



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

RET Becket Keys Church of England Free School

Sawyers Hall Lane, Brentwood,
Essex, CM15 9DA

Previous SIAS grade: n/a

Current SIAMS grade: Outstanding

Diocese: Chelmsford

Local authority: n/a

Date of inspection: 12 and 13 January 2016

Date of last inspection: n/a

School's unique reference number: 138239

Headteacher: Andy Scott-Evans

Inspector's name and number: Pamela Draycott 161

School context

Becket Keys is a Church of England free school which opened in 2012, admitting only Year 7 students in that year. Now it has 150 students in each year group up to Year 10. It has more families who want their children to attend than there are places. Half the places are available as 'church places' with the rest being available to the wider community. The percentage of students with special educational needs is well above the national average. The percentage for whom the school receives extra funding due to social disadvantage is below the national average. Plans are well advanced to open a sixth form in September 2017.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Becket Keys Church of England Free School as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The school's explicit Christian ethos effectively drives forward its growth and development as a church school.
- The high quality of relationships and exemplary behaviour of students expresses the school's 'character education' approach based on its Christian values of respect, responsibility and forgiveness.
- The school's daily worship programme is central to school life and supports the religious, spiritual and moral development of students very well.
- The commitment and effectiveness of the school's leadership team and governing body promotes well its high standards of attainment and progress based on its Christian ethos.

Areas to improve

- Ensure that the recently introduced 'worship student leader programme' is developed in order that student involvement in planning and leading worship across year groups and in tutor groups is increased.
- In religious education (RE), or as it is called at the school, religion and philosophy (RP) provide further written tasks which are explicitly linked to different attainment levels so that students have further opportunities to demonstrate their abilities and progress.

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

The school's motto, 'Faith in Learning' is deeply embedded and effectively permeates its life and work. This means that the school's growth and development is firmly grounded in its explicit Christian ethos. School values of respect, responsibility and forgiveness are lived out. High quality and caring relationships between adults and students and between students is characterised by mutual respect. Taking responsibility for learning and for each other can be seen in classrooms and around the school. As one student said 'the school's values affect our characters: we are helped to be respectful and to take responsibility for ourselves and others'. The school works effectively to encourage students to be caring, fair, honest and trustworthy. The Christian value of forgiveness is lived out by, for example, the 'fresh start' offered to students who may be finding school life difficult. The school's Christian foundation is evident in the very good pastoral systems provided for all students, including the most vulnerable. Consequently, attendance is above the national average and, since its foundation, there have been no permanent exclusions. Students are proud to belong to this school. This means that they work hard, effectively supported by staff, to achieve their best both personally and academically. There is currently no externally verified national data based on GCSE results. However, the school monitors attainment and progress carefully and accurately, drawing on external expertise as necessary. Ambitious targets for attainment are in place. This currently shows that the vast majority are making good or very good progress. The school provides a wide range of opportunities to support students in developing spiritually, morally, socially and culturally. Students respond very positively to this across the curriculum and through involvement in the extensive extra-curricular programme. Students recognise the importance of RP in helping to explore more about themselves and the diversity of God's world. They have a developing understanding of different Christian beliefs and practices as well as of a range of other world faiths. As a student reflected, 'It's important in a Christian school to look at other faiths because in the world there are different faiths. In the world today, there is controversy about religion and so it's necessary to understand other people and how they live.'

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Daily worship is central to school life. It is valued and celebrated by senior leaders, governors, staff, students and their families. Worship takes place in a variety of groupings where it is appreciated as a special time for prayer, reflection and thinking. It provides 'space' for those involved to demonstrate reverence towards God. Prayer is important in school life. For example, all tutor group rooms have a space for tutees to write and ask for prayer. There are prayer groups for staff, parents and students which meet regularly. Students and staff are provided with a good range of opportunities to consider issues of spiritual and moral significance through the worship programme. Worship is appropriately extended by regular Eucharistic services. There is an appropriate focus on Jesus and his importance for Christians. Christian festivals are well celebrated and students have an age-appropriate understanding of Christian beliefs about God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Aspects of Anglican worship such as the use of candles, set Bible readings from the Anglican lectionary and opening sentences with responses are well embedded in school practice. The Lord's Prayer and Creed, as well as the school prayer, are said regularly. Students understand the importance of these key elements of worship. Consequently, the worship programme helps students develop their knowledge and understanding of Christian beliefs as well as helping them to consider their own ideas and beliefs. Students have opportunities to evaluate worship. They lead worship through, for example, being servers, playing music, reading from the Bible and saying prayers. In response to student requests, the need to further student involvement in planning and leading worship in year groups and tutor groups has been prioritised. In response, there is a newly introduced 'worship student leader programme'. Its development has not had time to impact significantly on the depth and range of student involvement in planning and leading worship across year groups.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

Standards of attainment in RP are higher than average, across the school. The majority are making good or very good progress from their various starting points. The subject leader and the other RP specialist teacher are new to the school. Their positive impact on improving standards is already felt. The RP curriculum and assessment practice are being very well adapted based on national developments. The subject leader and staff have rightly refined some areas and included new areas of study. All students in Key Stage 4 study full course GCSE Religious Studies. The school's internal monitoring, validated by

external advisers, currently indicates much higher than average attainment and very good progress for the first cohort of GCSE students. They will sit the examination during the academic year 2016-17. Teaching is of a consistently high standard and is often outstanding. Consequently, the vast majority of students enjoy RP and behaviour is exemplary during lessons. Students listen respectfully and are prepared to offer their own ideas and beliefs as well as to ask for help when needed. They are very well focused on learning which means that tasks are completed very well. There are opportunities within the curriculum for them to develop higher level skills such as analysis and evaluation as well as creative and artistic responses. Their work enables them to make appropriate links between Christianity, other faiths and the school's Christian values. Most know their working and target grades and what they need to do to make further progress. Generally, work is closely matched to the students' learning needs. However, there is insufficient evidence of teachers setting different written tasks for different ability groups or of students having a choice of activities in any areas of study.

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

The headteacher's clear vision for and commitment to making Becket Keys a successful Christian school is evident and infectious. It is based on a clear theological understanding of education as service; of helping students fulfil their potential as precious children of God. This vision is well shared and articulated by governors, senior leaders and staff. Parents and students are well aware of this vision and regard it as the fundamental underpinning of Becket Keys. As a result, there is a wide-ranging commitment to implementing the school's Christian ethos as it matures as a church school. The impact of the school's Christian ethos on standards and progress takes a high priority. Senior staff and governors monitor this carefully and effectively. Leaders have a detailed and accurate understanding of the school based on thorough and insightful self-evaluation. They are very well supported in this by the Russell Education Trust with whom the school works in very close partnership. A rich and balanced curriculum is in place. This is enhanced by each department considering their contribution to the school's Christian ethos through an approach to Christian education called, 'What if... learning'. The leadership of worship is highly effective. The leadership of RP is given a high priority and the new subject leader is being effectively supported in developing her role within this key area of school life. RP and the worship programme enable statutory requirements for RE and worship within the church school sector to be met. Supportive links are in place with local church primary schools, Anglican parishes, the deanery and the Diocese. Staff at all levels are extremely well supported in understanding what it means to work in a church school. This contributes to some staff beginning to think about developing their careers further within the church school sector.

SIAMS report January 2016 RET Becket Keys C of E Free School, Brentwood, Essex, CMI5 9DA