

## **Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools**

### **Report**

School:	<b>Wadham CE VC School, Mount Pleasant Crewkerne Somerset TA18 7NT</b>
Status:	<b>Voluntary Controlled</b>
Diocese:	<b>Bath and Wells</b>
Local Authority:	<b>Somerset County</b>
Date of Inspection:	<b>October 15 2009</b>
Date of last Inspection:	<b>June 2007</b>
School's unique ref. no.	<b>123893</b>
Name of Head teacher:	<b>Mr David Derbyshire</b>
Chair of Governors:	<b>Mr Stuart Shepherd</b>
Inspector's name & NS no:	<b>NS264 Canon Harold Stephens</b>

### **School Context**

Wadham Church of England VC School is a mixed upper comprehensive school serving the Somerset towns of Crewkerne and Ilminster and the large rural area surrounding them. There are 643 students on roll between years 9 and 13 with 103 in the sixth form. The school is a specialist Business and Enterprise College. At sixth form level the school has growing links with other post-16 providers. On entry students are at nationally expected levels of attainment. Whilst the area as a whole is not characterised by economic or social hardship, nonetheless there are significant pockets of deprivation within the school's designated area. The great majority of students are of white British heritage. There are a few students from ethnic minorities and from settled Traveller communities.

### **Summary Judgement**

**The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Wadham School as a church school are good.**

The school is an improving school with a clear and consistent ethos of care and inclusion. Core values of forgiveness and redemption are well articulated. The

school recognises the implications of being a church school and has begun to work this out in practice.

## **Established Strengths**

- The quality of leadership and management of the school has enabled significant changes and developments, bringing the school to a strong position for future improvements
- The quality of Religious Education (Religion and Philosophy) which has a major role in the life of the school, and provides good opportunities for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students
- The cohesive nature of the school community at the heart of which are values of trust, respect, forgiveness and redemption, clearly recognised by all stakeholders

## **Focus for development**

- Monitor the impact on learners of the provision for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, in collective worship, Religious Education (RE) and across the curriculum
- Further develop the school's understanding of its distinctiveness as a Church of England school.
- Provide a daily act of collective worship for all registered students.

## **The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is good in the way it meets the needs of all learners**

Wadham School is an improving school which has fixed attention on raising standards of attainment and behaviour among pupils and the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom. The distinctiveness of the school as a Church of England school is improving and seen as an area for development. The core values of forgiveness and redemption are understood as implicit and influential in all aspects of the school. Trust and respect characterise the life of the school. These values, rooted in the Christian faith are recognised and welcomed as such by students, parents, staff and governors. They are worked out every day in the raising of standards, the policy and practice of inclusion, the positive nurturing and the effective strategies for conflict resolution. One member of staff said: 'Everyone is known and cared for' In approaches to the school's Business and Enterprise specialism the Christian character of the school has ensured that ethical and social issues are addressed and that aspirations and self-esteem of students are raised. The school increasingly provides for the needs of pupils with a balanced and enriched curriculum and one in which the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students is good. The impact of RE on the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students is clear, consistent and at least good. Students spoke positively about the learning environment in RE which encourages reflection, engagement, challenge and the opportunities to express and exchange ideas and opinions. Within this Christianity is clearly addressed and students appreciate the open and informative approach adopted. Pupils were described by one RE teacher as 'lively, lovely, challenging, interested and fun to work with'. Student involvement in leadership and responsibility is good. All students achieve well and standards overall are

satisfactory. Community links in the local area are well-developed and the school community itself is increasingly cohesive and inclusive. One adult said 'the school has a spiritual heart' and others agreed that this lays the foundation for the successful living out of Wadham School's core Christian values. The general environment of the school is pleasant and well-maintained but more attention could be given to the impact of displays and spaces to improve the opportunities for students to respond and reflect on their ideas, experiences and feelings.

## **The impact of collective worship on the school community is Satisfactory**

Collective Worship is provided for all students each week but this is not daily. The contribution of worship to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students is often good. Students were able to identify collective worship which had challenged them to think, to talk, to be shocked and to act. They respect the fact that many acts of collective worship are relevant to their lives and that this is of help to them. Collective worship is Christian in nature and offers opportunities for prayer and structured reflection. Themes cover the Christian year and anniversaries in the life of the school and community. Moral, ethical and social themes or issues are approached, often linked to special anniversaries or significant events. Collective Worship has an important place in the life of the school and both reflects the school's community and reinforces its ethos, values and cohesion. However there is the need to develop an effective system for monitoring and evaluating the impact of collective worship on students to help inform planning and improve what is offered. Greater participation of students in and leading worship should be encouraged. Worship at the school does not yet sufficiently recognise or embrace the range of Anglican practice and this should be addressed. Worship is enriched by the use of the parish churches for special services and events in the year. The parish priests of the two towns regularly lead collective worship as do ministers of other churches on an occasional basis. The parishes have some input in the preparation of special church services. The school holds services of Holy Communion but these, at present, are only for those staff and governors who wish to attend.

## **The leadership and management of the school as a church school is good.**

The school is ably led by a head and leadership team focusing on providing the best for all students in all facets of the school's life. The strong focus on improvements in behaviour, teaching and learning and attainment has turned the school around. The headteacher provides strong, positive and inspirational spiritual leadership which has enabled Wadham School to begin to realise its vision. The Senior Team and all staff are united in support of each other, the students and the community. They recognise the importance of the role model provided by senior staff on the school's Christian ethos and how that shapes the school's community life. The school is now starting to consider how the distinctive nature of being a church school may be worked out in practice. Both staff and governors have already set aside time for this. The governing body is effective and continues to challenge and drive a vision for the school as a Church of England school, supporting growth and development. Religious

Education is well provided for in all Key Stages with 3 specialist teachers and others appropriately trained in the subject. The subject is well led and managed and there is considerable expertise, enthusiasm and energy as a result. Provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils arises across the curriculum, usually as an integral part of class work rather than an additional element. Links with the local community and in the county are good. This contributes to school and local provision for Community Cohesion, although the national and international dimensions are as yet under-developed. The exploration of chaplaincy at Wadham School reflects a true partnership with church, parishes, Deanery and the Diocese.

*This inspection was carried out on behalf of the Diocese of Bath & Wells in whose area the school is set, in accordance with Section 48 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection framework used is that established by The National Society of the Church of England for the denominational inspection of church schools for all dioceses in England and Wales.*

*Your comments or complaints should be addressed to the Education Department, The Diocese of Bath & Wells, The Old Deanery, Wells, Somerset BA5 2UG. Further information about inspection of church schools can be obtained from the National Society's website at [www.natsoc.org.uk](http://www.natsoc.org.uk).*