

The King's (The Cathedral) School Peterborough

Park Road
Peterborough
PE1 2UE

Diocese: Peterborough

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Dates of inspection: 20th – 21st November 2012

Date of last inspection: 23rd January 2008

Academy's unique reference number: 110898

Headteacher: Gary Longman

Inspector's name and number: Nicholas McKemey 280

School context

The King's (The Cathedral) School is an independent, publicly funded academy of a religious (Church of England) character. The school's Statement of Values and Ethos states;

The King's School is a partnership between students, staff, parents and Governors who seek to create within the School and the community an educational environment in which the strengths and potential of all are realised, the needs of individuals are respected, and high expectations are achieved...The basis for these values is the Christian ethos of the School. Our Motto is 'A Family Achieving Excellence'.

With 1160 pupils, of all abilities, the school is of average size but has a proportionally large Sixth Form of 340 students. Kings School is close to the city centre and pupils come from Peterborough and a wider geographical area. Whilst they mostly represent Anglican and other Christian denominational families there are small numbers of pupils of other faiths. In September 2011 the school admitted 60 pupils in to a new Junior Department and now admits fifteen pupils into Year 3 each year. This will allow all of the Cathedral Choristers to be educated in the Cathedral School, along with a number of non-chorister pupils.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of The King's (The Cathedral) School as a Church of England academy are outstanding

The historical roots of Christian distinctiveness in this Church academy run deep. Today this is characterised by a powerful family ethos that embraces every member of the school community. As a result pupils grow in spiritual and moral knowledge, understanding and wisdom as they progress through their time at the school.

Established strengths

- The Christian family ethos of the school.
- The maturity of pupils' attitudes and behaviour.
- The vision and leadership of the headteacher.
- The effectiveness of the senior leadership and staff as a collegiate team.
- The high aspirations for all the pupils.
- The quality of care and guidance provided for pupils and their families.

Focus for development

- The future of the chaplaincy.
- The crystallisation of specific Christian values in policies and practice (as in the Junior Department),

The King's (The Cathedral) School through its distinctive Christian character, is outstanding at meeting the needs of all learners

"The King's family is not a cliché", said a member of the Sixth Form. Indeed, the school ethos is marked by a strong Christian sense of fellowship and inclusion. The Junior

Department adheres to a specific set of Christian values referenced to entitlements to learn, to be safe and feel valued. This reflects in sharp focus the way the distinctively Christian character of school life results in the flowering of rounded, secure and spiritually and morally mature young people, who are also fully achieving their potential as learners.

Parents report an outstanding quality of care and guidance which underpins and, when required transforms, academic and personal development. High expectations of pupils' behaviour, attitudes to learning and progress are clear and embedded. A learning community in which, for example, older pupils have a systemic role in passing on study skills to younger colleagues is based on an ingrained culture of trust and responsibility. It is noticeable how pupils habitually support each other in learning and social relationships.

The Cathedral Chapter provides an invaluable and symbolic frame of reference for the understanding and knowledge of the Anglican tradition and history. The central presence of the Cathedral in the minds of the pupils fosters the enormous pride they have in their school's heritage and enhances the sense of belonging found in everyone from Year 3 to the Sixth Form. The parents' prayer group see the prayer room as "the centre of the school" and pupils find the Christian signs and symbols around the school building helpful and reassuring. The substantial range of spiritual (including confirmation classes), learning and enrichment activities provided means that the Christian character of the school has a deeply significant impact on pupils' development.

The increasingly effective presence and service of the chaplain has brought a new focus on the sense of an inclusive Christian community. The establishment of the chaplaincy is a work in progress that is meeting growing demand as its significance to the school becomes apparent.

