



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church**



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Sexey's School

Cole Road, Bruton
Somerset
BA10 0DF

Previous SIAS grade: Good

Diocese: Bath and Wells

Local authority: N/A

Dates of inspection: 23rd and 24th March 2015

Date of last inspection: March 2010

School's unique reference number: 123902

Head Teacher: Mr Irfan Latif

Inspector's name and number: Mr Derek Holloway 93

School context

Sexey's School, Bruton became an academy in 2011. It is a growing but smaller than average 11-18 co educational boarding and day school with 506 students currently on roll. The school has low numbers of pupils eligible for pupil premium or with special educational needs. The head teacher and deputy head teacher have both taken up post in the last 2 years.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Sexey's School as a Church of England school are good.

- The outstanding leadership of the Head Teacher has brought about considerable and meaningful development of the school as a church school.
- The quality and realism of strategic planning is building significant capacity to develop Religious Education (RE) and collective worship.
- The quality of relationships across the school, modelled by staff, leads to exceptional systems of care for students.

Areas to improve

- Develop systems to monitor and evaluate the impact of the schools provision of spiritual moral social and cultural development, to ensure progression in students' spiritual development.
- Develop the role of foundation governors in monitoring and evaluating all aspects of church school life including collective worship.

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

Since his appointment the Head Teacher has developed a simple clear statement of the school's Christian values as 'Tolerance, Respect and Kindness' (TRaK). This has rapidly embedded into school life as it has both encapsulated and articulated the existing 'family feel' of the school. As a consequence there is a shared understanding of these values across all stakeholders. These values have been given a theological underpinning and are explored in collective worship. This clearer articulation of values has created a culture with an apparent 'behaviour for learning' that supports student's academic progress as well as their personal development and well being. As a result all students, including vulnerable students and those entitled to pupil premium now make expected or better than expected levels of progress. TRaK informs relationships at all levels in the school which are of the highest standard. This results in an exceptionally supportive environment for all who live and work in the school. Building on the schools boarding expertise all students are exceptionally 'well known', resulting in excellent pastoral care provision. Nowhere is this better shown than in the work of 'The Sanctuary'. This brings together the spiritual needs of students with the schools emotional literacy provision resulting in a holistic provision for students. Pupil attendance is high and exclusions rare. The recent introduction of Philosophical Perspectives lessons in the lower school is not only equipping students with academic skills, but has started to build greater capacity to live out the school's values of TRaK in more meaningful ways. Through the schools recently revised Theology & Philosophy (TP) curriculum and a wide range of extracurricular provision students develop a respect for diversity and difference. The school offers an exceptional range of extracurricular sporting and cultural activities. These, along with in-school curricular opportunities, help inform and develop students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The impact and provision of this is not, however, effectively tracked across the school resulting in differential provision and no clear progression of opportunities for spiritual development.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is recognised by all as being an important aspect of school life. Since the last inspection whole school acts of worship have become more distinctive and the support and planning for tutor group worship has been significantly enhanced. Students particularly value tutor group worship as a time for reflection, engagement and challenge in moral issues. This approach considerably helps support the schools TRaK values. Students have welcomed the greater opportunities to be involved with the planning as well as leading of collective worship at tutor group level. Teaching staff feel supported in this role and recognise how worship informs students' learning across the curriculum. The local church community has been very supportive providing resources for tutor worship through the 'Linx' project. Whole school worship has a significant focus on the Christian faith and helps support students' understanding of the school values. A range of school leaders and the parish incumbent take worship ensuring a focus on Anglican tradition. Prayer is a central focus of all acts of worship and the school has developed its own school prayer which is often used by students. The Sanctuary provides a place for private prayer and students are comfortable to use this facility if they wish. The school Chaplaincy team take a lead in providing small acts of worship, including regular Eucharist, in the Sanctuary. Systems to monitor and evaluate worship are intermittent and focus on feedback; these have yet to significantly inform the planning of whole school acts of worship. There is no regular opportunity for the Chaplaincy team leader to monitor tutor group worship.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

RE or Theology & Philosophy (TP) is a rapidly improving aspect of the school's curriculum. Standards of attainment at GCSE level are in line with national expectations and with school averages. The school has recently overhauled its approach to assessment and as a result students are making faster progress and standards at Key Stage 3 are now in line with or better than local and national expectations. The school's monitoring, and that of external partners, suggests that teaching is often outstanding and this was confirmed by observation during the inspection. The newly appointed subject leader has brought significant subject expertise that is rapidly raising expectations and standards in TP. The Key Stage 3 curriculum has been developed to bring it in line with the Locally Agreed Syllabus whilst retaining a strong focus on Christianity. This is done through exploring challenging religious questions ensuring students develop greater understanding of religious practice. This change of approach is not always understood by parents and older students. RE is not yet outstanding because although student attitudes at Key Stage 3 are increasingly positive older students don't always value the subject academically and whilst broadly enjoying the lessons some fail to see the subject's relevance to their lives. As a result the school has yet to be able to establish Key Stage 5 examination courses and Key Stage 5 provision is met mainly by occasional religion and philosophy days; the school therefore does not fully meet the National Society's Statement of Entitlement for RE.

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

School leaders, and in particular the Head Teacher, articulate and live out a clear vision for the school. This has led to significant development of the school as a church school in recent years. Explicit Christian values now inform daily life and are shared and supported by all stakeholders. The school has a thorough understanding of itself as a church school and as a consequence effective strategies are being implemented to improve RE, collective worship and church school governance. The role of foundation governors in church school self evaluation is underdeveloped but recent changes to the governance structure have given capacity to address this. The school has secured outstanding leadership for RE and has successfully developed expertise and capacity from within the school through the Head of Chaplaincy role. In this way the school has addressed all issues from the last inspection and meets legal requirements for RE at Key Stage 3 and 4 and for collective worship. The links with the local church and local community are strong giving substantial benefit to all. For example the school boarders' regular attendance at church and involvement with the church choir. The local incumbent has provided significant support to the chaplaincy team and the development of The Sanctuary. The school has good links with the local diocese and raises significant amounts for charity. Through its boarding provision the school works closely with the local community and significant links have been developed with global communities in Zambia, China and the Philippines.

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