

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Immanuel College Church of England Voluntary Aided Secondary School

Leeds Road
Idle, Bradford
BD10 9AQ

Diocese: Bradford

Local authority: Bradford

Date of inspection: 10th – 11th November 2010

Date of last inspection: July 2008

School's unique reference number: 132219

Headteacher: Mrs J Tiller

Inspector name and number: Mr R D Masterton No. 483

School context

This growing school of 1192 pupils including 102 in the sixth form serves the suburbs and large estates of North Bradford. Its pupils are mainly White British. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is higher than average and the proportion of pupils attending the school from church-going families is low.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Immanuel College as a church school are good

Through its clearly expressed mission and clear distinctiveness, Immanuel College is rapidly growing in respect and popularity. Careful review and evaluation is needed to secure the most effective goals for the next stages of its development as a church school with more expected of pupils both through greater achievement in religious education and in how they can more fully contribute to collective worship.

Established strengths

- The school chaplaincy and the way that its staff work at every level in the school, caring for the community and embodying Christian distinctiveness.
- The quality of teaching and learning in religious education.
- The shared understanding of the Christian mission of the school and its commitment to inclusion.

Focus for development

- The introduction of formal and systematic evaluation of church school distinctiveness by foundation governors and managers in order to identify priorities and goals for improvement.
- Significantly greater creative contributions from pupils in all aspects of school collective worship.
- Higher achievement in religious education with more individual support and advice to pupils particularly through the developmental marking of their work.

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

'All God's Children', the school mission statement aptly describes the spirit and commitment of all school staff towards the pupils they teach. The school is driven by a search for the way that Christian values can enrich school experience. They reach into every area of school work, both the taught curriculum and the social structure and are inspiring pupils to work hard and behave very maturely. Outstanding work by the chaplaincy is at the heart of school life. It strengthens commitment to pupils' individual needs, guiding policy and decision making and embodies the mission of Immanuel College. This is a school where all pupils feel welcome, whatever their talents, backgrounds or difficulties. They and their parents know that this is a consequence of every person being loved and valued. Christian teaching and ideals are expressed confidently and there is a high expectation that every pupil will succeed and they do even though for many there is a long journey to achievement and success. The school uses many strategies to meet each pupil's learning needs. All achieve success in some measured way and then progress confidently to the next stage of their education or employment. The dialogue and understanding between pupils demonstrates care, friendship and respect. The work of the chaplaincy is indispensable and it radiates the Christian dimensions of tolerance, respect, concern, understanding and forgiveness to inform all the work that has built the excellent relationships in school. Increasing numbers of local parents now recognise the quality of education at Immanuel and pupils are pleased to be at the college. They respond well to the opportunities they are given to look beyond the horizons of their local experience and take compassion on the needs of others less fortunate than themselves. Work for charities is very strong with good links to projects overseas. School display is varied and stimulating and much has a spiritual character. Outside grounds also provide some opportunity for reflection.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Daily collective worship has a very high profile. Indicative of this was the way school community resisted a temptation to shorten allotted time as its value for pupils (and staff) at the start of each day was widely recognised and understood. Collective worship is a quality experience for all both in the two year-group and three form-group sessions held each week. Under the direction of the Chaplain collective worship follows a clear structure with rich content. High quality guidance is provided to year staff and form tutors for them to be able to lead. They have received special training and are also encouraged to add a personal dimension to the experience for their forms using suggestions for alternative topics and approaches. Pupils respond well with very good behaviour. They are interested by the ideas they meet, which often provoke their participation through dialogue. Pupils spoken to could remember many of the topics they had met and could relate them to associated lessons of religious education. Pupils treat prayer with respect and many respond positively to the events they learn of in collective worship. For a few, collective worship had encouraged their involvement and membership of the local parish church. The school is growing the direct creative participation of pupils in acts of collective worship as took place on the day of inspection when a Year 7 class were key players in the act of remembrance on November 11th. However such activities are at still at an early stage and collective worship is not yet offering pupils an outlet for their creative personal development. Foundation governors have helped staff to evaluate the collective worship that pupils receive but they are not yet involved in its long term planning. Pupils meet some Anglican traditions in the way that collective worship is conducted.

The effectiveness of religious education is good

Religious education (RE) is a cornerstone of Immanuel College with a central place in the curriculum and life of the school. The school also aims to make RE the school benchmark for excellence in teaching and learning as the subject is so important. It is compulsory for all pupils to study it to GCSE level and this reflects a belief by governors and managers of the importance of RE for pupils' growing spiritual development. The specific emphasis on the study of St Mark's gospel stems from the wish of governors and the head teacher to ensure that all pupils will leave school with a detailed understanding of the story of Jesus' life and resurrection and its importance to Christian belief and values. The subject is also popular in the sixth form. In 2010 of the students who sat the A level exam 93% passed. GCSE standards in 2010 were broadly average, taking into account the high proportion of pupils who entered compared to the national pattern. These pupils had entered the school, aged 11 years, with general standards of attainment lower than average. Thus the progress in their learning was good. Progress in lessons is also good and current standards are above average. This is due to teaching which is consistently good and some that is inspired and outstanding. Sixth formers grasp the complex concepts of religion and philosophy and enjoy learning in depth. Older pupils in the main school work diligently to relate the stories of the death and resurrection of Jesus to their meaning for Christians and an understanding of Christian teaching. Young pupils enthusiastically show they can interpret the meaning of the Old Testament stories of Jonah and how they are understood by those of Jewish faith. Teachers skilfully tailor tasks to the abilities and aspirations of different pupils in each class and they constantly monitor how securely each pupil's understanding develops. Pupils value this subject and the opportunity it gives them to explore big ideas and the meaning of their lives. It imbues a respect in them for the values of the school and makes a very significant contribution to their personal development. There is scope for standards to be even higher. Although GCSE results in RE are among the best of the main school subjects, refining teaching and learning with more individual advice and guidance offers the potential for even greater success.

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

Effective leadership of the headteacher continues to improve the overall effectiveness of the school and strengthens the way that the Christian ethos and values permeate all aspects of school life and decision making. The work of the chaplain is highly regarded by staff and pupils. Foundation governors are highly committed and have steered the school through many difficulties, never losing faith in the potential effectiveness of a distinctive church school in the district of North Bradford. Today that faith is shown to be justified. Governors have contributed to the monitoring of collective worship but, the school does not use any formal system of review and evaluation of church school distinctiveness such as the National Society toolkit. This is restricting the ability to identify key routes and targets for improvement. The simple school mission statement, 'All God's Children', is powerful and well used. It underpins school values and communicates the mission of the school very effectively to pupils and parents who recognise the different character of provision at Immanuel College. All staff are well supported and developed for their present and future roles in a church school. Since the previous inspection, Immanuel College has extended its reach out to local churches and faith congregations. The Salvation Army, as a partner, is welcomed in its own mission to enrich the lives of disadvantaged youngsters. Links with the local parish church have resulted in some older pupils choosing Christianity and joining other worshippers.