

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Chelsea Academy

Lots Road, London, SW10 0AB	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	London
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Date of academy conversion	Opened September 2009
Date/s of inspection	3 and 4 July 2017
Date of last inspection	3 and 4 July 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Secondary Academy 135531
Principal	Matthew Williams
Inspector's name and number	Angela Smith Quality Assurance; Jo Fageant 104

School context

Chelsea Academy is an 11-18 science specialist school of just above average size, jointly sponsored by the Church of England and the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. Most students live in the local area and come from a wide range of backgrounds. 10% of places are for students with an aptitude for music. In comparison with national averages, those eligible for free school meals is higher, whilst students with English as an additional language is significantly higher. Students with special educational needs and/or disabilities support (SEND) is below average, while the number with statements of special educational needs is at national average. The principal joined the school in September 2014.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Chelsea Academy as a Church of England school are outstanding

- This academy is a vibrant, reflective and diverse community that lives out its Christian ethos through celebrating difference.
- Since the last inspection, the recently appointed principal and his reformed senior leadership team have shown outstanding leadership and acted on the previous report to ensure clarity in communicating the Christian ethos and the centrality of student participation in collective worship.
- The Christian values of joy, perseverance, forgiveness, charity and servant leadership, identified through the outcomes of the last inspection, underpin all aspects of learning.
- There is an emphasis on continual evaluation and seeking to improve opportunities and outcomes for students and staff, through consultation and collaboration, living out the principle of valuing the gifts of each individual.
- Innovative enrichment and coaching priorities demonstrate a clear Christian ethos based on partnership and mutual respect.
- Students encounter worship that reflects the Anglican character of the school and is creative, engaging and central to their experience of school life.

Areas to improve

- Consolidate improvements made in religious education (RE) to ensure a rising trend of results with the new specification requirements.
- Build on the developing strength in community partnerships so the school makes further positive impact on the wider community.

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

'Anchored in Christ', the academy motto, has become deeply rooted and is clearly communicated, with the result that students confidently claim that it is known by all. They can also identify that the values of Christ are universal and therefore this makes their academy welcoming. A student stated that, 'It is because of the strong foundation the academy has, that it has the liberty to be inclusive.' A further student highlighted that, 'As a Muslim I appreciate the harmony of the academy.' The academy's Christian inspired ethos of care, perseverance and encouragement is impacting on progress. This is demonstrated in the recognition of three Schools, Students and Teachers Network awards (SSAT) for progress, attainment and pupil premium progress. Furthermore, Progress 8 figures highlight that the academy is in the top 14% of schools nationally.

Intervention strategies are varied and used to ensure that students in this diverse academy have their needs met. Coaching time ratios mean the allocation of two staff, from both the teaching and associate staff, to work with each coaching group. This facilitates students accessing wider support and all academy staff having a student centred approach. The inclusion support centre provides structured and innovative support to those students who may need more individualised approaches to succeed in a school environment. This lives out the academy's vision statement, which includes the commitment that 'No student is left behind.' The five identified Christian values are used to inspire high levels of attendance and a clear view of acceptable behaviour. They inform the rewards system with students throughout the school keen to gain and redeem their accumulated points. These values are drawn from 1 Corinthians 13, with further biblical teachings identified as the basis for each part of the academy strapline, 'Work hard, be nice, no excuses.' These priorities are proudly displayed throughout the academy and students readily articulate them and the difference they make in their learning experiences.

Staff from different curriculum areas identify ways that their subject contributes to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural curriculum (SMSC), with citizenship and religious education (RE) providing particularly rich experiences for students. In maths, students explore real life problems drawing on the core value of perseverance and reminders of Jesus never giving up. In design and technology, there is an emphasis on buying locally produced seasonal food which encourages students to reflect on the impact of their actions. The academy prioritises meaningful restorative approaches to underpin the Chelsea Academy Way for Behaviour (CAW4B). Members of the academy community recognise and celebrate their diversity. Enrichment lessons on Friday afternoons means each working week is concluded with a positive shared experience, reflecting the Christian ethos of the academy and its central value of joy.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Recent staff and student surveys provide detailed evidence and evaluation of ways that the academy community recognises the significance of collective worship and show the impact it has on the whole community. It is the natural approach of the academy to turn to worship as a channel to express its priorities and concerns. There is ongoing review to ensure themes are relevant and approaches are varied, whilst also clearly reflecting the Church year. The student leadership panel works with the chaplain in evaluating and planning assemblies, where a wide variety of students participate. Students identify ways that they have been enriched through their participation, whilst in the last survey over ninety per cent of staff agreed that assemblies also provide them with opportunities for reflection and prayer. The chapel is appreciated and regularly used by students, staff and parents as a central hub within the community. It includes symbolism that reminds users of the content of the school motto through the idea of an anchor being a secure holding point when they face challenges. Students and staff regularly use the academy hymn and prayer, which are a way the centrality of the motto and strapline are expressed in collective worship. Having different Anglican year vicars is resulting in students gaining insight into the richness of Anglican practice. The year group church services are popular, with significant numbers of students participating. Students articulate their enjoyment of these being a celebration of using and sharing each other's gifts in worship. They are able to understand and access coaching time worship as a result of engaging materials and the complimentary style of a paired staff leadership approach. Alongside this there is increasing familiarity with Biblical texts and the concept of the Trinity, as a result of their inclusion in the structured and accessible coaching notes. Year vicars identify how the annual 'Christianity in Focus' week means students explore theological concepts in greater depth. The priority of prayer and reflection is shown in the regular prayer meetings that take place for students, staff and parents, which participants find meaningful and inspiring. Significant events, particularly some recent tragic incidents, have brought the academy closely together with charity opportunities utilised by students and staff to express Christian faith in action.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Having previously faced a period of staffing instability, RE has made significant progress since January 2016, when a new subject leader was appointed. There is now an established teaching team, with consistently high quality

