

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Clifton All Saints Academy

Church Road, Clifton SG17 5ES

Current SIAMS inspection grade

Good

Diocese

St Albans

Previous SIAMS inspection grade

Outstanding

Date of academy conversion

1 October 2013

Date of inspection

13 November 2017

Date of last inspection

25 October 2012

Type of school and unique reference number

Academy 140228

Headteacher

Carol Ward

Inspector's name

Mary Westley 926

School context

Clifton All Saints Academy is an average sized one form entry lower school set in, and serving, the village of Clifton. The current headteacher took up post in September 2013. The rector was new to post in September 2016. The percentages of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, and those receiving the additional funding allocated to disadvantaged pupils, are below national averages. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is also below the national average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Clifton All Saints Academy school are good

- Good levels of care result in a strong family orientated community, rooted in the Christian values of love, respect and the belief that every individual child is cherished as a gift from God.
- The well-being of all members of the community is given great importance and is directly attributable to the Christian character of the school.
- Determined leadership provided by the headteacher, working closely with the rector, has resulted in strong links with the local church and shared Christian values.
- The school's Christian character ensures a fully inclusive approach so that the needs of all children are met well.

Areas to improve

- Ensure the renewed vision works alongside a manageable number of distinctively Christian values so that leaders can consistently and confidently articulate, live out and promote this vision.
- Review the current RE provision to ensure pupils' understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith is established and their knowledge of global communities deepened.
- Build on the evidence collected for collective worship and develop a well-organised record of the impact of collective worship so that there can be continual improvement.

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

This school values its Christian foundation highly. The very visible cross, made of children's hand prints, is centrally placed to remind that the school is a Christian community. The headteacher and governors are united to ensure a fully inclusive approach where every individual child is valued. Academic excellence is sought for all, within a Christian context of love and respect, and individual pupil achievements across the school are highly valued. As a result, academic standards are at least in line with national expectations for most pupils. One year group's attainment is lower but they have made very good progress from low start points. Attendance rates are high for the vast majority of pupils, due to the fact pupils feel valued in this school. There is a sense of respect running through the community and this is evident in relationships at all levels. This leads to a strong sense of community, with all families feeling welcome and included. The well-being of all members of this community is given high importance and this is attributable to the Christian character of the school. This can be seen, for example, in the thoughtful messages sent to a pupil who was receiving medical treatment overseas and the pupil who was supported by his peers so he could take part in the Christmas production. Staff members also feel supported and valued because of this Christian ethos and the headteacher puts importance on the well-being of her team. Aspects of RE, including the Year 3 faith tour, have contributed to an appreciation of all. In addition, the distinctive Christian values, such as respect, are referred to throughout the school and have made pupils and staff aware of each other's needs. Christian values are shared through prominent displays around the school and clear links through collective worship and RE. Pupils also reflect on these values and see how they relate to their lives. Compliment slips are used to catch pupils demonstrating the Christian values of the school. A further award is given each half term to the pupil who has notably lived out the value the school is focusing on at that time. All this is celebrated as part of collective worship and in written messages home from the headteacher. Pupils, parents and staff value this highly and it clearly shapes their attitudes towards one another. Christian values also shape behaviour throughout the school as they are explicitly referred to in expectations and the behaviour policy. Pupil behaviour is good showing respect in all contexts. Pupils' spirituality is developed through their use of reflection and prayer. They are able to think about issues and do so comfortably making direct links to their worship. For example, a period of reflection is often held immediately after worship for pupils to record their thoughts in a place of quiet. Pupils' understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith is developing and they have some understanding of different Christian denominations. The headteacher has worked hard to build the Christian character of the school. As a result the school is a supportive Christian community caring for the needs of all its members and the wider community. An example being a Year 1 pupil's idea to give a charity tea party which he and his family were then encouraged to hold in school most successfully. There is a culture of giving across the school through supporting local, national and international charities. Pupils are centrally involved in this.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

