

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Canon Slade Church of England School

Bradshaw Brow
Bolton
BL2 3BP

Diocese: Manchester

Local authority: Bolton
Date of inspection: 13th December, 2012
Date of last inspection: 11th January, 2008
School's unique reference number: 105267
Headteacher: Canon P.H. Williamson
Inspector's name and number: Robert Haigh 660

School context

Canon Slade is an 11-18 voluntary aided school of 1685 students, including 333 in the Sixth Form. It receives pupils from 90 partner primary schools over a wide area. The ability of pupils on intake is significantly higher than the national average. The percentages of students who are known to be eligible for free school meals or who have special educational needs and disabilities are below average. The proportion with English as an additional language is low, although a growing number of Muslim students enter the Sixth form. The school holds numerous prestigious awards including Cultural Diversity (Diamond), Investors in People, Dyslexia Mark and is a Cross of Nails Centre for Reconciliation in association with Coventry Cathedral.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Canon Slade as a Church of England school are outstanding

Students receive an outstanding Christian-inspired education at Canon Slade. Explicit Christian beliefs, values and teaching underpin every aspect of the life of the school and are made manifest in outstanding relationships and well-rounded young people who have a robust moral and ethical code, positive attitudes to worship, learning and achievement and a compelling sense of citizenship. Canon Slade benefits from outstanding leadership and governance. Strong parental support and a wide range of education, church and community partnerships enhance the work of the school and hence the lives of the students.

Established strengths

- The vibrant and secure Christian ethos and outstanding quality of relationships based on respect, trust and care for one another at all levels of school life.
- The understanding that all members of the school community have of the importance of Christian values in their lives and the wider life of the school.
- The contribution of worship to students' spiritual development.
- The religious education (RE) department which achieves outstanding academic results and has a major positive influence on pupils' attitudes and learning.
- The outstanding inspiring and visionary Christian leadership of the Headteacher and the strong contribution of the chaplain, other staff, students, governors and parents in promoting the authentic Christian character of the school.

Focus for development

- Extend opportunities for building the capacity of staff and students for spiritual leadership.
- Further develop approaches to worship and its evaluation to enhance relevance, creativity, student involvement and engagement and impact.

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

Canon Slade is a strong, dynamic and high achieving community of faith, learning and service. Openly expressed Christian values and beliefs make a positive impact on the progress of all students through effective teaching, pastoral care, support and guidance. The school's mission statement and its motto 'Ora et labora' (Pray and Work) are evident in its

provision, culture and morale. All members of the school are valued and in response demonstrate a deep sense of belonging to the Canon Slade "family". "The school is like home to me" (Year 13), "We all look out for each other" (Year 9) and "There is always someone to turn to" (Year 8) are typical of comments made by students. The atmosphere is calm and relationships positive. Those new to the school in Year 12 commend its welcoming ethos. Students display excellent behaviour. They speak of a high level of "trust and mutual respect" (Year 10) and of feeling "safe, secure, and cared for in a supportive Christian community" (Year 11) where they are enabled to achieve irrespective of their ability. They have a high degree of spiritual and moral awareness which they attribute to the school's strong Christian character and being able to explore and express faith openly within an inclusive environment. Opportunities are created across the curriculum, for example in English, mathematics, science, history, art and modern foreign languages to reflect on meaning, purpose, personal belief and what is "invisible to the eye" (Year 13). Students have a clear understanding of the importance of Christian values such as trust, compassion, justice, tolerance, forgiveness and reconciliation and speak openly about the link between faith and living. They value the partnership with Muslim schools, the commitment to fair trade, the many opportunities for charitable fund raising, service locally and overseas and the priority given to community cohesion and reconciliation as ways of enhancing their social responsibility and cultural development. Students help to nurture the school's Christian ethos and sense of community by taking a wide range of responsibilities and leadership roles, for example on the school council and as prefects, buddies and mentors. They, with governors and parents, value greatly the commitment, care and Christian example of staff. The outstanding pastoral ministry of the chaplain is very highly regarded by all. Display throughout the school includes values statements and visual reminders of faith, for example wooden crosses in classrooms, which have a positive impact on students' spiritual and moral development.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is at the heart of the school's life and is valued by students, staff, governors and parents. Its importance is shown through the leadership of senior staff, an extremely committed chaplain and visitors, as well as in its resourcing, planning and monitoring. Students gain very good spiritual understanding from experiencing worship in a variety of contexts, including many local churches. Communion is celebrated regularly and special services take place at Christian festivals. The Worship Committee enables students to play a part in planning and evaluating worship. Sixth formers also lead worship in the rest of the school, seeing this as an opportunity to "use our skills and become more confident in our faith by sharing it with others." (Year 12). The skills of staff and students could be developed further to enhance their confidence and capability in preparing and leading worship in forms and larger assemblies. Students feel included, affirmed and inspired by worship, for example "It helps me know God is always with me" (Year 9), "It helps us to grow in faith and expands our thinking" (Year 8) and "It helps us to show the message of Jesus in our own behaviour" (Year 10). Students benefit spiritually by contributing to worship through music, drama and reading. Students have a good understanding of Christian practice - they are familiar with Bible stories, hymns, worship songs and prayers, including the Lord's Prayer. Themes, responses and liturgy from the Anglican tradition feature in worship. Communion services are particularly valued as opportunities for prayer and reflection, "Communion helps me to understand and experience the forgiveness of God" (Year 7). Members of staff speak about being "moved by the experience of worship" in the Eucharist. Students and staff are involved in small group prayer. The chaplain is nurturing church links and developing resources and creative approaches to deepen and enrich worship yet further.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