teaching, including two members of the senior leadership team. In addition, a supportive line manager shares management of RE alongside other subjects including English, showing standards across core subjects are equally valued and monitored. Students recognise the importance of the subject, appreciating the high level of challenge, commenting that, 'There are new things to learn in every lesson.' In Year 7, with the academy's new 3CERT curriculum, RE has one of the highest figures for achievement across all subjects taught. In Year 9, lesson observation demonstrated the high level of feedback and support students receive and the ability they have to express and critique religious ideas. The full GCSE course, which all students follow, builds on learning in Key Stage 3. This ensures development of a carefully planned understanding of Christianity alongside other world faiths. Students are able to interrogate teachings and attitudes with the confidence to complete the examination in Year 10. Staff highlight the high level of support students show their peers, as the religious studies examination is the first they encounter in Key Stage 4. The impact of self-evaluation is shown in the decision to increase RE curriculum time due to the additional demands of the new examination course specification. Post examination the academy gives careful consideration to the diverse range of further opportunities that are offered. This ensures that Year 11 have further experience of RE, often in the context of a meaningful SMSC programme. Results in GCSE religious studies (RS) show a clearly improving trend. Students articulate enthusiasm for RE and the skills it is helping them develop. The academy identifies in detail how it fulfils expectations set by the Church of England and this ensures provision is thoroughly reviewed and prioritised. Teachers of RE are benefitting from national training and support and accessing the well-developed academy continuing professional development (CPD) programme for emerging lead practitioners. Through this, RE staff work collaboratively with colleagues in other subject areas. They model and lead others in developing their skills to facilitate the academy's high standards of teaching and learning. During the inspection it was not possible to meet the curriculum leader for RE due to absence. However, judgements were possible through consideration of detailed line management minutes, work scrutiny, the subject development plan, shared observations and the positive trajectory of GCSE and A level results.

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

Christian values are confidently identified by leaders, including governors, for the direct benefit they have on both their own and students' well-being and achievement. High expectations are in place, coupled with a compassion and commitment that teaching responds to the strengths and needs of all students. The pairing of colleagues from different areas of academy life in coaching teams means students witness a model of servant leadership on a daily basis. The academy's specialist science status enriches learning. In Year 7 students consider how science benefits others. The science project undertaken by all Sixth Formers, looks at the impact of science on society. Staff identify that the restorative approach used throughout the academy, 'permeates conversations and draws out responsibility'. This includes the sense of positivity brought about by being able to put forgiveness into action through encouraging fresh starts, whilst also maintaining clear boundaries and expectations. Staff articulate this as, 'a practice for the real world', and a, 'lasting legacy in the lives of students.' The diversity and difference in the academy community is what makes it distinctive and special with 'Anchored in Christ' being, 'a deep and meaningful active choice, that is valued by parents'. This is seen as particularly important for those from different world faiths who choose the academy for their children.

The principal and his newly formed senior leadership team have shown outstanding leadership. Acting on the recommendations of the previous inspection report the Christian ethos is now clearly communicated and students participate more actively in worship. A revised rewards system, which involved all stakeholders, highlights a commitment to wise stewardship of resources and restates the link between rewards and Christian values.

The supportive performance management structure reflects the Christian ethos and is rigorous, supportive and fair. It values staff by giving them opportunities to revisit and reshape target areas during the academy year and time for two reviews. All are supported in pursuing enrichment, shown in the dedicated Friday afternoon programme, which brings spiritual and wider holistic benefits. Activities have the SMSC aspects identified and staff work together in collaborative and servant leadership style to provide a meaningful experience. Each year applicants for senior student leadership roles present on one of the core values, with students articulating and applying them in practice. The Church of England Statement of Entitlement is used to ensure quality staffing and resources are prioritised for RE. All staff are supported at their different career stages, with CPD prioritised through the weekly Wednesday afternoon programme. This is varied and diverse with an emphasis on spirituality and well-being.

The school chaplain is seen as a role model. His work draws together diverse aspects of academy life. It is outward looking and enriches areas of the local community, for example through youth clubs and other after school opportunities. Individual students benefit from his mentoring and leadership role, which shown in their co-delivery of the new staff induction workshop. The workshop supports new colleagues as leaders with their shared responsibility to ensure the academy Christian ethos is embedded in lessons and coaching time. Partnership with the local community is a priority, seen in increasing communication with local residents and churches. There are active links with other schools, including exploring common ground through research with the nearby diocesan schools.