

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Harris School

Harris Drive
Overslade Lane
Rugby
Warwickshire
CV22 6EA

Diocese:**Coventry**

Local authority:

Warwickshire

Date of inspection:

10 December 2007

Date of last inspection:

31 January 2005

School's unique reference number:

125757

Headteacher:

Mrs S Simms

Inspector's name and number:

Dr David Gentle 209

School context

Harris School is a small urban 11-16 school with approximately 780 students. The town in which it is situated has retained grammar schools. In addition to being a voluntary aided church school, Harris School is designated as a specialist sports college. The school is a resource for worship in the Rugby Deanery and contributes to sporting provision across the Rugby district. Pupils travel to the school from a wide geographical area.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Harris School as a Church of England school are outstanding

The school has a very strong distinctive Christian character. This strength derives from the vision of the headteacher and governors supported by all staff. Collective worship is an important and significant part of the school life. Students develop and grow within this strong Christian ethos. Relationships are very good. There is an environment of mutual respect within which all students receive excellent care and support.

Established strengths

- Clear and effective vision that leads to a strong Christian ethos.
- Collective worship that impacts significantly on learners.
- Excellent care for all learners within a climate of mutual respect.

Focus for development

- Make more judgements about impact in the self-review processes.
- As identified in the school development plan, enhance tutor group worship, extend use of the chapel and strengthen preparation for holy communion.
- Review policies on collective worship and religious education.

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

There is a very strong Christian ethos within which all learners grow and develop. Parents report that the school has developed a very high reputation in the community for supporting the development of learners. Parents agree that they have seen their sons and daughters *'grow as people'* in the school that is *'driven by faith'*. Students describe how they *'look after each other'* well. This permeates the school both informally and through formal systems such as prefects and tutor assistants. Teachers are regarded by parents and by students as excellent role models. There is a very high level of mutual respect in which students feel able to *'talk to staff'* openly. Students value the opportunity to discuss faith issues whilst *'retaining*

street cred'. Students and parents describe examples of excellent care and support from the school that applies equally to students of all abilities and aptitudes. High levels of support continue even when students are unable to meet the school's high expectations. Student voice (school council) is strong in the school. Students are showing high levels of initiative in structuring the student voice to address school issues on a theme basis. Students are very proud of their excellent outreach that includes extensive charity work and various performances within the community. There are very good examples, particularly in the entrance to the school, of how the school environment is used to reinforce the Christian ethos. An excellent example is the construction of a special cross for Christmas that is designed to allow each tutor group to add a lit candle. The chapel is a strong feature of the school. There are excellent plans to develop this further.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

It is clear that collective worship is seen by the school to be of paramount importance. The high-profile worship committee is an extremely effective forum for review and development of collective worship. This highly experienced and committed team consults widely to ensure that worship is continually improving in style and integrity and consistently has deep spiritual meaning. There is excellent planning resulting in worship that has clear and effective structure. The vast majority of students can describe how their faith has grown as a direct consequence of the worship. Students are able to recall the important messages, particularly when the presentation has been dramatic. A good example of this was the Ash Wednesday Service, integral to the worship experience and life of the school. Form collective worship is consistently good and sometimes excellent in that it always incorporates a prayer and reflection. There is good training for new staff and positive plans for further development of tutor group worship. Worship is significantly enhanced by the involvement of the chaplain and other dedicated visitors. Parents and visitors report that they are impressed with the enthusiastic involvement of students in collective worship. This is typified by the quality of singing, even by the older students. The involvement of students in the selection and reading of prayers has a significant impact in that the link is made between real life and worship. There are opportunities each term for students to take communion on a voluntary basis. However, not all students understand the personal significance of communion and the numbers involved in this are relatively small.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Teaching in RE is good and the department is well led. Students value and enjoy the opportunities for discussion and debate in lessons that are varied and interesting, involving students in high levels of thinking. Students speak of their growing understanding of their own faith and their developing respect for the faith of others. There is very good use of level indicators and assessment criteria. There is strong and effective use of self-evaluation and peer group assessment in lessons. Students have a very good knowledge of their target grade and their present level of working. Achievement in religious education is currently satisfactory. However, there are good systems for target setting and monitoring performance within the department with current data indicating that achievement is improving. This is mainly due to improvements in staffing, all new staff being specialists. Leadership and status of the department is strengthened through being led by the head of humanities. Students and parents comment on the good cross-curricular links. This is mainly through pairing with other subjects including drama, art, history and science. Current development planning appropriately includes review of the Key Stage 4 curriculum to maximise student achievement. The subject is enhanced by involvement of trainee teachers. Most students enjoy religious studies, particularly the opportunities for debate and the variety of activities within lessons. Teachers are well respected by students with any minor inattention being handled calmly and effectively. The learning environment is good, particularly the quality of displays.

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

The governors, headteacher and key leaders promote a very clear vision for the school as a Christian community. This is understood and promoted through the work of all staff. The school has exemplary support and expertise through excellent links with the parish, the

diocese, the deanery, the cathedral and groups such as Youth for Christ. These links affirm and strengthen the Christian foundation of the school. Governors have a very strong experience base and commitment to the school. They have a good involvement in review processes including data analysis. They share a commitment to the well-being of students as demonstrated through the work of the discipline committee. Governors benefit from the opportunity to take part in annual training events. The worship committee is an excellent example of creative and developmental thinking. The school effectively consults all stakeholders through questionnaires, surveys and discussion. The school and governors are aware of any issues and take appropriate action. It is particularly good practice that the school has developed its own attitudinal questionnaire based on the inspection criteria. The school is appropriately working to ensure that this survey is directed towards impact at individual student level. This will further strengthen the school's capacity to make judgements about impact. Parents report that they are always made to feel welcome at the school. They are kept fully aware of their son or daughter's progress. Any issues that parents raise with the school are dealt with quickly and effectively. The school has plans in hand for some necessary policy review.

SIAS report December 2007 Harris School, Rugby CV22 6EA