



Name & address of school:	Blue Coat Church of England Comprehensive School Birmingham Street, Walsall, W Mids, WS1 2ND
Type of school:	Secondary
Status:	Voluntary Aided
Diocese:	Lichfield
LEA:	Walsall
Date of inspection:	4/5 December 2006
Date of last inspection:	
School's Unique reference number:	104254
Name of Headteacher:	Mr Ken Yeates
Inspector's name & National Society Number:	Dr David Gentle 209

Context

The school is a specialist school for performing arts. It has approximately 1200 students on role. It is situated in the centre of Walsall on a split site on either side of a road. The school serves a diverse area with above average social and economic deprivation. About one third of students are white British, one quarter are from Pakistani backgrounds and the remainder include those from Caribbean, Bangladeshi and African backgrounds. The present Headteacher joined the school in January 2006.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Blue Coat School as a Church of England School are good.

Established strengths

- Strong vision from the headteacher.
- Good RE department with some excellent teaching and high achievement.
- Strong framework for collective worship with some very good practice.

Focus for development

- Consistency of practice to match the very best.
- Strengthen the role of the Governing Body.

The impact of the distinctive Christian character of the school in meeting the needs of learners is good.

Students value the positive support that they receive from staff. They are able to give examples of how behaviour has been improved through good support such as mentoring. An effective merit system leads to opportunities to win prizes. Students of all faiths appreciate the positive impact of the regular use of prayer in school. Many of them speak of how they have grown to use prayer both within and outside school. Students are proud of the very good relationships between all members of the school community. There is very little poor behaviour although movement is sometimes a little boisterous. Relationships with teachers are generally very good with few exceptions. Teachers often calmly refer to the need for mutual respect when maintaining good order. There is an effective drive to combat lateness that is designed to minimise confrontation. Students frequently contribute well to

community programmes. An excellent example of this is the compilation of a prayer book by students. This was sold to raise funds for an African appeal. Students are encouraged by the good thematic displays. This includes reference to the strong Christian Union and School Council. Students are encouraged by the good displays of positive achievement. All rooms seen had excellent display. The amount of specifically Christian display and artefacts in rooms varied from excellent to satisfactory.

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

There is a strong drive and clear framework for the delivery of collective worship. Students reflect well on the whole school collective worship. This is held weekly in the local church. Students show positive engagement in year group collective worship. They are able to relate well to stories and illustrations and fully engage in prayer. Some opportunities to create an appropriate environment, such as the use of cross, candle, music, were missed. Form collective worship was seen to create a powerful spiritual environment. The weekly theme was extended effectively to current affairs through students' prayers. Students report that the impact of form collective worship is variable. Students often gain from contributing to worship. Students of all faiths spoke of benefiting from collective worship. Students have very good knowledge and understanding of Anglican practice.

The effectiveness of Religious Education is good.

Standards of achievement and attainment in RE are very good. There is some excellent teaching. Good strategies are used to involve students in the learning process. The use of peer assessment is particularly effective. Lessons are varied and have good pace. Visual aids and other learning materials are well prepared. Teachers employ effective strategies to keep students on track. Teachers dealt well with the occasional interruption to learning. Students rate RE highly as a subject. They take care over their work and contribute well in lessons. Lessons have a very strong spiritual and moral content. Students' enthusiastic involvement in lessons demonstrates good impact. Lesson content is well balanced between promoting Christian beliefs and understanding other faiths. Students of all faiths are brought to respect the beliefs of each other. RE is a strong feature of the curriculum. It is a compulsory element of KS3 and KS4. It has now been introduced to the sixth form.

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

The head shows a very strong vision for development as a church school. He signals this very clearly to the whole school community. There is particular emphasis on collective worship and the use of prayer. The school prospectus indicates the school's distinctive character clearly. However, this is not always followed through in school documents and policies. Some governors are very supportive of the school. Some regularly attend the Friday whole school collective worship. Pupils talk of this as a very positive link. It is very good practice that the Chair of Governors attends staff training days. Formal monitoring by the Governing Body is not fully embedded. The school has introduced a sixth element, spiritual development, to the ECM agenda. This is very good practice in promoting the Christian vision for the school. The School Council and a student conference are very effective ways of including learners in evaluating the school's progress. The recent appointment of a school Chaplain is a significant factor in promoting the school's mission.