



## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

### St Edwards Joint Roman Catholic Anglican VA School

Dale Valley Road  
Poole, Dorset  
BH15 3HY

**Previous SIAS grade:** Outstanding

**Current SIAMS inspection grade:** Outstanding

### Catholic Diocese of Plymouth: Anglican Diocese of Salisbury

Local authority: Poole

Dates of inspection: 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> July 2015

Date of last inspection: 15<sup>th</sup> June 2010

School's unique reference number: 113893

Headteacher: Pola Bevan

Inspector's name and number: Derek Holloway (93) Sarah Adams

### School context

St Edwards is a joint Roman Catholic Anglican 11-18 comprehensive school serving the Anglican deanery of Poole and the Catholic community of Poole, Wimborne, Wareham and Swanage. There were 1073 students on roll at the time of the inspection. The numbers of students in receipt of pupil premium is above the national average as are the numbers of students with special educational needs. Most students are of white British heritage but there are growing numbers of students from other ethnic backgrounds and of students with English as an additional language. 36 % of students are from self-identifying Catholic backgrounds 54% from other Christian denominations.

**The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Edward's as a Catholic Anglican Joint School truly reflects John 13:14 -15 'If I, your Lord and Teacher have washed your feet, you are also to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example that you should also do as I have done to you'.**

- The central importance given to worship that provides a rhythm and cohesion to life at the school
- The clarity of Christian vision lived out and modelled by the school leaders
- The effectiveness of the leadership of Religious Education (RE) in successfully managing the subject in this joint school context.

### Areas to improve and develop

- Ensure progression in planned opportunities for students spiritual journey
- Enhance opportunities to evaluate student experiences of worship
- In RE develop approaches to ensure that the school builds effectively on students prior knowledge of Christianity

**The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is outstanding at meeting the needs of all learners. It truly reflects John 13:14 -15 'If I, your Lord and Teacher have washed your feet, you are also to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example that you should also do as I have done to you'.**

St Edward's is a school that takes seriously the command of serving one another and washing each other's feet. All students perform well. Most achieve in line with local authority expectations and slightly above national expectations. The school meets its floor targets. It is, however, the schools work with disadvantaged and vulnerable students and those in receipt of pupil premium that most clearly reflects the school's mission. The school's interpretation of gospel values has led to a rigorous approach to intervention and support. The school has developed an ethos of nurture that gives students an approach to learning based on courage, aspiration and resilience that has resulted in disadvantaged pupils making significantly better progress than similar students locally and nationally. The school's status is made clear in its detailed mission statement. This is well known, understood and lived out by adults in the community, it is however not part of the language of students. They understand the school as place of compassion, friendship and respect. They are clear that being a joint church school means they must start from a position of respecting each others' denominational difference and that this builds a mind-set of mutual respect that shapes their attitude to others' of faith and of no faith. Their understanding of compassion is particularly well expressed in the work of the popular Ethics committee that goes beyond impressive fund raising to a concern to raise awareness of the issues behind the charities supported and to the importance of prayer. This striking example of student voice is now being used as model by the school in other areas of its work. The school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development is natural and varied, for example SMSC displays in Maths explore life expectancy and issues connected to the living wage, on a recent Art trip to Salisbury Cathedral students stopped work on the hour to take part in Cathedral prayers. The school has made use of the 'Windows Mirrors Doors' approach to auditing spirituality however as yet there has been little work on developing a coherent progressive pathway for students' spiritual journeys. Religious Education (RE) contributes toward pupils' understanding of religious diversity. Each year includes study of a religion other than Christianity and it is long standing practice to study two religions for examination. The school has recently conducted a cross curricular audit to see where the school promotes British values and helps prepare students for life in modern Britain. The RE department has recently led a cross curriculum transition project for pupils in local Catholic Primary schools. The focus on prayer involved several departments for example Geography helped students research the natural wonders of each continent so that pupils could write and design prayers of thanks. Equally impressive was the contribution of sixth formers in leading many sessions.

