

**Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools**  
*and*  
**Inspection for and on behalf of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Plymouth**  
**Section 48 Inspection Report**

**Name and address of school:** St Edward's Roman Catholic / Church of England Comprehensive School, Dale Valley Road, Oakdale, Poole, BH15 3HY  
**Type of school:** Secondary Comprehensive  
**Status:** Voluntary Aided  
**Dioceses:** Salisbury and Plymouth  
**LA:** Poole  
**Date of inspection:** 26<sup>th</sup> June 2007  
**Date of last inspection:** 2003  
**School's Unique reference number:** 113893  
**Name of Head teacher:** Mrs Pola Bevan  
**Inspector's name with National Society inspector's number:**  
 Rev Harold Stephens. (264)

**The School's Context**

St Edward's School is a joint Roman Catholic and Church of England comprehensive school with 873 students aged 12 to 18, of which 176 are in the sixth form. The School is supported by the Roman Catholic diocese of Plymouth and the Anglican diocese of Salisbury. The school serves the urban area of Poole and its environs. The School is oversubscribed. The intake is slightly above the national average in ability range. The majority of its students come from Christian families of the two denominations and are drawn from a diverse social range. The majority of students are of white European background.

**Summary Judgement**

St Edward's School, Poole is an outstanding Church School. It is a school confident and consistent in its Christian ethos, working effectively for constant improvement and seeking to serve all its students equally, steeped in the Christian traditions and values that underpin the whole life of the school

**Established strengths**

- The clear, strong, effective and consistent Christian character of the School which permeates all areas of the school promoting and providing for the effective spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.
- The quality of impact of Collective Worship within the school.
- The good quality of pastoral care and the welcoming ethos which reflects the Gospel values underpinning the School's life.
- The outstanding leadership of the head with an extremely effective senior team.

**Focus for development**

- To further develop and implement the revised systems for assessment, personalised learning records and differentiation in Religious Education at Key Stage 3.
- Work to develop more systematic monitoring and evaluation of collective worship which also involves students.

**How well does the school, through its distinctive Christian character, meet the needs of all learners?**

The school is outstanding, through its unique character, at meeting the needs of learners. Students are proud of their school, feel they belong and enjoy learning.

The school has a clear and strong Christian character born of an unusual and exciting ecumenical foundation. This character and ethos is strongly embedded throughout the school and underpins every aspect of its life. The school is inclusive – committed to its comprehensive status and concerned that all should matter – “we will never give up”!

The school is highly successful in its provision for the effective spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students. Opportunities for these abound within and beyond the formal curriculum. For students and staff alike there are particular strengths in pastoral and spiritual provision. The work of the Chaplaincy Worker is very highly regarded by the community. All students feel they belong to a welcoming, relaxed but purposeful learning community. Work for students with particular difficulties is consistent and is increasingly well-resourced. The work of the Learning Centre and also the commitment to use restorative justice approaches when relevant are most encouraging.

Students have opportunities to prepare for Confirmation, engage with voluntary worship in and far beyond the school and to be active in concern for social justice and the environment from a Christian perspective. There is a programme of retreats which students (and also staff) are invited to attend.

There are extensive and varied opportunities for enrichment – notably musical and dramatic activities as well as in sports.

The student voice is strong and growing more effective through the Student Forum. Students are encouraged to develop morally and socially. They are offered opportunities for leadership. Features such as peer mentoring and mediation, 6<sup>th</sup> form mentors, the rôles of senior students and leadership displayed in extensive programmes of charity fund-raising are to be commended. There are varied and extensive links beyond the school and beyond these shores. These further enrich the social and cultural development of students and reflect an outward-looking cultural perspective.

Attainment at sixth form level has yet to fully reflect the progress made in KS3 and KS4 but strategies are firmly in place and effecting improvements driven by the School Development Plan.

The built environment has undergone extensive improvements and expansion with new buildings which greatly enhance a growing school.

**What is the impact of collective worship on the school community?**

The impact of Collective Worship on students is outstanding.

