



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



 The **Methodist Church**

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

St Luke's Church of England VC Science and Sports College

Hart's Lane, Exeter EX1 3RD

Previous SIAS grade: Outstanding

Current inspection grade: Outstanding

Diocese: Exeter

Local authority: Devon

Dates of inspection: 2nd December 2015

Date of last inspection: 2nd December 2010

School's unique reference number: 113550

Headteacher: Dave Holt

Inspector's name and number: Derek Holloway 93

School context

St Luke's is a mixed secondary college with 939 students on roll aged between 11 and 16. The college serves the north east part of the city of Exeter. Almost all students are of white British heritage. The numbers of students with English as an additional language is below the national average while the proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium is significantly above. The college has a specialist unit for students with severe physical difficulties and these students are supported to access the full curriculum. The proportion of students with special education needs is above national average. The college is oversubscribed with a proportion of places awarded on sporting aptitude. The current headteacher was acting headteacher from September 2014. He was appointed to the permanent position in February 2015.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Luke's Science and Sports college as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The sustained leadership and development of the deeply embedded system of Christian values ensures that the ethos successfully meets the personal development needs of the community it serves.
- The exceptional support of the college's chaplaincy team that for many of the students has become the explicit expression of being a church school.
- The effectiveness of the college's restorative justice programme impacts successfully on relationships and attitudes across the whole college
- The quality and provision for religious education (RE) engages and challenges students which contributes to academic standards above national norms

Areas to improve

- Develop a more explicit articulation of the basis of Christian values across the whole college community to give a firmer foundation upon which they can more explicitly support student outcomes and attitudes toward learning.
- Broaden the evaluation, planning and leadership of the 'Thought for the Week' programme to enable greater student involvement.

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

To promote and support the vision statement of 'Success for All' the college has developed a set of explicit values: respect, hope, love, charity, justice and strive. They are widely understood and articulated by the school community as Christian values. They predate all current students but through regular revisiting they are owned by students and so underpin college life. Arising from these values the college has created an impressive approach to managing behaviour, based on a robust system of restorative justice. A distinctive feature of the college, valued by students and parents alike, is that incidents and problems are effectively resolved through discussion and with reconciliation. As a result the college has become a place of hope, respect and compassion where each student is understood and valued for their individual qualities and strengths. A success of the college's ethos is the integration of all students regardless of ability or background. The level of pupil exclusion is low and attendance is steadily improving. The college has through consistent application of its Christian values developed a culture of resilience that is very effective in supporting the students' personal development and wellbeing. The link between the college values and student achievement is, however, less secure. The college has responded to a fall in academic results in 2015 by making significant use of its chaplaincy provision and church links to provide mentoring support that has helped students take up the opportunities for intervention provided. Recent work by the college's ethos committee has resulted in a clear articulation of spirituality that is understood across the community as helping 'make sense of the world' through reflection and empathy. Each curriculum area has explored what this means in their lessons and this is being mapped across the school. This work is at an early stage but is already developing links across curriculum areas that help students make more sense of their learning. The college receives excellent support from its chaplaincy team drawn from a number of local churches. They work closely with the college leaders to 'address the needs' of all students through worship, through pastoral support and through being a Christian presence in the college's PSHE programme. This contributes significantly to the college being an inclusive community in which all feel supported pastorally. Religious education is a popular and successful subject gaining examination results above national and college norms. Students' attitudes are positive and they describe the subject as helping them understand and develop respect of people of all faiths.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Careful planning by college leaders, supported and thoughtfully resourced by the chaplaincy team, provides a basis for worship that is both engaging and inclusive. As a result all members of the college community see the relevance of, and understand the importance of worship. Themes reflect the college's values and the effective use of visual resources challenges students to think and reflect. Worship is regularly linked to biblical text and there is a strong focus on ethical issues and the application of Christian ideas to everyday life. Students report that they enjoy exploring worship themes. They find them helpful saying that it has made them see the relevance of Christianity to the modern world, they consider worship inclusive. However, less reference is made to the Trinitarian nature of Christianity. There is always an opportunity for prayer but they never feel any element of compulsion. The college is developing its programme of tutorial group worship through the 'Thought for the week' programme. This explores a number of Christian values supplemented by national events and a thought or quote for the week is widely displayed through the college. Students say this helps them think through and explore a theme in more depth. The college worship room has been carefully designed as a multi-faith space that can be used by all students. Muslim students for example make use of this area for prayer and it is available during Ramadan for students who don't wish to be around others eating in the dining hall. Worship is monitored by 'walk-throughs' by leaders and governors. Students' views are sought through the Student Executive. They have also suggested themes and ideas. The involvement of students in planning and leading 'Thought for the Week', as well as its evaluation, has not been fully developed.

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

The inclusive management style of the senior leader with responsibility for Christian distinctiveness has ensured that the foundations of the college's Christian character have become deeply embedded in the school ethos. As a result, despite recent changes in leadership, the understanding of itself as a church school has remained consistent. It is lived out by adults in the school almost 'automatically'. The development of the chaplaincy team in recent years has given a more explicit articulation of this in the eyes of students. Their presence in the college, the community and the city give students a point of consistency. For example they offer a 'Text a Chaplain' service which means students always have a listening ear available. This commitment is valued by students. This has resulted, as one leader said, in 'blurring the border between church and school'. Through the work of the ethos committee the college's governors are informed and able to contribute to church school self-evaluation. Links with local churches are exemplary and have ensured that the college ethos is sympathetic to the needs and culture of the community it serves. The college has recently become an 'International Cross of Nails' (ICON) school. Although a recent innovation this is also starting to give a deeper articulation to the college ethos. The involvement with the project has been a shared one between church and college from which both are benefitting. The leadership of RE is excellent. Priority has been given to building a team of specialist teachers. Numbers of students taking full course GCSE RE has steadily increased and from the current Year 10 onward all students will take full course GCSE RE. Extra curriculum time has been found to enable this. The Key Stage 3 curriculum has been sensibly developed following the new agreed syllabus, but this has been done in a way that suits the college's needs. The college fully meets the expectations of the National Society Statement of Entitlement for RE. All issues following the last inspection have been effectively addressed and the college is on its way to meeting statutory requirements for collective worship. The college middle leadership programme begins with a focus on Christian vision and values thus contributing to future leaders of church schools. There are excellent links with the Diocese through the developing ICON project with other communities nationally and globally.

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