**The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding. It truly reflects John 13:14 -15 'If I, your Lord and Teacher have washed your feet, you are also to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example that you should also do as I have done to you'.**

Across all areas of school life central importance is placed on worship and liturgy. It is an expectation that all staff and students are involved in the delivery of worship. There are a wide range of high quality opportunities for worship in year group acts of worship, tutor group reflections and in a range of highly significant whole school liturgies. A feature of worship at St Edwards is the high degree of student involvement in planning and delivery. Students often take a lead in developing liturgies for important school events. Students often plan and lead tutor group reflections, they keep reflection journals that show, thought and insight and give opportunities for personal response and deep thinking. These journals are helping students to develop the language to express their spirituality. This has become part of the rhythm of life at the school. Many acts of worship include significant input from students in delivery. As a result of the care and importance taken with worship these are clearly meaningful times for the

whole school community. The school has in place rigorous systems for the monitoring of worship but the focus has not been on evaluation and gathering student feedback. Students have initiated and run a successful Christian Union which has been open and centred on exploring faith. The school offers small numbers of students the chance to attend a residential retreat. The school chapel is a place of great significance for students. They use it when they are upset, when they need to find a sense of calmness. It is a place to go and be quiet and think. As one student put it 'The Chapel is not a place to go with your friends'. The school benefits from the work of two youth workers, one from each community who are based in the chapel and can offer pastoral support to students. The joint nature of the school has meant that Eucharist and Mass is offered only optionally and often before school and the sign of the cross is not used regularly. This is a response to a great concern from students not to be divisive in worship.

**The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding. It truly reflects John 13:14 -15 'If I, your Lord and Teacher have washed your feet, you are also to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example that you should also do as I have done to you'.**

RE is considered a core subject at St Edwards. The school has appointed a team of specialist teachers of RE to deliver the subject and the subject receives 8% of curriculum time at KS3 and 10% at KS4. Students value the subject as a place where they can be honest and express their opinions and views. They find that it can, sometimes, be an unsettling experience leading them to reflect on the faith they bring from home, As one student said 'At church you are taught to have one view and at school we are encouraged to explore many'. All eligible students are entered for full course GCSE RE. The department achieves an impressive 76.8% A\*-C pass rate this compares well with national averages (71%) and the local schools (56%). School monitoring suggests that teaching is mainly good with some outstanding lessons. This was validated in lessons seen during the inspection. Lessons were fast paced and interactive, students are active and engaged. They develop a secure knowledge and understanding of the faith being studied and can make links between belief and practice. On occasion there is a tendency to have too much activity and not allow enough time for deeper questioning and reflection. Many, but not all students bring considerable biblical knowledge from their home backgrounds. This is not always built on effectively leaving some students not being consistently challenged on some occasions. Although teachers mark work regularly to check and support students, the department's practice in dialogic marking is still developing. A level RE is a successful option with significant numbers choosing to study the subject. There is excellent well thought through and relevant provision for those in year 12 that don't take the subject to A level. This comfortably fulfils the national society statement of entitlement requirements. The curriculum for RE suggests clear progression of understanding of Christian teaching, and for the exploration of philosophical questions at KS3. The opportunities to explore faiths other than Christianity are more limited at key stage 3.

**The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is outstanding. It truly reflects John 13:14 -15 'If I, your Lord and Teacher have washed your feet, you are also to wash one another's feet. For I have set you an example that you should also do as I have done to you'.**

The school's Christian vision is passionately articulated by all members of the school community. The school leadership ensure that they model Christian values to the school staff and that staff in turn model this to students. As a result relationships across the school are excellent and contribute to building a working Christian community. Leaders have a thorough understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses but ensure that it is the school's mission statement that drives the school priorities. Foundation Governors are well informed and the place of student voice is developing in the school. The leadership of RE and worship is highly effective, innovatively led through the work of the chaplaincy team which includes teaching staff, governors, youth workers and local clergy. The school has identified that the development of a student chaplaincy team modelled on the successful Ethics Committee is the

next stage of development. Relationships with the local parishes are excellent and of mutual and substantial benefit to all concerned. Staff attend student confirmations in the parishes, parish members come to school Lenten lunches. Clergy provide a transition link between primary and secondary school. There is a strong focus in developing staff to work in church schools. All new members of staff receive thorough induction to help them understand their role in this joint school. The school is actively involved in initial teacher training and as a result many new staff have been recruited into the school, several of them former students. The Head of RE is often asked to represent the Plymouth Diocese regionally and nationally and serves on the local SACRE on behalf of the Salisbury Diocese. The school has successfully addressed all issues raised at the last denominational inspection.

SIAMS report July 15 St Edwards RC/CE VA School; Poole Dorset BH15 3HY

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