

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

The West Grantham Academy St John's	Trent Road, Grantham, Lincolnshire NG31 7XQ
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Satisfactory
Diocese	Lincoln
Previous SIAMS inspection grade:	Satisfactory
Date of academy conversion	September 2012
Name of multi-academy trust	West Grantham Academies
Date of inspection	14 October 2016
Date of last inspection	29 November 2012
School's unique reference number	136478
Acting headteacher	Ian Woolerton
Inspector's name and number	Anne Lumb 333

School context

This is a larger than average primary academy which was established in 2012 following the amalgamation of two primary academies within the Trust. The children are taught on two sites arranged into Lower School and Upper School. The academy has experienced significant changes in senior leadership since the previous inspection. Since July 2015, St John's has had 3 different headteachers. The current acting headteacher has been in place since March 2016 and is in position until August 2017 to ensure stability. The academy is currently being supported by The Melton Mowbray Trust. Most pupils are from a White British background and speak English as their first language. However, a small but significant number of pupils speak English as an additional language. Of these, most are new arrivals from the European Union. The proportion of pupils eligible for the pupil premium is more than twice the national figure. The proportion of pupils supported through a graduated approach of special educational needs is above the national average. The school is located at the far end of the parish from the local Anglican church.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of West Grantham Academy St John's as a Church of England academy are satisfactory

- The explicit Christian nature of the academy's values are being developed as they make a growing impact on the pupils' learning and behaviour.
- An increasing awareness of each child as a valued child of God provides a context in which staff are prepared to 'go above and beyond' for the children.
- The new senior leadership team display Christian values of honesty and integrity which is engendering an atmosphere of increasing trust within the academy community.

Areas to improve

- Make clear links between the academy's Christian values and the biblical teachings on which they are based so that children articulate a clearer understanding of their Christian foundations.
- Clarify distinctions between, and expectations of, 'collective worship' and 'assembly' particularly ensuring that appropriate opportunities for reflection and prayer support the spiritual development of all members of the academy community.
- Explore the meaning of prayer within religious education (RE) so that children access appropriate opportunities for prayer and reflection.
- Develop effective monitoring and evaluation of the academy's Christian distinctiveness to ensure that Christian values become effectively embedded within the life of the academy community.

The academy, through its distinctive Christian character, is satisfactory at meeting the needs of all learners

Following a period of significant instability, senior leaders are establishing an appropriate learning environment based on the values of creativity, wisdom and responsibility. Staff and children are exploring these values in particular through the personal, social, health education programme and within RE lessons; making 'good choices' is a recurring theme. The 'St John's Six' rules on behaviour are well embedded. However, opportunities to link these values and rules to specific Bible teaching are often missed. As these values are becoming embedded the behaviour of learners is now generally good. Arguments between children are usually settled using values such as 'forgiveness' and children are often observed collaborating on their learning in the classroom. Pupils make expected progress as they move through the school to attain standards that are below national averages. Exclusion and attendance are dealt with appropriately as the behaviour and attendance officers work closely with pupils, parents and staff to ensure that individual children receive the support they need to flourish within the school environment. The work of the 'Pastures' unit is highly valued. Staff in the unit speak of the spiritual nature of working in a church academy. They talk of the 'togetherness' and 'caring' experienced by all members of the academy community through the provision of 'safe spaces' in the unit. An atmosphere of honesty and openness is modelled by senior leaders so that staff and children feel secure.

A new action plan for spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development is currently being developed. Links between this plan and the academy's Christian character are therefore in the early stages of development. There are currently limited opportunities for developing multicultural awareness. However, the SMSC development plan makes provision for such opportunities to be introduced.

Recent changes to the curriculum timetable have ensured that RE now has a more central role in the academy with discrete RE lessons taking place each week. The impact on the pupils' knowledge and understanding, and therefore the contribution of RE to the Christian character of the school, is in the early stages of development. The RE co-ordinator is attending diocesan training on the use of the new 'Understanding Christianity' resource and has received effective support from the diocesan RE adviser.

The impact of collective worship on the academy community is satisfactory

A recent review of the collective worship policy has clarified the importance of worship within the life of the academy. Senior leaders now plan and deliver a more coherent programme for collective worship. This planning is in the early stages of development. Consequently the impact of collective worship on the academy community has not yet been explored and this is reflected in the development points within the academy self-evaluation.

The academy's Christian values are being explored more consistently through collective worship and links to biblical teachings are developing. Worship times are distinctively Christian. The children are well-behaved and speak enthusiastically of learning stories from the Bible. They are increasing their knowledge about the Bible, for example, it having 66 books and being translated into many different languages. Although a candle is often used to distinguish between assembly and collective worship time, this distinction has not yet been clarified sufficiently for children and staff to appreciate the contribution of collective worship to spiritual development. The Lord's Prayer is now said regularly in collective worship with an age-appropriate version being used in the lower school setting. Although children are very familiar with the Lord's Prayer, there is some confusion over the meaning of the words contained in the prayer. Prayer is becoming an important focus within the school day. Prayers are said before lunch and parents comment that children are asking to say the school prayer at home.

Opportunities or 'moments' for reflection are provided within collective worship and reflective spaces are being developed in classrooms. However, these spaces are usually used to reflect on the children's learning and opportunities to reflect on a wider range of experiences can be missed.

Children are increasingly being given ownership of acts of collective worship. Recently a whole-school celebration of harvest involved Year 6 pupils leading with contributions being made by each class and children giving food for

the local Food Bank. Staff comment that the 'whole-school harvest festival was amazing!' Children speak enthusiastically of celebrating together as a community and of saying the Lord's Prayer together.

The academy's self-evaluation has identified the teaching of a Christian understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit as a development point.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the academy as a church academy is satisfactory

A new senior leadership team is working closely with the nearby secondary academy, also a member of the Trust to re-establish the academy's Christian distinctiveness. The academy's vision, to enable every child to achieve and flourish, is being related more closely to Christian values and Christian teaching. There has not yet been time to monitor and evaluate and therefore articulate the impact of values on the Christian character of the academy. Reports on improvements to the academy's Christian distinctiveness are now a regular item on the agenda for board directors' meetings. A focus of senior leaders and trust directors has been securing the stability of the current teaching staff so that academic achievement can improve.

Partnerships with local churches are developing. They have increased involvement in the life of the academy particularly through collective worship. This is enabling staff and pupils to gain a better understanding of the impact of the Christian faith on the lives of Christians. Partnerships with the local community are also developing. The local community church supports the school by leading collective worship, contributing to RE and supporting staff at parent drop-in sessions. The police community support officer visits regularly. Links with the diocese are maintained through attending the local Church Schools Festival and working with the diocesan RE adviser. The academy works closely with parents to secure their support. Parents comment that there have been improvements in communication between school and home and that they are being given more opportunities to engage with the school.

Arrangements for RE and collective worship meet statutory requirements.

SIAMS report October 2016 West Grantham Academy St John's, Grantham, Lincolnshire. NG31 7XQ.