The Spirit of Bishop Wordsworth’s School

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Introduction

1. The purpose of the Spirit of the School project is to help understand and to help develop the spirit of the school. The aim of the project is to answer three questions:

- What is the spirit of the school?
- What of the school promotes the spirit of the school?
- What do pupils and teachers and others do to contribute to the spirit of the school?

An additional, complementary, key question was added at the request of Bishop Wordsworth’s School:

- What kind of Christian community is this school?

2. Answering the questions (using an investigation ‘toolkit’) provided a guide to the spirit of the school, and a guide to discovering the spirit of the school. Some schools have more spirit, some less: all schools can develop their spirit. The spirit of the school is, I believe, generated by and in turn supports and promotes three dimensions of humanity – community, learning and dialogue – and will also be determined by the nature of leadership practiced in the school.

- Community is described by relationships, including opportunities for friendship. For determining ‘what kind of Christian community?’, use is made of educational interpretations of the Church of England’s ‘five marks of mission’ (Matter 2009, Anglican Consultative Council 2012), asking how the school promotes justice, peace and equality, how the school responds to the needs of others, how the school treasures and sustains creation, what role Jesus has in the school, and how the school teaches about God and the Bible.

- Learning is a creative process, with school learning centred on becoming human.

- Through dialogue people make community and learning: dialogue is how people come to be themselves by relating to others.

3. This report is on Bishop Wordsworth’s School. It is a Church of England secondary grammar (selective) school for approximately 900 boys, which became an academy in 2011. The school’s ‘ethos statement’ (from the website
http://www.bws.wilts.sch.uk/), says:

Recognising its historic foundation, the School will preserve and develop its religious character in accordance with the principles of the Church of England and in partnership with the Church at parish and diocesan level.

The School aims to serve its community by providing an education of the highest quality within the context of Christian belief and practice. It encourages an understanding of the meaning and significance of faith and promotes Christian values through the experience it offers to its pupils.

The prospectus explains further:

Our situation in the Cathedral Close offers a constant reminder of the foundations that underpin school life. We help boys to grow spiritually and, while competition is an intrinsic part of Bishop’s, it is balanced by compassion and respect for others.

Our Church school ethos permeates the fabric of life here – from regular worship in the Cathedral and our Chapel, through religious education, to the way we operate as a community. We welcome boys of all faiths or none, but the Christian values of concern for one other, respect and tolerance provide a moral compass that influences everyone, both personally and culturally’.

4. The report is based on notes made on conversations and interviews throughout a day-long visit (on 22nd May 2012), plus transcriptions from the 165 minutes of taped activities with 32 pupils (from years 7, 9, 10 and 13) and eight teachers and the writing completed during that time by all those who were taped.

My thanks to Dr Stuart Smallwood, Headmaster, Nuala Power, Head of Religious Studies, Graham Lloyd, Deputy Headmaster, and all the staff, pupils and parents, for giving permission for this research to be carried out, and for their wisdom, insight and enthusiasm shown during my visit.

Julian Stern
11th October 2012
Executive summary

5. This is a summary of fourteen key issues related to the spirit of Bishop Wordsworth’s School, based on the detailed information in the rest of the report.

i  It felt good for pupils simply to be allowed to attend the school.

ii Whole-school events were more inclusive when pupils had active roles in them.

iii Failure was not a cause of isolation or rejection: pupils still felt included.

iv It was through activities, not merely ‘symbols’, that the school community was demonstrated.

v The sense of community stretches back in time; there is an opportunity for it to stretch more widely geographically, and for it to be more strongly future-directed.

vi The physical environment sometimes works in favour of community, sometimes against it.

vii How does the school promote justice, peace and equality? All are promoted to an extent; within the school, justice, especially, and equality are perhaps promoted more than peace.

viii How does the school respond to the needs of others? This is particularly strong within the school and for the pupils.

ix How does the school treasure and sustain creation? There are opportunities for more work on this aspect of the school.

x What role does Jesus have in the school? There appear to be opportunities for the life and teachings of Jesus to have a higher profile in the school.

xi How does the school teach about God and the Bible? This is achieved in a relatively traditional Anglican style, and it is done in a way that is, broadly, inclusive.

xii There is good evidence of magnanimity amongst staff.

xiii There are opportunities for even more engaged leadership by pupils.

xiv The rhetoric of the school is, broadly, lived out in the activities of the school.
What is the Spirit of the School?

