



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

### Tring Church of England Voluntary Controlled School

Mortimer Hill,

Tring

HP23 5JD

#### Diocese: St Alban's

Local authority: Hertfordshire

Dates of inspection: 5th June 2014

Date of last inspection: 15th May 2009

School's unique reference number: 138352

Headteacher: Susanna Collings

Inspector's name and number: Kathryn Wright 436

#### School context

Tring School is a larger than average 11-18 co-educational school, it converted to a Church of England academy in July 2012. The number of pupils supported through pupil premium, and those with minority ethnic backgrounds is below average. The current head teacher has been in post for three years, and a voluntary chaplain works regularly in the school.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Tring CE VC School as a Church of England school are good

- The renewed focus on the distinctive Christian ethos of the school, championed by the senior leadership team and governors, provides a firm foundation on which the school can build
- The strong sense of community spirit means that students place high value on acts of service towards others both locally and globally
- The high priority placed on religious education (RE) ensures that its contribution to the Christian ethos is valued and celebrated
- The inclusive and personalised approach to learning rooted in the Christian value of hope, ensures that every student has high aspirations and can fulfil their potential.

#### Areas to improve

- To make explicit and fully embed the Christian values of wisdom, hope and community (koinonia) into all policies and practice throughout the school
- To ensure collective worship in tutor groups is consistently of a high quality
- To engage the students in developing, leading and evaluating collective worship

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

The importance of 'educating the heart' is central to the ethos of the school. The students speak of the school as being a family where each member is respected, encouraged and affirmed. This is supported particularly through the vertical tutor group system and highly effective transition arrangements. The Christian values of wisdom and hope are implicit within many aspects of the school life. In particular the aspirations of students are nurtured through a creative and personalised approach to the curriculum. The achievement of pupils is above the national average ( 5A\*-C including English and Maths), and extensive interventions are in place to support those who are making less progress. The importance placed on community (koinonia) is outstanding. Many students take part in acts of service within and beyond the school. One pupil spoke of the impact of taking part in 'World Challenge' saying it had built their character and helped them not to take things for granted. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted through the entire curriculum, as well as through the pastoral system and is an outstanding strength of the school. The sacred space and memorial garden provide places for students to reflect and respond. Religious education makes an outstanding contribution the Christian ethos of the school. The rebranding and imaginative approach to curriculum timetabling means that all students have an opportunity to study the subject at a level appropriate to them. The subject provides challenge and enables students to question and explore issues of faith deeply. As part of enrichment fortnight Year 7 students took part in workshops led by visitors on the theme of worship. This made a significant impact on the students' understanding of spirituality and stewardship. Ethical decision making is promoted through a Year 10 'Green Dragons' day which focuses on environmental and sustainable product design and innovation. However, at the current time, students are not fully aware of the biblical values which underpin the experiences and opportunities they have access to.

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

Collective worship has undergone significant improvement in the last two years, and the chaplain has played a key role in these changes. A new policy aims to ensure that worship is fully inclusive and meets the needs of a diverse school community. The values of wisdom, hope and community are rooted in an understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit and this forms the foundation of the worship programme. Whilst this is clearly articulated by the leadership and governors, this understanding is not fully comprehended by students. However, most students value worship and can articulate ways in which it has engaged them in thinking about the Christian faith and had an impact on their lives. The very good act of worship observed allowed students to reflect on the meaning of the Ascension, and provided both the biblical narrative, as well as an explanation of its relevance for Christians today. The style was engaging and student participation was actively encouraged. Anglican faith and practice is nurtured effectively through the use of liturgy and the well planned themes which reflect the Church Year. At festival times acts of worship are held in the local church and these moments were particularly appreciated by staff who commented on their spiritual impact. The profile and use of the school prayer has been enhanced, and students understand the values that underpin it. A broader understanding of prayer and its importance is developing, and the religious education department is supporting this through a specific unit of work on the nature of prayer. Due to the constraints of space, collective worship takes place in tutor groups on some days, and the quality of these sessions is currently inconsistent. The best practice allowed students to debate and discuss the theme for the week, however too often these occasions had a moral, rather than a spiritual focus. Formal monitoring and evaluation takes place by senior leaders and this is already leading to effective improvement.

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

A Christian vision based on biblical principles is articulated clearly by the senior leadership team and governors. Since her appointment, the head teacher has galvanised support in the realigning of the school to its Christian foundation. Her leadership has provided inspiration and built confidence in beginning to promote the values of wisdom, hope and community. This renewed focus is evident in the physical environment of the school and in documentation. Although not fully embedded into all aspects of school life, the foundations have been laid for successful future development. The leadership team describes the outworking of the school's Christian ethos as a 'work in progress', and this is an accurate description of its journey as a church school in the last three years. The chaplain has been instrumental in furthering this aim, and her presence has helped to ensure that the values are spreading into all aspects of the community. The high priority given to the well being of all in the school community means that the staff feel valued and appreciated. The sustained improvement of RE is testament to the high value placed on the subject by the leadership team and ensures that it is at the heart of the school. The school's self evaluation is honest and accurate. The areas for development had been carefully identified prior to the inspection. To support the refocus on the church school ethos, staff and governors have attended Diocesan professional development training. Although not all parents are fully aware of the specific values being promoted they understand the strive towards a more explicit Christian ethos. They feel that the school communicates well with them, and is transparent and open. The local churches and school have an active and supportive working partnership, and governors are involved in many aspects of school life.

SIAMS report June 2014 Tring School, Mortimer Hill, Hertfordshire HP23 5JD