King's School inherits a long tradition of education provided as a Christian service, which has been translated into high achievement and excellent care and support for all in the school community.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

As it is truly collective, worship is the hub around which King's School revolves. Levels of participation and enthusiasm for all forms of worship are exceptionally high. There is variety and depth to worship with a wide range of internal and external contributions, including that of the clergy associated with the school and the chaplain. At every age pupil involvement is integral to all assemblies. The impact of worship and prayer is made all the more meaningful by the pupils' ownership of the process and the trust put in them to design and make valued contributions. Whole school assemblies, incorporating prayer and worship, underpin the ethos of the King's school as a family. Pupils remember the themes and content sufficiently well to make them the stimulus for discussion both at school and at home. Worship, which is formed to include those of other or no faith, is having a significant impact on pupils' spiritual insight and moral development. Regular, cathedral, Eucharist and other forms of service are generating outstanding knowledge and understanding of Anglican tradition and practice.

The worship is nourishing the collective and private prayer life of the pupils and school staff. Pupils on the school council said, "prayer is being with people and sharing" and "we can express our feelings to God". As a result of their experience pupils at the King's School have an outstandingly positive attitude towards collective worship.

The effectiveness of the religious education (RS) is outstanding

RS makes a salient contribution to the Christian character and inclusive nature of the King's school family. The effectiveness of RS as a key element in the character of the school is outstanding as it features excellent learning and progress. This compares well with high standards within the school (in some cases significantly) and by national expectations. There is a significant proportion of outstanding achievement from the Junior Department onwards in RS. Significant progress in Year 9 is continued In Key Stage 4 and in the Sixth Form. This is the result of meticulous and highly effective curriculum planning based on profound subject knowledge and excellent understanding of the learning needs of the pupils. Stimulating

teaching pitches the level of challenge precisely at the point that stretches and motivates. The pupils are outstandingly confident, studious and co-operative learners displaying an expectation, based on experience, that the task ahead will be interesting and productive – they trust their RS teachers. RS lessons are well paced, demanding and consistently build on prior learning. A girl in the Sixth Form summed up her experience of RS as, “accumulative learning”; a tribute to the climate for progress created by the subject leader and teaching team. RS is highly effective in developing knowledge and understanding in terms of theological and philosophical competences. Pupils grasp and articulate the core beliefs and tenets of Abrahamic and other religions in a way that also sharpens their understanding of Christianity.

In Key Stages 2 and 3 RS follows a syllabus in which weight is given to the Christian and Anglican content with church and cathedral visits and clergy input. RS is a context in which individual religious beliefs, ideas and opinions are shared in open and honest but respectful discussion, enhancing social cohesion and goodwill. There are examples of strong friendships developing between pupils with different and firmly held beliefs.

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

The leadership and management of the school as a Church sponsored academy is highly effective in achieving the objectives of the Trust. There is a close working relationship with the Cathedral Chapter. The governing body is involved in the evaluation of the Christian ethos of the school. Staff appointees are expected to support and contribute to the Christian character of the all round education provided.

The King’s School has an outstandingly distinctive Christian character, manifested in embedded habits and routines in worship, learning and conduct. The pupils see themselves as the passing custodians of a precious heritage of Christian education and as lifelong members of the King’s School family. There is, however, no complacency in the governors’ and school leaders’ leadership and management. The school is as effective as it is in care, guidance, achievement and Christian character because of a constant quest for improvement and the translation of Christian values into policies and protocols.

The leadership of the headteacher is the focal point of the distinctive character of school and has the comprehensive support of governors, staff and parents. Pupils reflect the high expectations the school has of them and the school meets the highest expectations that parents and pupils have of it.

The future of the mission of the King’s School has been substantially enhanced by two key innovations. The Junior Department has successfully enlarged the sense of family. It gives the younger pupils the gift of belonging to an outstanding institution and the older members extend their guidance and coaching attributes by supporting their junior peers. The introduction of a school chaplain has added a significant dimension to worship, prayer and the school’s capacity in care, counseling and guidance. The leadership is reflecting on the impact of the chaplaincy initiative and the vision for the way ahead.

There is a powerful mix of implicit and explicit communication of Christian ethos throughout the school, which is the result of excellent management that makes the strong heritage of Christian education effective for today and the future. The school has a succession strategy for Church school leadership and staff and governors benefit from high quality development and training programmes.