6. Following work on spirituality as essentially relational, involving ‘relationship with the self, with ‘the other’, with others, with groups (communities and institutions) and with the world (or ‘the whole’)’ (Stern and James 2006, p 901), the first phase of the Spirit of the School research, based in thirteen schools in the UK and Hong Kong, developed a definition of the spirit of the school:

The spirited school is an inclusive community with magnanimous leadership that enables friendship through dialogue in order to create and evaluate valuable or beautiful meanings, valuable or beautiful things, and good people. (Stern 2009, p 161.)

A longer version of that definition, with some added explanation, is this:

The spirited school is an inclusive (bringing in from past times and local and distant places) community (people treating each other as ends in themselves) with magnanimous leadership (aiming for the good of the led) that enables (but does not insist on) friendship (by overcoming fear and loneliness and allowing for solitude) through dialogue (not monologue) in order to create and evaluate valuable or beautiful meanings, valuable or beautiful things (including the environment), and good (real) people. (Stern 2009, p 160-1.)

This report is based on that definition, in describing the spirit of Bishop Wordsworth’s School, with the particular emphasis requested by the school on what kind of Christian community the school is or wants to be, along with the sense of magnanimous leadership. Other aspects of the spirit of the school – notably, aspects of friendship, dialogue, and ‘creating and evaluating meanings things and people’ – are dealt with in less detail or, as with the ‘creating’, subsumed within other topics.

The spirited school is inclusive

i It felt good for pupils simply to be allowed to attend the school.

ii Whole-school events were more inclusive when pupils had active roles in them.

iii Failure was not a cause of isolation or rejection: pupils still felt included.

7. Schools are required to be ‘inclusive’ (as in Frederickson and Cline 2002, and as evaluated in Ofsted 2000, CSIE 2000), and this is not simply a statutory issue. How people are included in schools is a personal matter, an educational matter, and a spiritual matter. A person may apparently be included, but only by rejecting elements that are important to them. For example, a requirement to ‘set aside’ religious (or political) beliefs or practices in order to be ‘included’ in the school, is not truly inclusive. The inclusive nature of Bishop Wordsworth’s School is illustrated here in terms of inclusion within and between groups.

8. It was unusual, in the Spirit of the School research, to find participants saying that simply coming to the school made them feel included. However, as an oversubscribed selective school with an entrance exam, it was less surprising to find this at Bishop Wordsworth’s School. A year 13 pupil referred back to his ‘first day at the school’, having completed an exam which most did not succeed at, was one of the most memorable times the school made him feel good about himself, and a year
7 boy felt happy 'just getting here'. Being included in the school is seen by both respondents as exclusive, too, of course, and at one point another more negative aspect of inclusion was mentioned by someone in year 13 who said that 'integration is more or less imposed'. So, in what other – good or less good – ways does the school include people?

9. Year 13s referred to the Easter Cathedral service in which they had roles to play. This was complemented by a year 7 pupil who suggested there might be more activities that involved the whole school actively, and not simply going to whole-school assemblies where ‘you just sit and face straight ahead’. There were different views on how included more ‘solitary’ pupils might feel. A year 13 pupil thought that the school hosted such pupils well – for example in the library. According to someone in year 10, this is true ‘if your academics are outstanding’. One pupil in year 10 felt particularly included when he went to the office when his grades were not goo and they ‘made me realise that I do need to work a lot harder’ – and this has ‘been good for me I think’. Including people by supporting those who are not doing so well, and by hosting those who are more solitary, are both good, positive, signs of inclusion. A rugby match that the school lost was, surprisingly, described by one year 13 pupil as a time the school made him feel good about himself – in part as it was the last match of the season (and therefore of the pupil’s time in the school). However, one pupil in year 9 suggested the school might demonstrate ‘more consideration for how people like to work’, and a teacher suggested ‘spreading the extra-curricular involvement’ in order help include the ‘marginalised groups’ especially those in the 6th form.

