

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Archbishop Blanch School

Mount Vernon Road
Liverpool
L7 3EA

Diocese:**Liverpool**

Local authority:

Liverpool

Dates of inspection:

Tuesday/Thursday 12/14th June 2012

Date of last inspection:

April 2008

School's unique reference number:

104705

Headteacher:

Jane Griffiths

Inspector's name and number:

Elizabeth Collins [443]

School context

Archbishop Blanch is a slightly below average-sized girls' school. Boys are admitted to the sixth form which is run collaboratively with four other faith schools. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals and those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is well below the national average. Those of minority ethnic heritage and those with English as an additional language are well below average, although numbers have increased in recent years.

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

The genuine delight of many of the students and staff to express their faith with confidence sets the tone for Archbishop Blanch School's Christian distinctiveness. Identified Christian values are understood and expressed clearly in the life and learning of the school. The contribution pupils make to the day-to-day running of the school is outstanding. This illustrates the confidence and sense of responsibility for the 'common good' which supports them in their future lives.

Established strengths

- An exceptionally strong sense of community supported by the ownership of the mission statement and Christian values.
- The positive, caring relationships that encourage and motivate all involved with the school.
- A strong, committed leadership team and governing body.
- A creative and varied programme for worship.

Focus for development

- Ensure that the full scope for spiritual development is explored when reviewing the spiritual dimension policy.
- Re-address continuity and progression in the scheme of work for Years 7, 8 and 11 to support pupils achieving their full potential.

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

An all embracing feeling of 'friendship, compassion and thanksgiving' underpins all areas of school life. The six Christian values related to the mission statement are seen in action on a daily basis. This is seen in the 'cheerful, very helpful' security chap (sic), identified by a

visitor as 'an excellent first contact;' to the sense of belonging, responsibility and inclusiveness which is the hall-mark of all relationships. The 'passion, drive and engagement with pupils', to quote a parent, ensures that all aspects of personal development and learning are nurtured and flourish exceptionally well. The clear sense of community is illustrated by students at all levels as they take responsibility for whole school issues. Year 9 pupils offer friendship and trust to new Year 7 girls as 'buddies'. A small group also supports and tutors them in managing class worship, offering materials and ideas until they can be self-sustaining. The school council and its sub-committees play a significant part by very ably representing their peers in aspects of school improvement. A sixth form group raise money enthusiastically and generously for charities, including money for materials to support students at Qhasana High School in Mdantsane Township, South Africa. They also run Youth Alpha course and lead Muslim prayers. Pupils welcome the contribution Muslim students make to the religious dimension of school life, recognising the strength of diversity in faith. The tone for spiritual and moral development is set by the RE department and through worship. Spiritual development is as yet not so well embedded in all curriculum areas, but their contribution to moral development is excellent. In history the moral implications of living as a Christian in Nazi Germany is considered and other subjects have likewise identified where they make a contribution. Despite the limitations of the school site many areas make good use of displays to support moral development. Provocative statements linked to subject areas - sometimes in jest – nudge at ultimate questions. Art work gives pause for thought and, throughout the school there are reminders of the Christian values and their implications for daily life.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is given high priority in the life of the school. This is recognised and supported by almost all members of its community. Students' and staff responses are extremely positive. Those with a Christian faith commitment are very enthusiastic about what they are entrusted to do in leading worship and being part of the staff/student decision making process. Younger pupils enjoy being able to contribute and feel safe and privileged to present their own worship materials to their peers. Those of other faiths feel free to learn about Christianity in the open context of collective worship. They are secure in knowing that most of their contemporaries see them as part of a larger faith community, rather than an adjunct to the Christian establishment. They welcome the provision made for them to pray in their own tradition in the common respected space of the quiet room. The many and varied opportunities to express faith publicly and without embarrassment and/or ridicule helps all to grow spiritually in worshipful harmony. Many staff members are happy to talk with pupils in worship settings and lessons about their faith commitment and the place of worship in their lives. There is a blended worship programme of the traditional and culturally relevant. This embraces regular Eucharistic celebrations and the pupil-led Worship for Worth (WOW), as well as the sixth form-led group, Ignite. These all recognise and rehearse the wide and various traditions of the Anglican church.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

Learning and teaching in RE is at least good and, in some instances, outstanding. All students work exceptionally well together in a variety of groupings. They are happy to support each other and to share their learning and understanding. A 'one minute summary' at the end of a Year 7 lesson was done with confidence, displaying some very good learning. Similarly a less able set joined in a fact or belief exercise very sensibly. They understood clearly the task and at one point a pupil made the comment: 'that was evidence' without any prompting. Lessons are well structured, interesting and with good use of stimulating resources. A variety of tasks and opportunities enable the majority of students to reach at least good or better standards of attainment and achievement. Those in the flourishing Advanced Level groups often do outstandingly well. The current course for Years 7 and 8

does not always challenge pupils to reach their full potential. This is also the case with the post-GCSE provision made in Year 11. The RE curriculum demands overall, however, are used very effectively to support spiritual and moral development. Pupils do full justice to time spent considering Christian values on moral and social issues and are very ably prepared for future citizenship. RE was judged by an external survey as the most popular subject on offer. Much of this would be attributed to the contribution it makes in the eyes of the students to the unique character of their school and its ability to embrace all regardless of creed, ethnicity or culture. This pupil perception of the importance of RE in the life of the school is outstanding.

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

The school's distinctive Christian values are set within the context of its mission statement. They are the product of wide consultation and the basis for collective worship themes. The specific value selected each half term is 'advertised' not only around the school, but on the school web-site. They are also a source for consideration and discussion in different curriculum areas and so inform and engage pupils in the context of 'real life'. Leaders, including governors, set the tone for understanding and implementation extremely well through personal example. They encourage all those involved with the school – regardless of faith background – to be part of the vision. Regular monitoring exercises to inform the school development plan are undertaken with pupils and parents. These result in good responses, giving praise as well as suggestions for change. Outcomes form the basis for a governor report and development points. Staff and governors, as well as students, are encouraged to develop as potential leaders for the future. The opportunities offered also enable them to become 'messengers' of the vision and to take control for its implementation as well as develop their own skills. Parents particularly welcome the opportunities this gives their daughters. The mission statement prompts strong local partnerships, from hosting schools' enterprise days; out-of-school-hours community activities; local church and mosque links, to practical support for groups working with vulnerable individuals. On a far wider scale links have been established with a school in South Africa and students on World Challenge projects have worked in Kenya, Namibia and Malawi.

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