

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Bury Church of England Voluntary Aided High School

Haslam Brow
Bury
BL9 0TS

Diocese: Manchester

Local authority: Bury
Dates of inspection: 11th January 2012
Date of last inspection: 22nd April 2009
School's unique reference number: 105365
Headteacher: Mr Philip Grady
Inspector's name and number: Mrs C A Roberts 469

School context

Bury Church of England High School is a smaller than average sized secondary school. Students join the school in in year 7 from over 50 different feeder schools. The proportion of students known to be eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. Very few students speak English as an additional language. The proportion of students with a statement of special educational needs is well above average, however the proportion of students with special educational needs and /or disabilities is below average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Bury CE High School as a Church of England school are outstanding

The school's Mission Statement where every child is seen as unique clearly drives this school and provides a secure, Christian centred environment where students feel valued, nurtured, and safe. This has an outstanding impact on the school community seen by exemplary relationships, guidance and support. Consequently students flourish and achieve their very best holistically.

Established strengths

- The high quality leadership of the school driven by a clear Christian vision and mission.
- The centrality and importance of worship in school.
- The high quality and creative RE experienced by students.

Focus for development

- Develop training for staff on explicit Christian values and how these underpin the Mission Statement and the everyday life of the school.
- Identify new and effective ways to monitor and evaluate worship.
- Set up a formal system for governors to analyse the monitoring and evaluation of all aspects of the school as a church school undertaken by senior leaders.

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

Senior leaders, governors and staff, have successfully put the mission statement into practice by creating an environment where students know and appreciate that they are valued as individuals and encouraged to develop as whole people. Students are clear that this is a church school, for example one student said 'It's not just the crosses in classrooms or the religious symbols, it's the way we behave towards each other and also towards the teachers.' Relationships are indeed exemplary at all levels in school, based on Christian values of compassion and forgiveness with students and parents commending the 'care and nurturing' and 'fresh start' given to any student on a daily basis. Achievement is high, with all students, whatever their abilities, being nurtured to fulfil their personal goals. Students are also encouraged to become responsible citizens, for example by becoming a worship mentor, or by taking part in the many initiatives to develop local, national and global perspectives such as visits to the local hospice and Epworth Grange (a Methodist residential home for the aged), parcels for the Salvation Army, porch boxes and also for fundraising for schools in Namibia and South Africa. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding with all

curriculum areas highlighting and emphasising how their subject contributes to these strands. It is also developed through the display around school, particularly in RE classrooms. For example pupils are proud of displays such as their prayer tree/box and letters to God.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Worship is jointly led by a very dedicated and creative chaplain and a highly committed head of RE. Planning is undertaken thoughtfully and carefully to ensure it is appropriate to the needs of young people today. Students have a very good understanding of the Anglican tradition / Christian practice because of incorporating Christian festivals and seasons in the Church year. A variety of Christian visitors to worship coupled with a lively programme of activities ensures worship is inclusive, reflective and meaningful. Consequently attitudes to worship are excellent. Worship mentors are rightly proud of their role of supporting form worship, thus ensuring the impact of year group and key stage worship is continued throughout the week. The impact of worship on the community is outstanding with students stating, 'the themes and stories help us to reflect and also make us think about how we can change for the better' and 'even at home, something may just click about what you heard in assembly and it makes you feel better'. Students and staff particularly enjoy the Eucharist services which students say 'are special, interesting, fun and modern'. They welcome the opportunity to reflect on beautiful and moving power point images, appropriate music and activities such as the symbolism of dropping a pebble in a bowl of water. Although monitoring and evaluation of worship takes place regularly (including student feedback), worship monitors would welcome a formal programme for feedback. Currently there is no formal process of giving feedback to the governing body.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

The RE team is led by an extremely dedicated, able and outstanding teacher and is a real strength of the school. She is supported by a very talented and committed team of specialists. The level and quality of staffing demonstrates the support of the school's leadership for the subject, as does the fact that all students are entered for GCSE. All students make excellent progress in RE, with GCSE results being well above the national average, and on a par with or above other core subjects in school. Lessons are consistently good or better, and teachers use a range of strategies to engage students with relevant topics. For example in one lesson students role-played in groups modern day parables based on Bible ideas. In another they formed a panel to debate different perspectives on a moral issue. Students say they enjoy RE as 'teachers make learning fun and are approachable' and 'RE helps with your spiritual journey'. Monitoring of work, including peer assessment, is undertaken on a regular basis; therefore all students know what level they are working at and what they need to do in order to improve. RE makes an excellent contribution to community cohesion, not only through learning about faiths other than Christianity, but also through multi faith days. Formal monitoring and evaluation of RE takes place on a regular basis.

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

School leaders have a clear Christian vision that is a key driving force in all areas of school life. This is stated in all key documentation. The mission statement has been reviewed regularly and it is clearly stated at new parents meetings and when appointing staff. All stakeholders are clear which Christian values underpin the life of the school and how these are put into practice on a daily basis. However, there has been no formal training on explicit Christian values and how these shape the mission of the school. Parents are very pleased with the schools Christian character, one parent stated: 'the staff treat my child as a whole person, they are nurtured and cared for and someone knows their needs' and also 'my child is becoming more caring, which they get from here.' Students are also clear which Christian values are central to the life of the school, citing 'Respect, treating others as you wish to be treated, equality and forgiveness' as the main ones. They also recognise how vital their leadership is in school such as through the school council. Governors are extremely hard working, supportive and proud of the school as a church school, ensuring they challenge when appropriate. Informal monitoring of the school as a church school takes place, which is very reflective and insightful. However, governors do not yet have a formal process for analysing the monitoring and evaluation undertaken by senior leaders. Links with the local churches, the community and parents are very strong.