10. One teacher noted the degree of mutual support in the department, especially following a period of absence, although another noted that staff being in department ‘sections’ tends to ‘isolate each group’. Another teacher who was part-time described how included they were. An interesting example was given by a teacher soon to leave the school, who explained that the number of people – staff and pupils – who expressed their sadness was itself a way of making the teacher feel included.

The spirited school is a community

iv It was through activities, not merely ‘symbols’, that the school community was demonstrated.

v The sense of community stretches back in time; there is an opportunity for it to stretch more widely geographically, and for it to be more strongly future-directed.

vi The physical environment sometimes works in favour of community, sometimes against it.

11. This section describes how schools are communities. It is based on Macmurray’s description of community (see Stern 2001). Macmurray suggests that schools are necessarily communities – group in which people treat each other as ‘ends in themselves’ rather than as ‘means to ends’. Such communities are different to those social groups (or ‘societies’) where people have an external purpose: communities are more personal. A community is a ‘personal, not an impersonal unity of persons’ (Macmurray 1991b, p 147). ‘Like a society, a community is a group which acts together; but unlike a mere society its members are in communion with one another; they constitute a fellowship’ (Macmurray 1996, p 166). Hence, whereas a society ‘is an organization of functions’, a community ‘is a unity of persons as persons’ (Macmurray 1996, p 166). That is why examination results, an
external ‘function’ of schooling, cannot be its main aim. Flutter and Fielding refer to Oakley’s suggestion that ‘we are often preoccupied with young people’s ‘becoming’, with their status as “would-be” adults – rather than with the here and now state of “being” (Rudduck and Fielding 2006, p 223). For Macmurray, the ‘personal’ is defined in terms of the possibility of friendship. Indeed, he suggests that ‘[a]ll meaningful knowledge is for the sake of action, and all meaningful action for the sake of friendship’ (Macmurray 1991a, p 15).

12. A common theme of the *Spirit of the School* project was of ‘working together’, linked to an interpretation of a biblical text by the philosopher Macmurray. Macmurray uses the biblical account of the Good Samaritan to support the Christian nature of community as activity, not belief. In that account, Jesus is asked to say ‘who is my neighbour?’. As Macmurray says, ‘the Samaritan shared his material possessions with the Jew in his need, while the priest and the Levite made their natural community as members of the same nation and the same faith an ideal matter which did not express itself in action’ (Macmurray 1996, p 111). That is, community cannot be assumed, as a result of common beliefs or any nominal membership: it can only be the result of particular activities (quoted in Stern 2009, Chapter 2). At Bishop Wordsworth’s School, how did the school work as a community, and more specifically, what kind of Christian community is it?

13. The sense of community as working together (as in pupils and teachers working together) was stressed by a sixth former, who said that ‘the school shouldn’t … go overboard to foster a kind of school community ethos’ as ‘that comes naturally from having the right activities’. An imposed communality, he continued, ‘can cause resentment’. One year 7 boy suggested ‘maybe the older pupils could have links with the younger children, because at the moment the year 7s don’t really have anything to do with the year 12s and 13s’. Whole-school assemblies were appreciated by a year 10 pupil for recognising and rewarding achievements including extra-curricular activities such as Young Engineer and Duke of Edinburgh. Teachers were also conscious of the need to work together, with opportunities for ‘greater cohesion between the staff’ if there was ‘more willingness to accept change’ and to see change ‘as an opportunity to move on’ together. This theme of change is present throughout the transcripts, and it is important to consider in some detail. The school ‘community’ does not only consist of the present pupils and staff; it goes back in time to earlier generations, and stretches more widely, to the broader community (including families and others in the city and regions), and forward to future generations. A clear strength of the school is the sense of history, over 120 years and, as one person said, over 2000 years (through the church foundation, presumably). Yet this is not unambiguously celebrated. ‘I find there’s been quite a lot of resistance to new ideas’, one teacher said, and it ‘makes the staff splinter into small groups’. Perhaps, this person continued, if the school tried ‘new things’, then that ‘has potential to make things more of a community’ as all the staff would be ‘working towards making things better rather than resisting’. This is not about change vs stasis: it is not about two groups of people, one of which wants change whilst the other wants everything to remain the same. Instead, it is about how people can be working together in community, being involved in what is happening – whether that involves change or stasis. This was described by one teacher in terms of ‘empathy’ and ‘more of an understanding and appreciation of what goes on’.

