

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

### Hutton Church of England Grammar School

Liverpool Road, Hutton, Preston, PR4 5SN	
<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Blackburn</b>
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Lancashire
Dates of inspection	8-9 February 2018
Date of last inspection	24 May and 3 June 2013
Type of school and unique reference number	Secondary 119794
Headteacher	Mark Bradshaw
Inspector's name and number	The Revd Canon Steven Harvey 891

#### School context

Hutton Church of England Grammar School is a voluntary aided comprehensive school for boys aged 11 to 16. The school has a co-educational sixth form. There are 891 students on roll. The proportion of students with special educational needs and those who are eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. The proportion of students from ethnic minority backgrounds and those who speak English as an additional language is also well below the national average. Students' attainment on entry is above the national average. Since the last inspection a new headteacher has been appointed and chaplaincy provision has been restructured.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Hutton Church of England Grammar School as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The school's distinctive Christian character has a very significant impact on the daily lives and achievements of students.
- Collective worship in this church school is distinctive, inclusive and inspirational.
- A high profile religious education (RE) department makes a very significant contribution to the school's Christian character and to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school's leadership is highly effective in articulating and promoting a vision which is rooted in Christian belief and teaching.

#### Areas to improve

- Consolidate the excellent progress of the last two years in developing the school's Christian distinctiveness, so that it is further embedded in the daily life and work of the school community.
- Extend the availability of prayer boxes and share these prayers more fully in collective worship, so that students as well as staff are helped to have a stronger sense of the community supporting each other prayerfully.
- Develop the programme of visits to places of worship, to further enrich students' knowledge and understanding of different Christian traditions and of other faiths.

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

The school's Christian vision and character are expressed through the three values of accomplishment, humility and service. Displays around the school are a constant reminder of the school's core values. Great progress has been made under the school's new leadership in embedding Christian values in all aspects of the school's life. For example, each subject has adopted one or more of these values, such as humility in RE. Attractive posters in departmental areas link these values to subjects and include biblical quotations and prayers. These links, which are explored in teaching and learning, make a very significant contribution to students' appreciation of the school's Christian distinctiveness. The recently introduced Huttonian Award is currently being followed by all Year 7 students and is based on the school's core values. The award challenges students to express these values in their academic work and extra-curricular involvement and in their service of others. Staff speak of the significant impact of the award on students' academic progress.

All members of the school community articulate confidently the distinctive Christian character of the school. This character 'permeates the school', not least in the mutual care and support which students and staff show to each other. Students say that 'we all know the values we are expected to live by', and they understand their basis in Christian belief and teaching. All students, whatever their religious faith, recognise and value the significant impact of these values on all aspects of their lives. This supports their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well, helping them to develop a personal spirituality and resulting in behaviour and relationships being of a very high order. The school is very committed to the care and nurture of disadvantaged students. The impact of this is seen in the way in which older disadvantaged students contribute to the care and mentoring of younger students.

The school's Christian ethos creates an environment in which students are challenged and supported to be the best they can be. This makes a very significant contribution to their academic progress and attainment. All groups of learners achieve well. For example, in 2017, attainment scores at GCSE were above the national average for all groups, including disadvantaged students. A very small negative score for students with high prior attainment was quickly and effectively responded to through stretch and challenge work with more able students.

Students have a very high regard for RE. They recognise the major contribution it makes to the school's Christian character and to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They understand the multi-cultural nature of the Christian faith and have a high degree of knowledge and understanding of religious and cultural difference and diversity.

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

The school community attaches great importance to its distinctive, inclusive and inspirational collective worship which takes place daily in a variety of settings. The recently refurbished and rededicated chapel is beautifully decorated. This results in the prayer boards not only being used for prayers but also for questions about the nature of God. This encourages students to engage with faith with intellectual seriousness, and many respond thoughtfully and intelligently.

Worship is inspirational and relevant to students' lives. This is reflected in the high quality of their attention and engagement. A calm, reflective and spiritual atmosphere pervades worship. The inclusion of biblical material and Christian teaching, and the following of the Christian calendar, ensures that worship is distinctively Christian. Students are able to articulate clearly the central place of Jesus Christ in the Christian faith, and the Christian understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Worship is also inclusive. Students speak of there being a message for everyone, commenting that 'you don't have to be a Christian to take away the message'. For example, an act of worship for sixth formers focussed on how, during the season of Lent, Christians commemorate the journey of Jesus to the cross. This encouraged students to ask about their own journey. Students speak of regularly discussing the questions raised in worship with their friends. They clearly express how worship supports the school's core values. For example, they speak of the very positive effect which worship has on their behaviour, relationships and attitudes. Students and staff of other faiths say that they feel entirely comfortable in worship and how much they value its spiritual encouragement.

Reflection is a key feature of worship. This is highly valued by students as part of their own spiritual journey. They speak of how worship helps them to be aware of the spiritual dimension of their lives and to explore their own spirituality. Prayer is frequently led by students. Increasing use is being made of the prayer boxes which are located around the school. Currently, however, these prayer requests are responded to only by staff at a weekly prayer meeting. The school recognises the importance of sharing prayers more widely, so that staff and students support one another prayerfully.