The RE department, well led by a very able teacher, is a strength of the school. It has a record of outstanding academic success and contributes strongly to students' spiritual development and the school's distinctiveness. The head of department is supported by a talented, committed team of teachers and all use their expert subject knowledge and a variety of interactive approaches to foster a stimulating learning culture. Lessons are well planned and characterised by a strong working alliance between teacher and students, clear explanation of key principles, a high level of challenge, good pace, effective questioning, opportunities for reflection and the evaluation of learning against agreed targets and expected outcomes. Students believe they are well taught and are clear about the next steps to improving their work. They value the many opportunities for independent enquiry, group work, discussion and investigation. "We are more confident to ask and answer questions

about life issues" (Year 10) and "RS helps us to think outside the box and look at different points of view" (Year 13). They engage and respond enthusiastically and thoughtfully, as in observed lessons on understanding God from the Old Testament (Year 8), life after death (10) and religious language and the nature of belief (13). RE's contribution to students' oracy is a strong feature. The department is developing effective strategies in assessment for learning and approaches involving ICT, recognising that extending and embedding these policies are essential next steps. The Christian faith and other world faiths are studied to meet the needs of students. "RS helps me to understand more about God, my own faith and that of others" (Year 8). The curriculum time allocated to RE is appropriate and a reflection of the importance attached to it as a core subject central to the school's vision and mission. Almost all students are entered for GCSE and RS has become a popular AS and A2 option. The sixth form non-examination philosophy and ethics course is valued by students from a range of faith backgrounds and none. Attainment and achievement are outstanding at all key stages. Quality, standards and the impact of RE are monitored both by the department and the senior leadership team. Students are able to discuss how RE helps them to reflect on their attitudes and behaviour, consider social and moral issues and deepen and test their understanding of their own faith and other religions and cultures. They would welcome the involvement of more visitors in lessons to enhance these positive outcomes.

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

The leadership and management of the school are outstanding. The headteacher provides strong spiritual, moral and pastoral leadership. He is highly effective in promoting the school's Christian vision, values, beliefs and its drive for excellence and is supported enthusiastically by leaders at all levels and the governing body. The passion felt by the headteacher and governors that all aspects of the life and work of the school should be permeated by Christian values is central to its inclusive ethos and distinctiveness. Leadership is distributed throughout the school so that members of staff as well as students in positions of responsibility feel valued. Pupils, parents and other partners are proud of the school and support its vision of distinctiveness, inclusivity and service to the community and wider education network. The development of church school characteristics is paramount in the improvement plan. An active and vigilant governing body is effective in offering support and challenge to sustain the school's Christian ethos and vision, for example in strategic prioritisation and evaluation, staff recruitment, leadership development, succession planning and commitment to open enrolment in the sixth form. The school's website, publications and policies portray very effectively the school's Christian character and identity to the wider community. The school is nurtured very effectively by the varied, strong and mutually beneficial links with its communities and the local, diocesan and national church.

SIAS report December 2012. Canon Slade School, Bolton BL2 3BP.