



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Christ's College

Larch Avenue
Guildford
Surrey GU1 1JY

Previous SIAS grade: Good

Current SIAMS grade: Good

Diocese: Guildford

Local authority: Surrey

Dates of inspection: 1-2 July 2015

Date of last inspection: 22 June 2010

School's unique reference number: 134120

Principal: Stephen Green

Inspector's name and number: Andrew Rickett 201

School context

Christ's College is a smaller than average size secondary school with 680 learners on roll. The college has a range of ecumenical partnerships. The number of learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above the national average. The majority of learners are of white British heritage and from varied socio-economic backgrounds. Attendance is broadly in line with national averages. The majority of learners come from a wide range of primary schools most of which are not church schools.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Christ's College as a Church of England school are good

- Learners speak with considerable confidence about the place and impact of faith and belief in the daily life of the college.
- The profile of religious education (RE) and its contribution to the Christian ethos has improved significantly.
- The chaplaincy provides exceptional support for all learners and adults in the college community.

Areas to improve

- Provide more regular opportunities for learners to plan and lead acts of worship and have greater involvement in how worship themes are explored.
- Ensure regular structured verbal feedback from learners provides high quality evidence of the impact of collective worship and of the Christian ethos, that informs areas for further improvement.
- Raise current standards in RE by providing greater challenge to the depth of learners' responses to questions of meaning and purpose.

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

An outstanding aspect of the college's Christian vision is the extent to which learners are aware that as part of a church school community they are cherished and nurtured both academically and in their personal development. When talking with learners they explain how the church ethos 'somehow gets problems sorted out quicker' and 'makes the college a safer place' with 'a friendly feel'. These comments reflect how the college leadership hope learners will articulate what it means to be a member of a church school and see the vision being lived out. The establishment of an ethos, in which learners and adults openly talk about matters of faith and belief, makes a positive contribution to the creation of a learning environment in which they are confident to respond and actively engage in lessons. Learners are making improved progress as evidenced in rising standards. The college is currently exploring the provision for social, moral, spiritual and cultural (SMSC) development and mapping the provision for these across the curriculum to ensure that the SMSC profile remains high. As part of this, the needs of learners to develop a personal spirituality to support their wellbeing and resilience are aspects that need to be developed further. The work of the chaplaincy in supporting the pastoral needs of learners and their families is exceptional. The trust and honesty that characterises the relationship between chaplain and members of the college community is a reflection of the way the college has grown in its confidence to express its distinctively Christian ethos. The college provides learners with many opportunities to be aware of the diversity of faiths and cultures in Britain and internationally through RE and the many charitable events.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Learners speak with respect about acts of worship and the place they have in the life of the college. They openly talk about the impact of prayer and the opportunities for them to have time and space to be quiet and still in the school day. The college chapel is an important part of this. Learners explain how the chapel is important to them at difficult times and provides a place to pray and be with friends during adversity. Learners talk about the power that these times have given them to help 'get through' difficulties with friendships or their work. The college has identified the need to further extend the impact of the chapel and has exciting plans to develop the space so that it has greater relevance for young people. Learners are open and honest about worship and prayer. They see them as important expressions of being a church school and acknowledge that whether you have a personal faith or not, it is important to respect those that pray. Older learners have some involvement in leading prayers in worship but generally worship themes and their delivery is the responsibility of adults. Tutor times are used effectively to discuss the weekly themes in greater depth but the use of these times, as well as other opportunities to help learners develop the capacity to reflect and take a greater lead in how worship themes are discussed, have not yet been fully explored. The college has already identified this as an area to improve through the establishment of student-led worship teams. Adult planning for acts of worship is thorough and based on Biblical teaching that helps learners understand values such as compassion or mercy and how they contribute to a better life. A successful aspect of worship is the time given for learners to share their thoughts with each other and the opportunity to tell their own stories about times when they have been inspired to live out a value. The annual prayer week, more regular visits to local churches, the Christian Union and support from youth workers from local churches, means that learners have a wide range of opportunities to engage in prayer. Surveys have been carried out that provide data on learners' responses to worship. The proportion of learners who find that worship is a help to them is rising. There has been less done to gather first-hand evidence of the impact of worship themes on the lives of learners and how this information can inform areas for further development. The excellent work of the worship coordinator has been central to the continued high profile of worship in the life of the college and the commitment to continually look at ways to improve it further.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

The quality and effectiveness of RE has improved significantly over the last year. Standards in RE are improving because learners are more engaged and positive about the subject and there is much greater consistency in the quality of teaching across the RE faculty. Measures have successfully been put in place by the new RE team to improve the quality of the subject curriculum and ensure that learners are challenged. These changes are reflected in better than expected progress being made when the learners starting points are taken into consideration. There are a greater number of learners whose attainment is at least in line with national expectations, and increasingly, those who are achieving higher levels. Learners have a secure knowledge of RE and are able to apply this knowledge to learn from their studies. There are times when teaching misses opportunities to challenge them in greater depth particularly with regard to the impact of what they are learning on their own lives and understanding. Progress and attainment is regularly assessed and goals are set that correspond with their literacy targets. However, these do not always reveal an accurate picture of the extent of learners' achievement in RE. The school has plans to introduce baseline assessment in September 2015 for RE in Year 7 so that progress can be more accurately tracked. The positive change in attitudes towards RE is a reflection of the rise in quality of teaching and the commitment shown by RE teachers to their subject. Learners respond well in lessons and are eager to answer questions and share their opinions and ideas in discussion. They listen respectfully to the views of others and have the confidence to defend their own views in debate. Learners enjoy being challenged by the teacher or their peers but sometimes haven't yet fully acquired the language through which to express their thoughts in depth. All learners study the full course RE at GCSE, but for a number of reasons, fewer take it up at 'A' level. The RE leadership is aware of the need to explore why this is the case and how to improve the popularity of RE in the 6th form. Leadership of RE is excellent. The subject leader has a clear understanding of what needs to be done to continue to take the subject forward and is fully supported by her team of teachers and the lead from other senior staff.

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

Leadership and management, including governance, are outstanding because there is a strong spiritual quality to their understanding of the purpose and practice of being a church school. This spiritual dimension, which is underpinned by prayer, impacts on every decision made and makes a significant difference to the lives of learners. The principal articulates a theological understanding of the purpose of the college as a church school which underpins the vision. Central to this is the recognition that each learner is unique as a child of God to be cherished and valued as an individual. The vision is understood by all members of the college community to be Christian in nature which is reflected in a shared commitment to care and nurture each young person equally. The college has made good progress since the previous inspection in making the vision more overtly Christian which is fully supported by senior leaders and governors. Leaders have been consulted over self-evaluation as a church school and their contributions have helped to inform an accurate evaluation of where they are. Actions for future improvement have been identified and form an integral part of the college improvement plan. The chair of governors has an excellent understanding of the college's strengths and areas for further development as a church school. Governors clearly articulate a Christian underpinning of the ethos and have a clear grasp of how it impacts on the daily lives of learners. The leadership and management have a good capacity to continue to develop as a church school. The impact of the work of the college chaplaincy is excellent. The chaplain is held in high regard by all members of the college community. Learners, whether they have a personal faith or not, speak of the chaplain's role in supporting them in times of trouble by listening to them without judgement. Ecumenical links with a range of local Christian denominations through membership of the governing body or involvement in the life of the school, have improved substantially since the previous inspection and now make a valuable contribution to the life of the college. The college meets the requirements for RE and for providing opportunities for every learner to experience an act of worship each day.