Themes regularly pose a moral challenge. Students respond to this through practical concern for those less fortunate than themselves, and attribute their charitable activity to Christian values, such as justice and compassion. Very considerable sums are raised each year for a range of local, national and international charities.

A range of leaders, including staff and visitors from local churches, and the use of different churches for such festivals as Christmas and Easter, give students a rich experience of worship. This is being further enhanced by more frequent experiences of being part of a celebration of the Eucharist. Students regularly plan and lead worship, and do so with confidence. One Year 9 student praised a student-led form worship as 'good, interactive and informative'. Student representatives meet regularly with senior staff; their feedback is acted on, resulting in improvements to practice.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding**

RE has a very high profile in the school. All students study RE at GCSE, and the popularity and success of the subject have led to the decision to introduce A Level RS from September 2018. GCSE results are above the national average for both genders, and significantly above the national average for boys. In 2017 disadvantaged students out-performed non-disadvantaged students.

Students are inspired by RE and learn well. They particularly value the opportunities for reflection and respond positively to the encouragement they are given to apply this to their own thinking about questions of meaning and purpose. This reflection contributes significantly to their spiritual awareness and development. The rich RE curriculum at both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 ensures that students acquire a thorough knowledge and understanding of Christianity alongside their study of a range of other world faiths. Students speak of the critical importance of RE in helping them to learn about religious and cultural difference and diversity, both within Christianity and more broadly. While their learning is broad, its depth is currently restricted by a limited programme of visits to places of worship of a range of faiths. The school identifies this as an area for development. Students recognise the major contribution which RE makes to their respect for those of different faith traditions, commenting that 'RE teaches us to respect others, and in our multi-faith school it brings us together and strengthens our community'. They speak eloquently of taking this respect into their adult lives, and of being helped to live harmoniously and creatively in a multi-faith world.

Regular lesson observation and work scrutiny reveal that RE teaching is frequently outstanding. This is because a wide range of teaching and learning activities is used, and this ensures that the needs of all learners are met. Questioning is particularly effective in developing students' thinking skills and their excellent religious vocabulary. Teaching enables students to link their learning to the school's core values and to British values. Students engage with RE in a collaborative and mutually supportive and encouraging way. Assessment is thorough and enables students to know what they need to do to improve. Intervention strategies have a very positive effect on progress and attainment. Monitoring and evaluation secure improvement in students' performance.

Subject leadership is highly effective. The strong and cohesive department is led with Christian commitment, vision and passion by a subject leader who is ambitious about the contribution of RE to students' education. These ambitions are rooted in high expectations of students and staff, an unrelenting focus on improving outcomes for all students, well-targeted and effective action plans, and a very attractive learning environment. This results in RE making a very significant contribution to the school's distinctive Christian character.

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

The school's senior leadership team and governing body are fully committed to, and ambitious for, the school as a church school. They articulate, live out and promote, from personal conviction, a vision which is rooted in Christian belief and teaching. The leadership of the headteacher is inspirational. Members of the school community speak of a 'new school' under his leadership, and say that his 'faith and vision have been caught'. Leaders express with confidence the impact of the school's Christian character on the whole life of the school community. For example, the school's commitment to caring and compassionate service has a demonstrably positive effect on students' academic achievement, on their behaviour, relationships and attitudes, and on their personal development. Governors have a very hands-on engagement with the school. Extensive monitoring and evaluation procedures ensure that they possess a thorough understanding of the school's performance. The governors' ethos and well-being committee is particularly significant in monitoring and evaluating the school's Christian distinctiveness across all aspects of the school's life. Regular audits with staff and students are translated into a Christian Distinctiveness Development Plan and result in effective action for improvement.

The continuing professional development (CPD) of staff is given a high priority. Staff speak very highly of the support given to their professional development. The Christian Leadership Course run by the diocese supports those who aspire to church school leadership, and the school's current leadership benefits from the work done by participants.

There are mutually beneficial partnerships with a range of local churches and with the diocese. The chaplaincy exercised by four local Anglican clergy is highly valued, as is the support given to the school's three Christian Unions by staff from local free churches. The recently established partnership between the school and a Muslim school in Blackburn, sponsored by the diocese, is bringing significant benefits to staff and students. This further enriches the latter's knowledge and understanding of diversity within local and national communities. Parents and carers speak of the school being 'proactive' in its engagement with them. They particularly value the 'superb pastoral care' given to their children and often to them and their wider families. They, and the wider community, contribute financially and socially to the school through the various activities of the Hutton Grammar School Association.

Leaders have ensured that the areas for development identified in the last inspection report in 2013 have been addressed effectively. They ensure that arrangements for RE and collective worship meet statutory requirements. They have also identified that embedding the school's distinctive Christian character consolidates and builds upon the excellent progress made over the last two years.