



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Ark William Parker Academy

Parkstone Road, Hastings,
East Sussex,
TN34 2NT

Previous SIAS grade: n/a

Current SIAMS grade: Satisfactory

Diocese: Chichester

Local authority: n/a

Date of inspection: 30 June and 1 July 2016

Date of last inspection: n/a

Academy's unique reference number: 139821

Acting Principal: Terry Kelly

Inspector's name and number: Pamela Draycott 161

School context

This boy's academy is housed on a large and well-kept site, sharing a sixth form with a nearby girls' academy. It became an ARK academy in 2013. Since then there have been 3 principals, including the current interim principal who took up post in April 2016. Most pupils are White British with a small number from various minority ethnic backgrounds. Approximately 40% come from Christian backgrounds and 7% from other religious backgrounds. The percentage with special educational needs is above the national average as is the percentage for whom extra funding is received due to social disadvantage.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of William Parker Academy as a Church of England school are satisfactory

- The interim principal, well supported by senior leaders, governors and the church school co-ordinator, have an accurate knowledge of the academy and an ambition to improve outcomes for learners based on a developing but clear Christian vision.
- Grounded on its long history of service there is a strong sense of belonging, which is reflected in positive relationships across the academy.
- Overall behaviour is good. Boys are respectful towards each other and adults. This is based on clear expectations reflected through the academy's refreshed Christian ethos and values.

Areas to improve

- Ensure that the academy's Christian foundation and values are explicit and central in driving improvement in the attainment, progress and personal development of all learners.
- Improve provision for religious education (RE) in Key Stage 4 ensuring that all learners have access to an externally accredited course.
- Increase academic standards in RE by:
 - ensuring appropriate pace, challenge and support in all lessons;
 - extending marking and assessment practice so that it consistently reflects the more effective practice that is evident when following externally accredited course criteria.

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

Ark William Parker academy now has a clear vision for its distinctive Christian and inclusive character to support it on its improvement journey. Since its inception as an academy its Christian vision has grown slowly and not incisively enough. Consequently, its explicit impact on day to day procedures, behaviour, attitudes and relationships has not always been sufficiently recognised. This has slowed development as a Church institution. That said, behaviour has improved and is now good and standards of attainment and progress, whilst below national averages, are moving upwards. Learners, including the more vulnerable, are well known and cared for as individuals. Appropriate rewards and sanctions are well supported by a fresh emphasis on the academy's Christian foundation of service and inclusion. Consequently, exclusions are decreasing and attendance, whilst still below the national average, is on a rising trend. Boys are respectful towards each other and adults in class, when moving around the site and during break times. The academy's refocusing on personal development, as well as on improving academic standards, is beginning to impact positively through its refreshed Christian values. Firm plans are in place to introduce a revised vision and values in September 2016. This has at its heart an explicit Christian understanding of service and of helping all to fulfil their potential. A clear monitoring and evaluation system has been put into place which has developed appropriately over the past 3 years. It provides accurate information about learners' attainment which guides teaching to support learning and progress, which is improving. Opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development are satisfactory and improving. RE, the worship programme and PHSE curriculum, alongside extra-curricular opportunities are principal ways in which these dimensions are addressed. However, the contribution of the whole curriculum with regards to SMSC opportunities is rightly a current focus for development. RE is properly recognised as making a key contribution to the academy's ethos and values and to learners recognition of and respect for difference and diversity.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is satisfactory

Detailed planning focuses on the academy's values, some biblical and Christian teaching, principal Christian festivals and significant events in school, national and international life. It takes place in houses, key stages and in tutor groups. Larger groupings are capably led by a variety of people including senior leaders, pastoral staff and local clergy. This variety helps to maintain interest and appropriately supports different viewpoints and styles of worship. Boy's behaviour is respectful and they and staff know the worship programme's importance in underpinning the academy's Christian foundation. A theme for the week provides a relevant focus. Recently tutor time has begun to incorporate a short act of worship and reflection on the days learners do not meet in larger groupings. This is led by staff or learners. It has begun to encourage greater consideration of spiritual and moral issues. Through the worship programme learners have some experience of prayer and reflection, but many have a limited understanding of its value and relevance to everyday life. Some themes during worship prompt learners to respond through charitable giving as service to others. Learners have a basic understanding of the Lord's prayer, the idea of God as 'Trinity' and of the importance of Jesus for Christians. The daily programme is appropriately enhanced through a regular voluntary Eucharist service. The number of those who attend this is increasing, with around 30 boys present regularly. The monitoring and evaluation of worship is embryonic but developing, as is the involvement of learners in planning and leading the worship programme.

The effectiveness of the religious education is satisfactory

The academy's leadership rightly affords RE a central part in its quest to develop its whole school Christian distinctiveness and effectiveness. This is having a positive impact on the way in which it is viewed by learners and staff across the academy. Good leadership of RE is in place and an accurate set of priorities for further development have been identified. Currently RE is not taken as an examination subject for all learners in Key Stage 4. This diminishes its effectiveness and impact. Standards in RE for those who sit the examination in Key Stage 4 and those who take it in the sixth form are good, against both school and national averages. Standards in Key Stage 3 are below national expectations, mainly due to literacy issues which slow progress. There is a focus on RE related issues

as part of the sixth form PHSE programme but this is not well embedded. Teaching in RE overall is satisfactory with some good practice in place. Lesson planning follows academy procedures and marking is done regularly. Assessment practice is more focused when learners are following an examination course as it is closely linked to clear criteria. The pace of learning is not always well matched to the activity given or to the learning and literacy needs of those involved. Consequently, learners, particularly higher ability boys, are not consistently supported and challenged to give of their best. Across the academy there is an appropriate balance between study addressing Christianity and other world faiths as well as exploring religious insights into moral, ethical and philosophical issues. Overall learners engage well in RE but do not consistently challenge themselves to achieve their best. A range of activities and approaches to help them develop their knowledge, understanding and skills and reflect on issues addressed are well provided for, particularly through the examination courses taught.

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

The interim principal has a clear vision for developing the academy as a Church of England institution. In this she is ably supported by senior leaders and others. A refocused vision is due for implementation in September 2016. This builds well on the long history of service of its predecessor schools and more recently its time as an ARK academy. The appointment two years ago of a church school's co-ordinator and the recent work of a church school working party is positively supporting the academy's Christian distinctiveness and effectiveness. There are firm plans in place, based on accurate self evaluation, to develop this further. Leaders have a realistic ambition to improve outcomes for learners based on enabling all to flourish and fulfil their potential. This is well based on a basic but developing understanding of Christian service to its community. It means that leaders have set credible and challenging goals for themselves, staff and learners. These goals are well balanced between improving academic attainment and progress and encouraging learners' personal development and well-being. However, this vision is not currently sufficiently embedded into practice. Links with local Anglican churches, principally through clergy involvement in leading worship contribute positively to the academy's life. Likewise, the William Parker foundation and foundation governors are expressions of the local Christian community's positive support for the academy's life and work. Staff are being well supported in understanding the Christian foundation of the academy with performance management being used well as a tool for professional and personal development linked to the academy's priorities. The Church school co-ordinator is working effectively with colleagues to help develop clarity about working in a church school. Arrangements for RE and worship meet statutory requirements. Links with parents are satisfactory and improving as the Christian and inclusive vision for service within the community is shared and lived out.

William Parker Academy, Parkstone Road, Hastings, East Sussex, TN34 2NT