

Name and address of school: St Edmund's Church of England VC Girls School, Church Road, Laverstock, Salisbury. SP1 1RD

Type of school: Secondary Modern

Status: Voluntary Controlled

Diocese: Salisbury

LA: Wiltshire

Date of inspection: 10.2.11

Date of last inspection: 8.11.2007

School's Unique reference number: 126468

Name of Head Teacher: Mrs J. Goodall

Inspector's name with National Society inspector's number:

Canon Harold Stephens. (264)

The School's Context

St Edmund's Church of England Girls School is a girls' secondary modern (non-selective) school located in the eastern part of the city of Salisbury and serving that part of the city and beyond. It has 778 students on roll in years 7 to 11. The number of pupils with special needs and those eligible for free school meals is lower than the national average. There are fewer than average students from minority ethnic and cultural backgrounds although a number of students have a language other than English as their first language. The attainment levels of students on entry to the school conform to the national average although selection means there are fewer with the highest levels of attainment. The school has specialist Sports College Status. It has Foundation International School Status and sustains a number of international links encompassing Europe, Asia and North America. The school lies within the area of Salisbury deanery.

Summary Judgement

St Edmund's Church of England Girls' School is an outstanding Church of England school. Its shared Christian values and strong, open, Christian ethos are reflected throughout the school, within and beyond the formal curriculum. The school's leadership is such that there is a vision of what is held in common and of that which the school treasures, resulting in outstanding provision for pastoral care and guidance and for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students.

Established strengths

- The quality of the Leadership and Management of the school as a Church school, under the outstanding spiritual leadership of the head teacher.
- The excellent pastoral care and guidance provided for all students at the school.
- The consistent and high-calibre provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students including that of Religious Studies in KS3 and 4.

Focus for development

- To review the current policy for collective worship to enable it to conform better to the requirements of a Church of England school.
- To seek ways in which to improve the environment for and the frequency of collective worship for all students.

How well does the school, through its distinctive Christian character, meet the needs of all learners?

St Edmund's CE Girls School, through its distinctive Christian character, is outstanding in meeting the needs of all learners. The school provides extensively and effectively for the needs of all learners as a Church school. The outstanding quality of care and guidance is rooted in an explicit and a well-developed Christian vision and a strong and consistent Christian ethos which permeates the school. All learners do well at St Edmund's. The quality of impact of the provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is outstanding. This is evidenced not least through Humanities, including a highly effective Religious Studies curriculum. Here

students are challenged and encouraged to reflect, to explore, to debate and to respond. Elsewhere across the formal and informal curriculum and life of the school this is repeated. Students refer to the chaplaincy, to the ethos of all lessons, the freedom to express ideas and the quality of learning about faith and faiths which is both interesting and transforming. Parents identified ways in which the moral, spiritual social discussions among students spill over into discussions beyond school and clearly affect the thinking and behaviour of girls. The recent Hinduism evening, studies about domestic abuse, consideration of issues in tutor time arising from the Holocaust Day and special focuses on War have all had real and significant impact on students. The Christian ethos of the school underpins policies, practice and the language of the school. It inhabits the excellent relationships which are universally characteristic of the school which endeavours to ensure inclusion as well as positive and very creative approaches to multi-cultural and international education. The specialist Sports College Status has equally reflected this Christian ethos. Christian values such as respect, honesty, integrity and forgiveness are actively promoted and team work has infused the life of the school generally. "This is a school where students and teachers have mutual respect" said one girl. Another spoke of their trust and confidence in the staff whom "you can tell and know it will be confidential". Students are given extensive opportunities to take responsibility and leadership rôles. Year 9 Buddies, the School Council, the fund-raising activities, sports leadership, and rôles of Head girl and prefects are a few examples. These are taken seriously and play an important part in the daily life of the school and sustaining its Christian ethos. The curriculum is of a high quality including the provision to GCSE level of Religious Studies for all students. Religious Studies is a major contributor, within the Humanities context, for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. The quality of teaching in Religious Studies is good, often outstanding. Students show considerable confidence in forming and expressing their ideas and beliefs. Evidence of prior learning underpinning work at KS4 was especially strong. Religious Studies is extremely well-led and highly regarded by the whole school community. Community cohesion is very strong and the sense of unity within the school most apparent. There are good links at several levels with the Church of England parishes, deanery and Cathedral. The appointment of two, unpaid, part-time lay chaplains has been as the result of deanery support, reflecting the positive links with the Church. A local Parish Priest is chair of governors. The local priest who is deanery secondary schools chaplaincy officer is a frequent and much-appreciated visitor and the Head of Religious Studies and collective worship co-coordinator is an Anglican priest. Responsibility to and service for the local community is very evident. There is considerable commitment to fund-raising for charity and to outreach to the community. The school is much esteemed in the local and church communities. International links are a strength and reflected in the school's aspiration to achieve International School Status. Of particular note is the active exchange scheme with a Roman Catholic secondary school in New York, formed in the light of the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre.