14. By the time pupils get into the sixth form, there is more of a sense of community between teachers and pupils, ‘because teachers can talk more about their subjects’. However, as one year 13 pupil said, this is matched by something of a separation between the sixth form community and the rest of the pupils – especially since the
building of the sixth form block. Tension between year groups was noted by another sixth former, and this might be reduced by more support across year groups – with older pupils helping younger pupils, and, according to a teacher, by ‘increased empathy for the work + achievements of others (adults + children)’. In general, however, the school is said to be very good at responding to the needs of the pupils – including pupils responding to the needs of other pupils.

15. Although sixth formers noted their closeness to teachers, there were some indications that pupils and teachers could be a little divided. Closeness between pupils and teachers was well represented, as in the celebrations, noted by a year 10 pupil, when the rugby team beat ‘one of the better schools in the country’, and ‘we were all celebrating’ and ‘the teachers were celebrating as well because they knew how much effort we put in and we knew how much effort they put in and it was like a mutual celebration’. But another year 10 pupil said ‘with students there seems to be a community … but occasionally there can be a gap between teachers and students’. He continued that ‘it sometimes seems like two contrasting quarters’. Along with the work that is going on, community can be helped or hindered by the physical environment. This too has positive and negative influences at Bishop Wordsworth’s School. The ‘cramped site with very little space for the boys to exercise’ was pointed out as a negative by one teacher, as it is ‘a big issue because it’s a source of conflict in all sorts of different ways’. ‘We could do with more rules on places like the yard’, a year 7 pupil noted, because it involves a lot of ‘rough and tumble, so year 7’s never go, because year 10s just barge into you’. Sixth formers valued having a new sixth form block and at the same time realised that it cut them off, to any extent, from connections with the rest of the school.

What kind of Christian community is this school?

Here, the ‘five marks of mission’ of the Church of England (Matter 2009) are used:

vii How does the school promote justice, peace and equality? All are promoted to an extent; within the school, justice, especially, and equality are perhaps promoted more than peace.

viii How does the school respond to the needs of others? This is particularly strong within the school and for the pupils.

ix How does the school treasure and sustain creation? There are opportunities for more work on this aspect of the school.

x What role does Jesus have in the school? There appear to be opportunities for the life and teachings of Jesus to have a higher profile in the school.

xi How does the school teach about God and the Bible? This is achieved in a relatively traditional Anglican style, and it is done in a way that is, broadly, inclusive.

16. There are various ways in which the school promotes justice, peace and equality, and this appears to be something of a strength of the school. A year 13 boy even noted that inequality ‘helps the school’, not in itself but because it means that ‘the person who does more work gets a better mark’. Inequality is therefore helpful in terms of promoting a sense of justice – or ‘just deserts’. Justice is also important to some of the pupils in year 10, notwithstanding one pupil saying that this ‘should be done at home’ as ‘it’s not really the job of the school’ to promote justice, peace and
equality. It is the ‘small injustices’ that are noted, such as queue-Jumping (the school should ‘pick up and stop small things such as queue-Jumping or cheating or copying’). One pupil complimented the school for its sense of a ‘bigger’ justice, rather than a procedural enforcement of rules. The example he gave was of a teacher who was prepared to show appropriate leniency – or what Aristotle would call ‘equity’, which ‘corrects the deficiencies of legal justice’ (Aristotle 1976, p 198) – in dealing with an incident between two pupils where, if narrow rules had been followed, at least one of the pupils involved would have been resentful, and the two pupils would not have become friends. One teacher suggested that the school was stronger on justice and equality than on peace, in part because of the lack of room on the site. Younger pupils, in particular, sometimes feel unsafe, and there is a need to oppose bullying quite activity.

