

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

All Saints Church of England Junior Academy

Githa Road Hastings East Sussex TN35 5JU	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese District	Chichester
Previous SIAS Inspection Grade	Good
Date of academy conversion	1 February 2015
Name of multi-academy trust	Diocese of Chichester Academy Trust
Date of inspection	19 October 2017
Type of school and unique reference number	Academy 141655
Headteacher	Katharine Hurd
Inspector's name and number	Connie Hughes 765

School context

All Saints Junior is a two-form entry school with 232 pupils currently on roll. In February 2014 it became the first school to join the Diocese of Chichester Academy Trust. The transfer of pupils at the end of Year 2 from the nearby Dudley Infant Academy, within the University of Brighton Academies Trust, is established practice. Located in the 'Old Town' community of Hastings, the majority of pupils are White British from a range of social and economic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who have special needs and/or disabilities is well above the national average. A stable school leadership team has been in place for the last four years, with the senior leader appointed as the headteacher in January 2017.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of All Saints Junior Academy as a Church of England school are good

- Relationships across the school community are collaborative and supportive, enabling all pupils and staff to feel happy, safe and valued.
- Collective worship, inclusive of biblical teaching, prayer and Anglican tradition encourages and challenges pupils' spiritual, moral and social development.
- Religious education contributes to pupils' experience and understanding of the Bible, Christianity, major world faiths and beliefs.
- The strong commitment of the headteacher, well supported by staff and governors, ensures that applied Christian beliefs and values influence attitudes and behaviours in the daily life of the school.

Areas to improve

- In all communications with parents make explicit reference to the school's Christian ethos and values to raise the profile of the school's Church of England foundation within the community.
- Extend pupils' affirmation and celebration of the school's Christian ethos and values through more first-hand experience of planning, delivering and evaluating collective worship.
- Establish more opportunities for pupils to engage and reflect on spiritual and moral issues through personal and collective prayer, ensuring a greater richness to the prayer life of the school.
- Through the Governing Body establish explicit monitoring and self-evaluation strategies of collective worship and religious education to gather impact of the school's Christian distinctiveness on the development of the whole child.

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

This is an inclusive school where Christian values held by leaders, staff and pupils underpin all decision making. Anglican symbolism, pertinent displays and reflection areas placed in all classrooms and communal areas signify the school's Christian distinctiveness. Pupils clearly understand the importance of the school's Christian faith foundation when translating the historic Latin motto, 'Nothing can harm us when God leads us'. When reflecting on their understanding of Christian values, pupils explain 'that through our learning about God and Jesus we are taught to love one another... to respect each other... it's what on the inside... in our hearts that's important'. Adults and pupils relate well to each other in an atmosphere of mutual respect, support and friendship. Pupils happily share how school staff, 'were always there to help us with our work... to sort out our problems'. Parents are confident the school 'nurtures the whole child... physically, emotionally, mentally and spiritually.'

In 2017 Key Stage 2 pupils performed better than pupils nationally, with the majority of pupils making good progress in relation to their Key Stage 1 starting points. Progress for disadvantaged pupils is showing an improving three-year trend. Staff respond to pupils' specific needs because pupils are valued as unique individuals. The majority of pupils are well-behaved, caring and helpful. Incidents of poor behaviour are managed with compassion and care by the school. Respect, as one of the school's core Christian values, is underpinned by a Christian understanding of forgiveness, which ensure relationships are quickly restored. With attendance as an area for improvement, the school stresses the link between good attendance and pupil progress in communications with parents. Social, moral, spiritual and cultural (SMSC) development is a strength of the school, enabling all pupils to make a positive contribution to the local, national and global society to which they belong. Learning experiences involving an active school council, meeting with local councillors and visiting the Houses of Parliament develop pupils' understanding of life in a democratic country. Religious education (RE), taught through discrete teaching and cross-curricular topics, embeds the distinctive Christian character of the school. Liaison with their Sierra Leone partner school, including first-hand experience through teacher exchange visits, develops pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity as a multi-world faith in a culturally diverse community. Year 4 pupils are sending a copy of their class prayer book to their peers in Sierra Leone. Pupils decide on a range of charities to support each year, which contributes strongly to their SMSC development. For example, the Demelza Hospice Care for Children, Harvest festival gifts for the local foodbank and practical teaching and learning resources for Sierra Leone.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

The school's daily collective worship (CW) is distinctly Christian in character and reflects the school's Anglican faith foundation. Worship deepens staff and pupils' knowledge and understanding of the teachings of Jesus and how to apply Christian and moral values to their everyday life. 'Worship is always a reflective and meaningful experience allowing staff and children to have a true opportunity to worship God', state staff members. Anglican symbolism including seasonal altar cloths, the Bible, candles, greetings and responses is embedded in worship. Collective worship is planned and organised in themes centred on Christian values, incorporating the cycle of the Church's year, biblical stories, multi-media power points, music, prayer and reflection. It is central to the spiritual, moral and social development of the school community.

