

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Bishop Rawstorne Church of England Academy

Highfield Road

Croston

Leyland

PR26 9HH

Diocese: Blackburn

Local authority: Lancashire

Dates of inspection: 28th February & 1st March 2013

Date of last inspection: May 2007

School's unique reference number: 137296

Headteacher: Paul Cowley Executive Headteacher: Alan Davies

Inspector's name and number: Lyn Field NS151

School context

The school takes students from 11-16 years in a rural area south of Preston. The proportions of students eligible for free school meals or with special educational needs are both lower than most schools nationally. The Academy's original foundation links it to five ecclesiastical parishes that are still involved with the school. In September 2011, the school converted to academy status supported by the Diocese of Blackburn. In 2012, it was designated a Teaching School and awarded National Support School status. In response to this, there is now a headteacher with responsibility for the school on a daily basis and an executive headteacher who has been appointed as a National Leader in Education.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Bishop Rawstorne as a Church of England school are outstanding

Christian service of others lies at the core of the school's work. It can be seen in strategic leadership and in the teaching and care of students. As a result, they grow into compassionate and responsible young people able to make informed choices about the place of faith in their lives.

Established strengths

- Relationships across the whole school community that fully express a Christian understanding of values
- The clear vision of headteachers and governors for the future as a Church of England Academy
- The high standards students achieve in religious education
- The excellent pastoral support for the whole community

Focus for development

- To develop a more consistent role for students in planning, leading and evaluating worship
- To refine existing systems for evaluating the school as a Church of England Academy so that a clear set of agreed priorities emerge for action
- To monitor the planning for spiritual and moral development across all subjects to ensure links are made to deepen students' understanding

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

Excellent relationships between staff and students lie at the core of the school's success and reflect its deeply embedded Christian values. The way that students behave and conduct themselves is exemplary. Senior students take their positions of responsibility very seriously and

regularly take the lead in reaching out to disadvantaged groups in the community. They are in no doubt that the Christian values of the school, far from presenting a soft option, are uncompromising in the high standards expected of them. The sense of a united Christian family is palpable at all levels of school life. Small touches such as Friday breakfast for staff and headteachers on bus duty is an example of service of others at the heart of Christian leadership. The staff provide exceptionally good care for their students, particularly in the long term support they provide for families who have experienced bereavement or where students find learning difficult. A comment from one student summed up the feelings of them all: 'the staff don't come for the money but just to care for us'. Consequently, students are confident, keen to learn and willing to take on challenges. These qualities help them achieve results in line with the best schools nationally. Students name mutual respect, service of others and compassion as the key values of the school and, whatever their faith backgrounds, they have no difficulty in relating these to the teachings of Jesus. Their excellent spiritual and moral development is the result of strong teaching in religious education and their experiences of prayer and worship. Teachers in most departments highlight religious issues when they arise in topics. However, there is no monitoring of the overlap between subjects in order to check if all opportunities are taken to explore spiritual and moral issues in depth.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Prayer is a constant thread through every school day and carefully planned acts of worship capture students' interest by tapping into their current concerns as young people. It is the consistency and regularity with which these are delivered that provide a valuable rhythm to the spiritual life of the school. This is an exceptionally strong feature of the Academy as it reflects practice in only the best schools nationally. Clear Christian teaching frequently gives students pause for thought and leaves a lasting impression on their thinking. Students of all backgrounds feel comfortable to join in worship and, because the range of leaders represents the breadth of the Church locally, they are confident to engage with a range of Anglican traditions and practice. In spite of changes to staffing structure both in school and in local churches, worship has retained its place at the centre of school life. Students' involvement in worship has moved on from active participation in major services. They are now taking a lead in daily worship at all levels and keen for this to grow further. Many share in leading prayer time and tutor group worship with their teachers and a new initiative is already successfully underway for tutor groups to each take responsibility for worship in their year groups. Improvements, such as the increase in live music and hymn singing, continue to be made and are popular with students. Similarly, the nature of services for staff has changed to better meet the needs of adults. At three points in every day, there is a brief time of prayer and reflection. This cements the feeling of a single worshipping community. These many developments show the excellent use made of regular feedback received from governor visits, student surveys, chaplaincy meetings and informal responses from individual staff and students to keep worship alive in the school. The comprehensive scope of the Action Plan, although it reflects the ambitions of leaders to refine every single aspect of what the school provides, is sometimes too wide for energies to be channelled efficiently on agreed priorities.

The effectiveness of RE is outstanding

Students make excellent progress throughout the school to achieve GCSE results that are better than in schools nationally. Teaching is consistently good, sometimes outstanding and the rate of students' progress accelerates faster than in other subjects. In lessons, students are set a wide range of imaginative tasks that capture their interest and so maintain the pace of learning. These are the result of the subject leader's extensive knowledge of national initiatives in RE and the sharing of good practice within the department. Teachers' questioning prompts students to think reflectively, although their responses are not always probed in enough depth to deepen their understanding. They form their own opinions and show a genuine interest in those of others, which is central to learning in RE. Assessment is used effectively to plan lessons at the right level and to track the progress of individual students. This information is analysed to check how different groups are doing. A close eye is kept on the progress of boys, for example, and topics are planned with this in mind. The RE curriculum is rich in scope and makes an

outstanding contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The unit on Death in Year 9, for example, adds significantly to their understanding and strengthens the basis from which they begin to cope with difficult moments in life. Students enjoy RE. They acknowledge its importance and support the school's decision for them all to carry it through to GCSE. The RE department works effectively as part of the Humanities faculty. Senior leaders are thorough and regular in their monitoring. Consequently, they have an accurate knowledge of strengths in teaching and learning and precisely where development is needed. This is enhanced by the expertise of the subject leader who tailors her support to the needs of individual teachers. This ensures consistency in what students experience and leads to the high standards achieved.

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

The leadership of the academy is strong because headteachers and governors constantly give attention to the long-term needs of the school and the community. They anticipate future changes and take action to ensure that leaders will be in place with the relevant skills to sustain the school's success as a distinctively Christian organisation. Leaders are ambitious to play a full role in the development of church schools locally and are working closely with the new Diocesan Director to realise this vision. The staff already contribute to this through their outreach as a Teaching School and liaison with other RE departments. Students and adults involved with the school have no hesitation in describing how Christian values are lived out on a daily basis. The visit to the Cathedral for Y7 pupils on their first day sets down a clear marker for how learning is managed in a Christian context. For older students it has been followed through in the significant decision to make RE a full GCSE for all students. The school is a very reflective community where the collegiate style of leadership has had a far sharper focus on improvement in the last three years. This is also true of the attention given to its development as a church school. However, the systems to analyse all the feedback received have not been as effective in identifying a clear set of priorities for improvement. The partnership with local parishes, which dates back to the foundation of the school, continues to play a key role. The Chaplaincy Team of local clergy now embraces the ecumenical nature of the Church locally. Although stretched in terms of time, the deep commitment of this team ensures the Church still maintains a regular presence in all year groups and provides individual spiritual support for staff. The youth worker is highly effective in making Christianity accessible to students of all backgrounds. They all speak enthusiastically of his input into worship and his availability to talk about contemporary issues in a Christian context.