17. The school responds to the needs of others both within and beyond the school gates. More was said about the needs of others within the school, especially – understandably – the needs of pupils: ‘if you need help there is at least one school facility that you can go to for help’ (as a year 13 pupil said). There was a great deal of talk about sensitive support, when pupils are doing well (as in celebrations) and when they are not doing so well (and need additional help), and examples of these are given throughout this report. It is clear that pupils in each of the year groups appreciate support that works across year groups, and would value even more of that. They also talk of supportive teachers, and the particular pleasure of being complimented by a teacher known to be ‘tough’. Teachers talk of mutual support amongst staff, and of course of supporting pupils. There was much less said of supporting people beyond the school (other than the quotation in the following paragraph). No doubt such support is given in various ways, but this might be an area either for further development or at least for a bit of a raised profile.

18. How the school treasures and sustains creation is more lightly touched on by those who participated in the research, although a year 10 pupil wrote of a wish for ‘more opportunities to be creative’ which would provide ‘opportunities to shine’, and a year 7 pupil said ‘we’re quite good at responding to people in other countries’ as there are ‘lots of fund-raisers’. A teacher noted that the pupils were probably more ‘treasured’ than were the staff: ‘we’re very good at treasuring the creativity and success of the boys, I just think we’re not very good at it with the staff’. There is some evidence that those within the school are more ‘treasured’ than are those beyond the school gates. The physical environment of the school was discussed (and this is described in other parts of this report), with a value given to the good facilities and a concern with the relatively cramped campus and a wish for doing ‘more on recycling and things like that’ (from a year 7 pupil). Links to the Cathedral were valued – including services held there – but, perhaps inevitably, the pupils did not take as much joy as tourists take from the physical environment of Salisbury. Environmental issues are significant in political discourses but these barely got a mention in the interviews. Perhaps a higher profile, therefore, might be able to be given to this aspect of the world – especially as it is one of the ‘five marks of mission’ of Anglicanism.

19. A pupil in year 13 noted that in ‘the chapel services and readings and prayers’ there is ‘a sense of religion, muscular Christianity’ and that ‘it’s important to maintain the virtues of Christianity even if you are secular’. He continued, helpfully, that ‘it’s not forced upon you but it’s there’. The role Jesus has in the school was discussed in this and various other ways, along with how the school teaches about God and the Bible. ‘We have RS lessons’, says one year 9 pupil, but ‘if they [the teachers] are trying to sort out our problems they don’t use religion as such’. ‘The school is not
wholly religious’, another year 9 pupil said, and ‘I think it’s better off as it is’. Even where explicitly religious activities take place, another suggested, such as in ‘prayers and hymns in assembly’, it is ‘normally stuff relating to schoolwork and whatnot … like working hard and let us be the best we can be, but He [i.e. Jesus] doesn’t really make much of an appearance in the school’. A pupil in the same year group contrasted the Christianity of the school with that of his own ‘more fun’ church. The latter is ‘not so much orderly and everything with prayers written down and everything’, in contrast to the school’s ‘rather classic’ hymns which can ‘get a bit dull’. He continues that ‘something a bit more interesting would be a bit nicer’ to ‘make it a bit more modern … a bit more appealing’. However, the ‘conservative’ approach of the school has its value for pupils, one of whom (in year 9) noted that ‘there’s actually quite a lot of Christianity around – just subtly’. A teacher suggested there was ‘more god than Jesus’, and another said that Christianity was ‘very high profile’, whilst allowing pupils ‘to discuss opinions freely’. ‘I think there’s a really good balance here’, another teacher said, ‘coming from a perspective whereby I’m a Christian but I’m not a regular church-goer, and I feel very comfortable in this environment’. ‘As a non-Christian I’d second that’ was the next contribution to the interview. ‘You don’t get the resistance to RE teaching about Jesus and the Bible that I’ve experienced in other schools, there isn’t any here, they just accept it at face value at first and as they grow older there is questioning but no resistance or why do we have to do this’, concluded the teacher.

