

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Tring School			
Address	Mortimer Hill, Tring, Hertfordshire. HP23 5JD		
Date of inspection	2-3 May 2019	Status of school	Secondary academy in the Ridgeway Learning Partnership
Diocese	St Albans	URN	138352

Overall Judgement	Grade	Good
How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?		
Additional Judgement		
The impact of collective worship	Grade	Good

School context

Tring is a larger than average secondary school with 1538 students on roll. The majority of students are of White British heritage. Very few students speak English as an additional language. The proportion of students who are considered to be disadvantaged is below the national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national averages. The only secondary school in the immediate area, in 2017 it became the founding member of the Ridgeway Learning Partnership. The current chair of governors was appointed in December 2018.

The school's Christian vision

'Different gifts but the same spirit. In all of them the same God is at work'.

Our motto of "Live to Learn, Learn to Live" is reflected in our belief for creating successful learners, (wisdom)confident individuals, (hope) and responsible citizens (comprehensive community) which is underpinned with dignity and respect."

Key findings

- Students say the Christian message of the school and its values create an exceptionally strong community in which they feel known and cared for.
- Leaders and governors are actively reflecting on the biblical roots of the school's values. This work is at a relatively early stage, but good progress has been made.
- Leaders are passionately and proactively developing the school within, and for the community.
- Hard working and dedicated staff ensure that students are individually supported to make good, and often very good progress from their starting points. This has not always been the case for all disadvantaged students, but gaps have closed, or are closing.
- The experience of some worship and prayer does not do enough to deepen students' spirituality.

Areas for development

- Further develop the ways in which leaders and governors can apply the biblical roots of the school's vision so that all members of the community can confidently articulate it.
- Deepen the experiences of prayer and worship to enable pupils and adults grow spiritually.
- Continue to close gaps made by disadvantaged students so that, as in the sixth form, they all make at least average progress.

How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?

Inspection findings

Tring is an inclusive school, open to all, and attended by significant numbers who have no religious affiliations. 'Different gifts but the same Spirit. In all of them the same God is at work'. Leaders use I Corinthians, chapter 12 to explain how, and why, their school is such a nurturing community. Staff focus on developing the different gifts and abilities of every individual. Students explore the concept of the Spirit through worship and philosophy and religious studies (PRS) over time. They feel it immediately. It flows through the excellent relationships which characterise this community. Currently, many students cannot explain the connection between this recently adopted biblical quotation and their school life. All, however, clearly describe how the school's longstanding values influence their learning and behaviour. The values are: wisdom, hope and comprehensive community, all underpinned by dignity and respect. Staff implement them consistently. Leaders and governors use them to drive policy. Consequently, they create the school's identity and shape character.

Students thrive because the curriculum is tailored and monitored to meet their individual needs. They enjoy high quality personalised support because leaders manage resources wisely. Teaching and learning are enhanced by an innovative use of technology. Students attend well, and results often exceed national standards. Students with special educational needs and /or disabilities make good progress from their starting points. Results for disadvantaged students, however, are inconsistent. Those in the Sixth Form perform much better than their peers nationally. Those in Key Stage 4 make below average progress but current school data shows they are catching up with their peers. Disadvantaged students in Key Stage 3 perform as well as their peers.

Parents cite examples of how the school has transformed their children. They say staff know their children incredibly well as individuals and provide exceptional pastoral care. Typical of their experience is the example of one child described by his parent as 'broken' before he joined the school. True to the school's vision, staff have since 'freed him to fly' personally and academically. Parents believe that because staff respect the dignity and worth of every individual, their children do the same. Staff also experience the transformative effect of the school's vision, personally, and professionally. Leaders' sensitive consideration of staff workload feeds into practical decisions which reduce stress and aid well-being. The headteacher and her team are highly regarded by staff who appreciate and feel valued by them.

Tutor groups are organised to facilitate positive relationships between students of all ages. Behaviour is excellent and repeat offences are rare. Students identify hope at the heart of the behaviour policy. They know they have the chance to right any wrongs and say that achievements never go unnoticed. Staff work proactively to prevent bullying. If it does occur, parents report that it is instantly and effectively dealt with. Students are surprised by questions about how they react if differences between them become apparent. They simply assume any differences are either irrelevant or welcome. Students challenge unkindness to ensure that their community is inclusive. Leaders take student voice seriously. Following discussions in 'Tring Talks' a support group has been established for those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender.

Leaders give high priority to PRS. Students' critical thinking skills and knowledge of theological concepts are developed very effectively. This is because the team of subject specialists and experienced staff have developed a unique and rigorous course. Planning is excellent. Students all study the subject through to Year 11 and sit GCSE religious studies. They seize opportunities in lessons to clarify their own principles. In discussion they independently raise questions such as whether you can forgive someone but still not like them. Crucially PRS also builds students' understanding of the diverse richness of religions and culture in the wider world. Clear assessment procedures enable teachers to gauge students' progress and guide them further. Results are good and uptake at A level has increased dramatically because students value the subject.

Experiences beyond subject lessons are explicitly designed to help students discover their gifts and build character. Life skills, an enhancement programme, and rich extracurricular provision all take students into new areas of personal growth. They have their eyes opened to issues of local and global concern. Inspired to look beyond themselves they are motivated to make a difference. They have regular opportunities to address the issues they identify. For example, half termly enterprise markets typically raise awareness and funds for nearly 20 different projects. These include a school in Malawi and many projects closer to home tackling injustice and deprivation.

Students become successful, courageous, agents of change. A Sixth Form campaign to remove plastic from the school's canteen has influenced change across the county.

Students regularly evaluate collective worship, and all have a role in leading it at some point in the year. Worship, confidently led, offers them something distinctive. In this large but tight knit community they value it for 'togetherness' and 'the chance to hear God in the silence'. They describe coming to 'see things in a new way' in worship led by the chaplains. Worship at other times, including in tutor groups, provides a calm invitational space for reflection. However, opportunities to develop prayer and spirituality are not sufficiently followed through in all worship. Services in the local church familiarise students with Anglican traditions and arrangements have also been made for visits to local churches of other Christian denominations. A weekly prayer group nourishes the adults who attend, and Sixth Formers have a dedicated space for prayer and reflection. Generous support from the local parish funds two chaplains who work part time in the school. The relationships they build take the spirit from collective worship out into the community. 'You are known and loved'. Students internalise this message from worship and identify 'prayer, worship and the church' as sources of support. In return, learning gained from the school has inspired revisions to elements of the liturgy in the local church.

Leaders are outward facing and, in line with their vision, passionate about building a seamless approach to great learning from 3-19. Work with their partner primary school in the Ridgeway Learning Partnership is directly benefitting pupils and students. Different aspects of the school's work have achieved local, national and international recognition. Alliances and links made with numerous local schools support the development of professional practice and church school leadership. Leaders have also successfully secured funding to radically improve facilities on site. Good use is made of diocesan training and support. The school's Christian foundation is strengthened by governors' increasing focus on it as a church school and their knowledge of current thinking.

Headteacher	Susanna Collings
Inspector's name and number	Elaine Skinner 914