost all speak English as their first language. The proportion of students known to be eligible for the pupil premium is well below the national average as is the proportion of SEN students. The academy was inspected by Ofsted in the two days preceding this inspection.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Kings of Wessex Academy as a Church of England academy are outstanding

- The inspirational leadership of the head teacher and of senior leaders that seek to be the living embodiment of Christian values to the students, resulting in a school community at ease with itself.
- The rigorous curriculum approach taken to ensuring the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students.
- The significant contribution that Religious Education (RE) and worship make to the day to day rhythm of life at the academy.

Areas to improve

- Develop a clearer public exposition of the Christian character of the academy
- Expand opportunities for student's experience of prayer and reflection in the daily life of the academy.

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

The Kings of Wessex Academy has a deeply embedded Christian ambience that pervades all aspects of academy life. The effectiveness of the academy's Christian character is understood differently by different stakeholders. The clearest articulation, however, comes from the students who identify respect, a sense of thankfulness, trust and friendship as the marks of the academy. As a result of a well thought through programme of collective worship students can locate these values in Christian teaching. They can explain how these values shape attitudes and relationships with each other and the wider community and how this enhances their educational experience. For example the excellent pastoral care students receive is made possible as it is rooted in the trust students have for the academy, their teachers and each other. This results in exemplary student behaviour and shapes the academy's approach to attendance and exclusion. A sense of thankfulness creates in students a desire to 'give back' through involvement in school life, volunteering and charity work. A sense of friendship underpins relationships across the academy which results in an exceptionally calm and peaceful learning environment. Religious Education contributes significantly to the Christian character of the academy; students value the subject for helping them to ask deep and searching questions about religion and faith and as a result they develop respect for each other's opinions and views. The RE curriculum also helps to develop respect for diversity and prepare pupils for life in modern Britain. The academy has a highly developed approach to the provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC). There is a clear definition of spirituality in the staff handbook and each subject audits provision annually. It is in this approach that the Christian character impacts most clearly on student's achievement. Students, including vulnerable students and those in receipt of pupil premium, make progress that is significantly above the national average at 16 and at 18.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Considerable value is placed on collective worship at The Kings of Wessex Academy. Practice is deeply embedded and accepted by all as an integral part of school life. Particularly significant is the use of the local church for a range of key services which are, for students, memorable experiences. The school receives strong support from the local ecumenical church community and the new reappointment of a jointly funded 'Christian Leader' post reflects this continued commitment and builds capacity for yet further development. Worship planning is based on a combination of the church's year, the RE curriculum and identified needs and current issues. As a result of this detailed approach worship is inclusive and meaningful for students. The 'Thoughts' for the week programme, rooted in biblical material, offers students the opportunity for reflection and the opportunity to expand their thinking. Themes in worship challenge students and are a major driver of the considerable and impressive charitable giving and fund raising that is a feature of the academy. Designed opportunities mean all students get the chance to plan and lead acts of worship and this helps develop positive attitudes to worship. The school has developed robust arrangements for the monitoring and evaluation of collective worship and consequently worship develops through gradual adaptation. A focus for development from the last inspection was to provide a space for student reflection and prayer. The school has addressed this by directing funds to the Christian leader post. This now gives capacity to provide expanded opportunities for prayer in the life of the academy.

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

The academy's aims of 'Getting the best out of everyone' and to 'stand out from the crowd' are suitable as aims for a school that serves the whole community. At the time of the inspection there was no exposition of how these aims are informed by or reflect the Christian vision on the academy's website. All leaders do, however, articulate, live out and promote a Christian vision for the academy. This articulation varies in its expression across the school. Detailed self evaluation involves all groups in the community and the academy is served by foundation governors who are well informed and contribute significantly to church school self evaluation. The academy has invested in ensuring strong leadership in both RE and in collective worship. Priority has been given to appointing specialist RE staff and as a result RE is a highly effective, high performing subject that is a model of outstanding practice. The National Society's statement for entitlement is fully implemented. During the recent vacancy of the 'Christian Leader' post the deputy head has successfully ensured the continued effectiveness of collective worship. There is an excellent programme of internal professional development where middle managers are given the chance to innovate and to model their work. Relationships with the local church community result in mutual and substantial benefit for all groups concerned. One small example seen during the inspection was the involvement of year 9 students working with a local First school to decorate the church for Mother's Day celebrations.

SIAMS report March 2015 The Kings of Wessex Academy Cheddar Somerset BS 27 3AQ