20. It is tempting to ascribe a good understanding of Anglicanism to a year 7 pupil who said of teaching about God and the Bible that ‘they sort of teach it in the middle so it’s almost too much for people who don’t like it but not enough for people who do follow it’. Another pupil in the same year provided a more positive view, saying ‘I think there’s pretty much just enough, because it’s quite a big part of the school, but nothing is completely based on it so if you don’t follow that religion – ’. Less positive was the year 7 pupil who described assemblies as ‘a bit odd’ for him as an atheist, ‘because everyone like bows their heads around you so … if you’re the only people with their heads up it’s just a bit nervey a bit strange, self-conscious’. Year 10 pupils were keen to have ‘more variety of religions that are actively talked about’, as, other than in RS lessons, ‘we could do more about Buddhism’. There were compliments for the school’s ‘RE day’.

21. It was Aristotle who best described leadership in terms of magnanimity (megalopsuchia or, more literally, being ‘great-souled’), which he described as the ‘crown of the virtues’ (Aristotle 1976, p 154). Understanding hierarchical organisations means understanding the morality of hierarchy, and this is often hidden in current debates that stress democracy whilst leaving less democratic organisations morally adrift. The theme has been taken up more recently by Sennett (2003) in his account of ‘respect in a world of inequality’. It is a concern to understand how leaders contribute to the spirit of the school that underpins this theme of the research, as leaders need the right attitude to people (as described in Stern 2002 and Stern 2007, p 144-152), and need to know – in a policy context in which ‘every child matters’ (DfES 2004) – what matters. What matters to school
leaders, to teachers, and to pupils, and what they each think the others believe about what matters, is a sensitive guide to the spirit of schools as hierarchical organisations. Leadership within Bishop Wordsworth's School was not as significant a theme as it was in some other Spirit of the School research. However, it is worth highlighting some of the leadership issues that were raised.

22. Perhaps the best example of magnanimity came from a simple description by a year 13 pupil of a teacher's response to a piece of his work.

I remember when I got an essay back and next to one of my paragraphs I'd got loads and loads of annotations from the teacher, which were then all crossed out, and a note was underneath where she said something along the lines of she thought I'd made a mistake and then she read through it and actually what I was talking about was about things that were beyond the course, so it was like congratulations for that, it was quite nice

This was one of the examples the pupils gave of the times when the school made them feel good about themselves. It is a very strong example of a teacher being able to be ‘big enough’ to admit that she had got things wrong, and this level of magnanimity was clearly recognised by the pupil. Assessment feedback that is ‘spirited’ in this way has been described – as part of the Spirit of the School project – in Stern and Backhouse 2011, and it might be interesting for the school to follow up that work further. Pupils welcomed ‘constructive criticism’ from teachers: a year 9 respondent said ‘they don’t say you’re rubbish at this, so it is constructive criticism’.

23. In terms of leadership by pupils, there were several mentions of the school council. It was described as ‘restricted by the school having this massive history and things take a long time to happen’, so that ‘there’s quite a clash between contemporary and tradition’. However, it was also described positively with a year 7 pupil valuing it as ‘we’ve got members of the school council, and we meet once a month, every half term’ so ‘you’re not scared of going to someone bigger than you’. However, a limitation – perhaps a limitation in the magnanimity of the school’s leadership – was described by a pupil in year 9 who said that ‘it’s a pretty tight ship, there are not a lot of changes, big changes, kind of same systems always’. Even then, he qualified his criticism, saying ‘but that’s sometimes quite good so there isn’t something new you have to get used to’. A teacher said something similar, encouraging more opportunities for change, based on the ‘real world’ and ‘what the boys are interested in’.

24. The headmaster was keen to understand the relationship of the school’s ‘rhetoric’ (e.g. its formal statements of ethos and purpose) to its reality. The two statements quoted in the introduction to this report (from the school’s website, and from the prospectus) are the basis of an initial analysis of the relationship between rhetoric and reality:

| Recognising its historic foundation … | The history of the school is mentioned by most groups, and is therefore clearly and widely ‘recognised’. As has been said elsewhere in this report, there are positive and negative features of the history, including a concern expressed by several respondents that the ‘weight’ of history should not prevent further development and change. Perhaps some work might be helpful on the ways in |

which the foundation is relevant to the future of the school.