Pupils confidently share how 'gathering together, engaging and participating in Christian worship experiences is a time when we send messages to God'. Observing pupils entering collective worship, soothing guitar music played by an assistant headteacher created a peaceful and reflective ethos. Pupils are attentive and responsive to the headteacher's greeting of 'Jesus the light of the world is here', respectfully replying, 'Let your light shine upon us'. Pupils were inspired and encouraged to bring their hopes and wishes to God in prayer and praise. Stimulated by media images of different forms of light, pupils reflected on their understanding of the Christian value of 'hope' and how turning to Jesus, can help them in a time of need. Sharing their understanding of Jesus' claim, 'I am the light of the world', (John 8 verse 12) pupils' spiritual responses included, 'God lights the path for us... Jesus shows us the way'. The school song 'nothing we can't achieve if we believe...', written by the staff, was sung with joy and enthusiasm. Pupils' personal prayers of 'hope', hang on the recently installed prayer tree in the school hall. Pupils know traditional prayers, including the Lord's Prayer, and contribute to annual class prayer books. Although defined reflection areas exist for pupils in every classroom, space is limited for planned and purposeful interaction. Building on the school's experience of annual prayer spaces, led by Christian school's workers, pupils have approached the headteacher on creating a communal prayer space enabling them to explore and engage more fully in the prayer. Through worship led by local clergy and the headteacher, pupils develop an understanding of the centrality of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit to the Christian faith. Although the parish is currently without a substantive vicar, local Anglican and Baptist clergy continue to support school worship. Pupils successfully participate in school worship, including once a week class assembly within the context of the values theme, but they are not involved in planning, leading and evaluating whole school worship. Senior leaders have yet to fully develop an effective monitoring system to evaluate the impact of the school's Christian ethos on the development of the whole child.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Religious Education (RE) taught through discrete teaching and cross-curricular topics, embeds the distinctive Christian character of the school. Headteacher and subject leader lesson observations, work scrutiny and assessment procedures indicate the majority of pupils make good progress from their starting point. Pupils in lower Key Stage 2 are working towards age related expectations. Evidence in RE books from the previous Year 6 and the current upper Key Stage 2, reflect that the majority of pupils are making appropriate age-related progress and attainment is in line with national expectations.

Through RE and collective worship pupils develop a breadth of knowledge and experience of Christianity and major world faiths and cultures. Religious education makes a good contribution to pupils SMSC development. Pupils' RE experiences for the beginning of the school year, reveal an emphasis on whole class, teacher led focused work. Teachers and pupils successfully applied whole school reading and comprehension strategies to further develop the skills of enquiry, discussion, questioning and reflection. Pupils are experienced and confident to work with their talk partners and the majority of pupils are able to learn exceptionally well. Pupils are highly motivated to deepen their knowledge and understanding when comparing multi-world faith beliefs and practices. Pupils state 'we enjoy learning about other religions and making links to our Christian beliefs... we learn to be accepting, respectful and understanding.' Behaviour was excellent in the lessons observed, with no evidence of disruption.' There is, however, limited evidence of differentiated activities and extended writing tasks to support, reinforce and deepen all pupils' RE learning. Marking strategies to support all pupils' engagement and progression in RE learning are not consistently applied to acknowledge success and/or support pupils to improve their work.

The RE subject leader's monitoring and evaluation informs school development planning, providing professional expertise to senior leaders in improving and sustaining the school's Christian foundation. With a breadth of RE subject knowledge, guidance and support is cascaded to staff within the school's on-going professional development programme. Resources to meet the needs of the curriculum are plentiful.

The subject leader's continuing professional development is primarily through local authority RE courses and partnership working with local church schools. Further professional development from the Chichester Diocese wider network of schools is planned for the coming year. The subject leader is the staff governor and informs governors on RE progress and developments. However, more consistent and accurate evidence of monitoring effective RE teaching and learning strategies that focus on meeting the needs all pupils are not embedded in the school and governors' cycle of school self-evaluation.

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

The headteacher has a clear vision for 'sharing Christian values with the whole academy and aims to lead through the Christian way'. The school website, prospectus and policy documentation clearly reflect the school's Christian foundation, vision and ethos. A strong and proactive senior leadership team, key governors and staff continue to address school improvement priorities underpinned by Christian principles. The explicit communication of Christian values, intrinsic to worship, RE and cross-curricular teaching and learning experiences, strongly contributes to the personal achievement and well-being of all pupils. New staff are encouraged to reflect on how they will 'promote and encourage Christian values... as they are a school priority'.

The Diocese of Chichester Academy Trust (DCAT) senior education leader is confident, 'the headteacher and senior leadership team have meticulously guided the strong and rapid progress of the school in the last three years'. During a period of significant change in the status of the school, DCAT identified a range of specific support for the leadership and governance of school. The appointment of an experienced church school headteacher appointed as the Group Executive Principal, strengthened the capacity of the senior leadership team. Through the commitment of the current chair of the Local Governing Body (LGB) and a diocesan appointed foundation governor, monitoring and evaluation is becoming more strategic in addressing church school distinctiveness. Foundation governor monitoring, through learning walks and worship observations in the past year, celebrates the school's Christian ethos. The LGB has greater capacity to address school improvement with all governor vacancies now filled. Communication with parents on the school's Church of England foundation and the school's explicit Christian distinctiveness needs to be strengthened. Discussion with some parents and carers identified the need for a more explicit celebration of the school's distinctive Christian ethos as they found it difficult to relate their children's experiences and success to the school's Christian faith foundation. Parents were confident that "the school is a great school" but 'with no clear picture of it being a church school'. Although there has been no substantive clergy in post since July 2016 the school continues to work in partnership with St Clement and All Saints churches through the church/school link worker. A well-attended Harvest festival service involving the parish churches and the school families were celebrated in the school newsletter. Statutory requirements for religious education and collective worship are met.