

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Manshead Church of England Voluntary Aided Upper School

Dunstable Road
Luton
LU1 4BB

Diocese of St Albans

LA: Central Bedfordshire
SIAS Inspection: 2nd-3rd November 2011
Previous S23 Inspection: December 2008
URN: 109705
Headteacher: Mr. J. Parker
SIAS Inspector Name: Mr. A. Brown No. 256

School Context

Manshead Church of England Upper School is a co-educational 13-18 school with 1094 students on roll. It is an oversubscribed school with specialist status in science and maths. The school has an above average number of students with special educational needs. The majority of students do not come from a church background.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Manshead School as a Church of England school are good.

Manshead School is a good school where the distinctive Christian character is present if understated. It is a welcoming and caring community where implicit Christian core values and principles underpin the experience of staff and students. The support for RE and the high standard of the teaching in the department makes a significant contribution to the school's ethos. Manshead continues to work to provide an enhanced experience of worship for students and needs to explore ways to express its Christian vision and practice more clearly.

Established strengths

- The Christian values and relationships which define the school's character and ethos;
- The confidence students have in the school and in their teachers;
- The school's support for Religious Education and the quality of teaching in the department.

Focus for development

- To ensure the Church foundation of the school is clearly represented policies and aspirations as well as, more practically in the Reception area;
- To increase and improve student participation in the planning and presentation of worship;
- To raise the profile of the Ethos Committee.

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

Manshead School has a strong commitment to the continuing improvement of the Christian character of the school. There is a clear Christian concern for each other, staff and students, and those in the wider community whom the school serves although this is not celebrated as it might be. Students recognise and are appreciative of the pastoral care offered by staff and the opportunities and responsibilities they are given which enables them to grow and mature. One student commented, '*The values of the school have enabled me to achieve and I have always known I would be fully supported while I am here*'. They give their full support to the school as a caring, happy Christian environment, although not all students are aware the school is a church school. The Christian principles and values that run through the school and underpin academic and pastoral concerns reflect the commitment and enthusiasm of senior staff but there is a need to express this in a more open manner. The school should clearly demonstrate what the Church in education can offer to the communities it serves. Manshead should explore strategies which would enable it to find a more public expression for the things it already does and does very well. Manshead School is a welcoming, caring Christian educational community.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is satisfactory.

The school has worked hard since the last inspection to improve the quality of worship and the experience of the students. There is still the need to identify key aspects of worship which would engage students although some of the students interviewed did find worship interesting on occasions. The lively Christian Union is willing to help and support the planning and leading of worship, in association with some of the younger students and the new Pastor has a number of ideas about which he is most enthusiastic. The act of worship seen during the inspection was good: thoughtful and reflective, though students might have been given a moment of silence for their private reflections. There needs to be a more critical evaluation of how Anglican worship in particular can be presented effectively. Students will leave the school familiar with the cycle of the Christian year and some will have had the opportunity to experience worship but there is still work to be done. Other initiatives such as using Christians from outside the school are welcome as they contribute to the variety of worship in the school.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good.

The expectations and standards in Religious Education are high. All students interviewed said how much they liked and enjoyed RE and felt challenged by the work. The teaching in the RE department is very good: most of the teaching observed was outstanding with other lessons being very good. Students are given clear direction on their levels of attainment and what they need to do to improve helping them to recognise and achieve their full potential. This was particularly true for students in year 9 who commented on how much more relevant they found RE than in their previous schools. '*It is more about our lives*'. Students appreciated the importance of learning about the place of religion in contemporary society in a lively and challenging way. The review of the GCSE syllabus in RS and the subsequent change, with implications for year 9 teaching, has led to a marked interest in RE. The school continues to support the department and the Learning Manager for RE has worked with great energy and imagination to ensure that students are able to make good progress. RE makes a significant and important contribution to the spiritual, social moral and cultural development of students.

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

Manshead is a welcoming and supportive school where the leadership and management are able to express the Christian rationale on which the school stands. There is, however, more work to be done if the Christian character of the school is to be fully recognised by all students and the raising of the profile of the Ethos Committee would be an important step. There is an overt sense of purpose and enthusiasm throughout the school which students recognise for they appreciate the commitment and personal interest of their teachers. The practical application in the daily life of the school of caring for one's neighbour and developing themes of respect and responsibility are important but need to find purposeful expression in the context of Christian action. The Church in education is expressed through Manshead having such a strong presence in the local community and responding to the needs of students, families and the societies it serves. This commitment of school and Church working together could be made more explicit. Students and staff provide practical examples of the importance of community cohesion as do all the charitable works of the school. The school embodies Christian values though these are not always expressed in the policies of the school nor attributed to the vision of Christian service to the community.

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