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<tr>
<th>the School will preserve and develop its religious character …</th>
<th>There is a strong sense of the religious character of the school, again – inevitably – with both positive and negative aspects. On balance, this seems to be a strength of the school.</th>
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<td>in accordance with the principles of the Church of England …</td>
<td>Analysis is provided according to the ‘five marks of mission’ of the Anglican Communion. Areas for further development include the ‘reality’ of supporting the needs of others, and treasuring creation, beyond the school gates, and ways of continuously reviewing the relationship of the Christian principles to those in the school who are not Christian. However, once again, there is a range of good evidence to show that these principles are part of the ‘reality’ of Bishop Wordsworth’s School.</td>
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<td>and in partnership with the Church at parish and diocesan level.</td>
<td>Examples were given of very specific partnership work with the Cathedral. Less was said (and less was asked about) work with parishes or the diocese as a whole. (This is a limitation of the research, not of the school!)</td>
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<td>The School aims to serve its community …</td>
<td>There is a very strong sense of the school serving its community (the community <strong>within</strong> the school), with supportive links across all groups, and a wish for even more of these. There was less evidence of service to the community beyond the school (geographically) or to future generations. There was more evidence, however, of an active relationship with previous generations of staff and pupils.</td>
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<td>by providing an education of the highest quality …</td>
<td>Educational achievement was a high priority for the pupils, with rewards for achievement recognised as of value – to a greater extent than in most of the other schools in the <strong>Spirit of the School</strong> project. Aspects of the ‘quality’ of the education that could be further developed (such as those relating to ‘treasuring creation’ or the range of religions having an influence) have been mentioned in the report, but these should not take away from the considerable achievements in this area.</td>
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<td>within the context of Christian belief and practice.</td>
<td>Christian belief and some aspects of practice were widely discussed. The ‘context’ of such belief and practice is less clear outside RS lessons, assemblies, and services, but that is hardly surprising. Opportunities for more of this could be developed, such as in geography and science (relating to ‘treasuring creation’) and history, and no doubt a number of other subjects. However, the context is already clearly present.</td>
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<td>It encourages an understanding of the meaning and significance of faith …</td>
<td>This is present, and the ‘balance’ of religion and religiosity seems broadly welcomed by staff and pupils. Specific issues of faith were rarely mentioned, and there could be more work on its meaning and significance, as suggested elsewhere.</td>
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and promotes Christian values through the experience it offers to its pupils. | The values – represented in the five marks of mission – are indeed promoted.  

Our situation in the Cathedral Close offers a constant reminder of the foundations that underpin school life. | Perhaps, although this was not particularly significant to the pupils, it seemed – at least, in this research.  

We help boys to grow spiritually … | Even by the end of year 7, the pupils seem to have developed a keen sense of themselves and of their relationships to each other, to the wider world, and, for those who were religious, to the divine.  

and, while competition is an intrinsic part of Bishop’s, it is balanced by compassion and respect for others. | This was noted by many of the respondents. Competition was described as ‘healthy’, and compassion and respect were demonstrated. There are some issues related to the rather cramped campus, especially for younger children, but these are clearly being considered and dealt with as much as possible.  

Our Church school ethos permeates the fabric of life here – from regular worship in the Cathedral and our Chapel, through religious education, to the way we operate as a community. | This is broadly achieved. A Church of England ethos brings with it all the strength and all the ambiguities of an Established Church. Strengths include the church’s and the school’s inclusivity and the support for variety. More ambiguous were the church’s and the school’s tendency to compromise (on religious issues) in a way that does not necessarily please everyone and may end up pleasing no-one.  

We welcome boys of all faiths or none, but the Christian values of concern for one other, respect and tolerance provide a moral compass that influences everyone, both personally and culturally. | There is good evidence of pupils and teachers with a range of different beliefs being well catered for, and broadly supporting the Christianity said to be underpinning the values. Even more strong support was evidenced for the values of respect and tolerance (as described in more secular terms). A somewhat raised profile of ‘other religions’ and of non-religious ways of life, without rejecting or ignoring the school’s foundation, might help further ‘welcome’ the range of people already in the school.
Bibliography


Centre for Studies on Inclusive Education (CSIE) (2000) Index for inclusion; Bristol: CSIE.