There are imaginative, extensive and effective approaches to Collective Worship and beyond, which embrace the opportunities given by the school’s ecumenical character. Worship is firmly established at the centre of the life of all members of the school community. Students are able to describe examples of collective worship which have had an impact and inspired them, made them think and evoked sympathy, empathy and understanding. This is very good.

Acts of collective worship are provided for all students, including the sixth form, by the use of tutor-based reflection and a weekly “assembly”. Themes are carefully thought through and worship provides significant opportunities for students to reflect, to ponder and to pray. The quality of tutor time reflections can vary but by the sharing of good practice and provision of good quality support materials, staff are encouraged to seek ever more effective means to enable this time to have an appropriate impact.

Worship at the school is effectively managed and resourced and many students have opportunities to contribute to or to shape worship in tutor groups or for the year group. The Chaplaincy Worker is considerable help. On the day of this inspection Year 9 students led worship for Year 12 with confidence and imagination. This is to be commended.

Beyond this core, there is excellent provision for the spiritual development of students in worship. The Mass and Anglican Eucharist are celebrated regularly (attendance is voluntary). There is a Chapel with space for silence, reflection and prayer. Special times of the year are marked as are times of arrival and departure to and from the school. The high feast days / festivals are always marked in varied liturgies reflecting imagination and care and also expressing the unity of the school.

Evaluation is regular and informs planning with which the chaplains are also involved. It would be appropriate to provide for a greater student voice in this process. There is room for more visitors to be invited to lead assembly.

### **How effective is the Religious Education?**

The impact and effectiveness of Religious Education at the School is good.

Religious Education is a major provider of opportunities for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students at the school. Through its programmes of study students are helped to develop a greater understanding of Christianity and to explore issues of social and moral concern in relation to it. There is a consistent application of the school's ethos and mission statement and several examples of application of these things into projects / concerns beyond the classroom. This is good. Students' attitudes generally are good in Religious Education and they value opportunities to engage well in debate and discussion.

The department is well-staffed and well resourced with several specialist rooms. Attainment is at least that expected at a national level. Assessment and target setting with related differentiation is being further developed and refined and this will ensure even the most able are challenged even more. At sixth form level a growing number of students follow the AS Level programme and the A2 programme. Here results are less consistent and affected by the whole-school issue of class size in an expanding sixth form. Nonetheless the students affirm the positive impact of the course and its effectiveness. And the school has ensured class size is no longer to be an issue.

Teaching in Religious Education overall is good. Leadership of the department is effective and directed to constant improvement in teaching and learning (part of the whole school development plan). Lessons are well-prepared by the teaching team of 8 experienced staff.

### **How effective are the leadership and management of the school as a church school?**

The leadership and management of the school are outstanding.

There is much to demonstrate the strongly embedded Christian nature of the school. It is led by a head and senior team with clarity of vision and focused ambitions for the school's future. Governance is supportive and the culture of the staff team strongly rooted in the school's Church character. All stakeholders recognise the Head's affirmation of a vision of the potential of all to be discovered.

Curriculum policies and practice are all consistent with the Christian nature and ethos of the school. Throughout the school, staff and senior students (e.g. peer mentors) are excellent rôle models. In all this, students are given the freedom to respond in their own ways and are treated with respect and integrity.

Extensive, diverse and strong links with churches at various levels and which work both ways are in place. Communication is a strong point. For example, the way in which parishes are invited into the school, informed about it and asked to pray for it. Both dioceses actively support the school in a number of ways. Episcopal visits are annual events. A growing shared sense of mission is evident with the two designated feeder Roman Catholic schools.

The Staff are well-supported and share a common understanding of the Christian vision of the school. Parents have confidence in and admire the quality of leadership at the school which also commands the confidence of the Governing Body. There is a sense of a "school going somewhere" said one parent.

Strategies and systems are in place and the Senior Team, ably led by the Head Teacher, have initiated developments for further improvements to the school.