What is the impact of collective worship on the school community?

The impact of Collective Worship on the school community is good. Collective Worship is provided for all learners on one or more occasions in a week. This does not fulfil statutory requirements. Collective worship is well planned, contains a good range of styles and students are involved in leading worship reasonably frequently. The programme of Collective Worship is both thematic and also reflects the Christian Year well. There are special services such as the Carol Service in the link church of St Thomas and a St Edmund's Day service in school. Collective Worship is led by a variety of staff including year leaders, lay chaplains, senior staff and a variety of visitors. Resources are sufficient although the school recognises the potential of enhancing a greater variety of modern technology to enhance worship. Some worship is overly wordy and pacing could be improved. The environment for worship should be reviewed and opportunities sought to enhance this to engender an even greater sense of reverence and reflection. Collective Worship is an important provider for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural

development of students and has considerable impact on them. Students expect high standards and respond well to them. They are enabled to reflect and respond in an open and inclusive environment which maintains a sensitivity to those of other faiths as well as those of none. Students, when asked, could talk about some worship which has caused them to ponder, to be uplifted, to laugh and to reflect. Students as well as staff are engaged in monitoring and evaluating worship, which is overseen by the Governors ethos committee. The policy for collective worship at St Edmund's School should be reviewed to reflect better its Anglican status. The spiritual life of the school is enriched by provision for prayer and Holy Communion for those who wish to participate and in the school's open and sensitive manner towards students of non-Christian faiths and none.

How effective are the leadership and management of the school as a church school?

Leadership and management of the school, as a Church school is outstanding. The school, as a Church of England school, is provided with good spiritual and moral leadership and management at all levels. The school's vision, long-established, informs the whole life of the school. This includes the Sports College Specialism where Christian values and ethos "complement, balance and moderate the Sports College values". At the centre of the life of the school has been the strong spiritual and moral leadership of the head teacher. In difficult times (the deaths of a teacher and a student within the past year) she has led and inspired the school community to address the circumstances with sensitivity, strength and compassion. Where difficulties or conflicts arise they are always addressed swiftly, justly and with compassion. High priority is given to the provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students. The excellent provision for the care and guidance of students and the unambiguous commitment to inclusion reflect the core values of St Edmund's CE Girls School. Students and parents spoke with enthusiasm about the provision for students in any kind of need and of the positive impact of cultural diversity found in the school. Governance is very effective. The governors have a passion for the Christian ethos and nature of the school. They provide both support and challenge to its leaders to drive this forward and to seek for constant improvements. The Governors Ethos Committee plays an important part in this process and is to be commended. All the areas for development identified in the previous Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools inspection have been addressed. St Edmunds Girls' School is a school which has both the aspiration and the capacity for continuous improvement. "My daughter is proud of her school", wrote one parent, "I consider her fortunate to be a pupil there".

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