



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Wyvern College

Church Road
Laverstock
Salisbury
SPI IRE

Previous inspection grade: Good

Current inspection grade: Good

Diocese: Salisbury

Local authority: Wiltshire

Dates of inspection: 14 and 15 March 2016

Date of last inspection: February 2011

School's unique reference number: 184199

Headteacher: Paul German

Inspector's name and number: Jo Fageant 104

School context

Wyvern is a non-selective boys' school with 282 pupils. Its new premises were opened in September 2015. These are on a site shared with two other secondary schools with which it works in partnership. It retains the focus of a technology college and became a voluntary aided school in 2003. Students come from mainly white British backgrounds. Average numbers are eligible for free school meals, come from ethnic minority backgrounds, and speak English as an additional language. There are an above average number of students with special educational needs and average attainment on entry is below that which is expected. The headteacher and deputy have been in post since 2014.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Wyvern College as a Church of England school are good

- A Christian commitment to the value and potential of every person underpins high quality academic and pastoral support.
- The same Christian commitment pays particular attention to developing a sense of self-worth and encouraging high aspirations which are especially important with those boys who have not gained a place in Salisbury's boys' grammar school.
- Three core values (courage, commitment and compassion), which are relevant to all, have been given a clear Christian interpretation linked with the distinctive Christian belief about God as three in one.
- Explicitly Christian worship in school and church is set in the context of relevant themes and values which promote good relationships, excellent behaviour and charitable fundraising.

Areas to improve

- Governors and senior leaders should work together to review the way they articulate the college's Christian distinctiveness so it is made clear to all stakeholders.
- Governors and senior leaders should develop strategies to evaluate the impact of the college's collective worship in all its contexts in order to inform continuing improvement.
- The college should explore a range of ways in which collective worship can be offered and use some of these ideas to ensure it is provided on a daily basis for the whole college community.

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

The three values of *courage*, *commitment* and *compassion* are woven throughout all aspects of college life. Students readily give examples of the impact they have on relationships, behaviour and attitudes. A good example is seen in the number of boys, the majority, who signed a pledge to zero tolerance of any form of bullying. Teachers say compassion between the boys is evident in their sense of moral justice and generous charitable fundraising. There is an understanding of the Christian significance of the values because they are explored in collective worship and links are made with Christian beliefs in some lessons. Attention to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development across the curriculum means they are encouraged to think deeply and reflectively in a wide range of contexts. For example, students recognise how religious education/ethics develops their understanding of important issues as well as their respect for people who come from different backgrounds and have different beliefs. Boys who have been in the college longest describe how it has changed. They understand the new building, renewed high expectations and the encouragement they are given to aim high as examples of the college's commitment to their wellbeing. Some say teachers 'convince you you can do more than you thought', which sometimes demands courage. This applies to some who have taken part in the challenges involved in working for a Duke of Edinburgh's Award and a trip to Morocco. They speak appreciatively of how these develop confidence and a sense of self-worth and personal achievement. They recognise that these experiences develop all three core values. Boys who join the school other than at the start of Year Seven say they are welcomed, quickly understand the influence of the college's values and like the way they are treated with respect and trust. Records reveal that when, in recent years, the focus on the college's Christian ethos and its values, was reduced, statistics relating to attainment and progress were less positive. As a result of the clear Christian commitment to the value and potential of every student there is now a strong trend of improving academic results and progress. The same commitment, involving forgiveness where necessary, drives a continuing focus on attendance and has significantly reduced exclusions. There is a detailed understanding of where and when additional support and pastoral care are needed. The work of the lay chaplain and involvement of local Christians in a mentoring scheme for students helps boys understand the college's care for them is linked with its Christian character. The trust that underpins relationships within the college has helped develop an effective system of student voice. Through this, boys have been able to provide valuable and influential feedback on the rewards system and marking practice across the school.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is built on a detailed annual plan of weekly themes and members of the college community talk of the relevance of these to their own lives. They say that these themes influence relationships, behaviour, attitudes and social and charitable action. The themes include a focus on key times and festivals in the Christian year. Some of these occasions are celebrated in local churches and the cathedral. Through these students develop a familiarity with Anglican liturgy and the ways in which Christians express their belief in God as three in one, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Students respond positively and some participate by undertaking readings, leading prayers and playing music. Times in church and in school understood by all to be collective worship are explicitly Christian in nature. They are led by a variety of people including teachers, clergy and visitors. They include passages from the Bible, particularly the teachings of Jesus. Students develop an understanding of their contemporary relevance and the importance of Jesus for Christians. Consequently, times of worship make a good contribution to students' SMSC development. The college prayer, focused on the three core values, is identified by students as an essential element of all acts of worship. The symbolic lighting of a candle is understood to mark the start of worship within an assembled gathering. Students understand this to have spiritual significance but its relevance to Christianity is not made explicit. Although anecdotal feedback about worship is positive, there is no strategy in place to evaluate its impact in the several contexts in which it takes place. On most days each week worship is planned to happen in tutor groups using the weekly themes. However, students' reports of what happens in these contexts indicates an inconsistency of practice often understood to include nothing recognised as worship. Up to now, following the move to the new building with its improved hall, students have not taken responsibility for the leadership of major acts of worship. This was a deliberate decision on the part of leaders who wanted first to establish a pattern of worship. There

is, however, a tradition of forms successfully leading worship in year group contexts.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Religious education (RE) is led by a teacher with energy, commitment and an awareness of current developments. It also benefits significantly from the expertise of the headteacher and other humanities teachers. Although attainment overall is lower than national expectations, students make good and, in some cases, outstanding progress from their starting points. This is because they are engaged with units of work that have been planned to make up an interesting course. They recognise that the topics encourage them to think about issues which are relevant to their lives. Students respond well to the challenge of wrestling with big questions of meaning and purpose such as Year Eight boys exploring religious beliefs about suffering. This contributes well to students' SMSC development. 2015 was the first year in which all students followed the full GCSE course. This has raised the status of the subject within the college. Through this course students develop a secure understanding of Christianity and how its teachings inform the lives of believers. Assessment and tracking of progress are in place and inform appropriate challenge and support. Marking, in line with the college policy, provides personalised feedback. It tells students what they have done well and presents them with a challenge indicating ways to improve to which they have to respond. The majority of RE teaching is reliably judged to be good. The best lessons develop skills such as enquiry, interpretation, analysis and reflection. They structure learning and provide a variety of tasks and resources to match the abilities of different students. They engage with the college's core values and as a consequence students' understanding of their significance is deepened.

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

The college has a clear, powerfully expressed statement about its distinctively Christian vision which provides a rich theological interpretation of the three core values. It speaks of the courage to do God's will and links commitment with the work of the Holy Spirit and compassion with the love of Christ. Although some people are aware of this statement it is not shared consistently or prominently with all members of the college community. It does, however, drive leaders to raise the aspirations of students, setting high expectations of general behaviour and attitudes to learning. It motivates the setting of realistic targets arising from the college's excellent record of accurately predicting academic attainment. This means leaders have a good understanding of discrepancies between the progress of different groups of boys and, believing in the value and potential of every individual, develop appropriate support where it is needed. The size of the school enables support to be personalised and bespoke. Good use is made of members of a church group called *The Bridge* to provide mentoring for boys who would benefit. Leaders' Christian commitment to providing the best life chances for students has driven a strong focus on strengthening the quality of teaching and learning in response to a recent history of disappointing results. As a consequence, teachers' skills have been improved through a challenging programme of professional development and a high proportion of lessons are now judged as good or outstanding. A focus on SMSC development has involved all subject areas so issues of faith and belief are addressed in a wide range of contexts. For example, an art unit on Egyptian illustrations explores Egyptian and Christian beliefs about life after death. Christian beliefs about stewardship are explored in humanities lessons. The importance given to RE and collective worship is demonstrated by the direct involvement of the headteacher in both areas. However, inconsistencies in the provision of worship in tutor time suggests statutory requirements are not always met. Partnerships with the diocese, local authority and other external consultants help the college understand the progress it is making. Training provided for some staff about collective worship and Christian distinctiveness has not yet had sufficient positive impact. Good relationships with local churches and the wider community develop an understanding of Christian beliefs and commitment and involvement in charitable and social action. Trips abroad, like one to Morocco, broaden students' horizons and enrich their understanding of the wider world and different cultures. Governors, who have a good range of skills, are very involved in the college. They challenge well across a range of issues and have recently established a committee to focus specifically on the Christian ethos. However, they have had no direct involvement in the college's self-evaluation of its Christian distinctiveness.

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