The school places great importance on collective worship as shown by the attendance of many staff. Pupils engage well by listening attentively and singing beautifully. Very few families of other faiths elect not to attend. Pupil involvement is considerable and they greatly enjoy this active participation. They routinely read aloud prepared passages from the Bible and say prayers, often written by themselves or other pupils. A recently established worship group leads and plans worship every half term based on the current Christian value. They tackle this with enthusiasm and sincerity. Pupils also lead a monthly worship in school, based on a parable, and contribute to the half termly church services regularly, as well as helping lead the parish harvest festival. This is one of the many close links with church. Opportunities for pupils to evaluate this and other acts of worship are developing. Planning for collective worship is very thoughtful and links clearly to biblical teaching in a comprehensive three year programme. Pupils have an age appropriate understanding of the key Christian beliefs such as the importance of Jesus and God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit and can explain their thoughts. There are frequent opportunities for prayer in their worship and in class rooms. They reflect quietly and candles are used to aid reflection both in worship and in class. Each class has its own reflection area which the pupils find helpful. One Year 4 pupil said, 'It helps you think of something better to do next time if things have gone wrong'. Parents are welcome to, and make time to attend, the half termly services in church which includes a termly Eucharist. Many attend on a regular basis and participate in increasing number. Worship provides a strong community link with the village, an example being the harvest festival shared with members of the parish where many school families stay on for the harvest lunch. The rector leads worship weekly in school with zeal. She plans thoughtfully with the head teacher and plays a key part in linking worship to the school's Christian values and how these can influence the daily lives of pupils. Pupils enjoy her worship in school and church and are keen to join in where appropriate. She is also available to pupils after worship if they wish to ask questions and this has helped deepen their understanding of faith. Staff, as well as pupils, appreciate the patterns and atmosphere created for worship by entry music, candles and banners made by the sewing group to illustrate the seasons of the church year. A range of people are involved in leading worship in the school including members of other Christian denominations. As a result pupils' awareness of the faith of others is developing.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Standards in RE are in line with syllabus expectation. Pupils enjoy RE and work well together in pairs, small groups or individually. They reflect and think widely. There is evidence of their thoughtful questions, and possible answers, in class displays and books across the school. For example, a Year 1 child had replied 'God is in my heart' to the question 'Where is God?'. Pupils are taught four world religions in addition to Christianity. Pupils say they enjoy learning about other faiths and they accurately share key ideas. The regular faith tour in Year 3 provides a clear comparison of three world faiths through back to back visits to a mosque, gurdwara and a Church of England church in a different style from that in Clifton which the pupils know well. Invited visitors are also welcome to share their faith. This all leads to pupils' growing awareness of the religions and faiths of others. The RE teaching links clearly to worship through the Christian values of the school and this gives pupils examples of how the Christian values are demonstrated in the Bible. For example, Year 2 pupils are taught how Mary trusted the word of Gabriel. Pupils' knowledge of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith is still developing. RE is given the same value and respect as other core subjects, for example literacy, across the school. Work is well presented. Pupils also record their reflections sensitively, often linking these to the Christian value they have been focussing on. These are presented through shared 'I wonder' books and in their individual reflection books. Pupils can retell some Bible stories and they are aware of the old and new testament. Pupils' behaviour is generally good in RE lessons and their progress at least comparable to syllabus expectations. Teaching in RE is good and pupils' progress is monitored regularly. Tasks are clear and matched to the needs of learners. The RE subject leader leads the subject with determination and is well qualified for the post. She introduced 'Understanding Christianity' training and materials to the whole school in January 2017. Impact has already been noted in teacher feedback showing greater teacher confidence and enjoyment. The teaching of RE is monitored regularly by the subject leader through learning walks, book scrutiny and pupil interviews. There is not yet a formal pattern of lessons observations or formal communication between subject leader, governors and staff.

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

Both the governors and headteacher value the Christian foundation of the school highly. They form a strong partnership united in the desire to improve the life chances of every child in every respect. Christian values shape relationships and help create a Christian environment where everyone is valued. A caring community exists at all levels. The headteacher leads by example in her behaviour. This has led to all staff and pupils sharing respect across the community. Parents remark on this. They also say they chose the school because of its happy and nurturing nature. Small acts of kindness occur every day and are common place. Members of the community help each other from pupils comforting each other spontaneously to colleague supporting colleague. The headteacher cares about every child and family in the school and greets them daily. This goes beyond the school as support is extended to families whose children have moved on. She knows her families well and they appreciate this. RE and collective worship have a very clear profile in the school. They both reflect the Christian values which run through the school and are known by all. These are reinforced through prominent displays around school including four beautifully hand-made banners made by the sewing group and designed by current pupils. Governors are reminded of the Christian values at visits and meetings. Each governors' meeting is started and finished with prayer reflecting the close link between school and church. Although governors are involved in aspects of monitoring, there is not yet a systematic evaluation by the governors of the school as a church school. The school uses a range of values to support teaching and focus is increasingly on those values which are distinctively Christian, although the transition is not yet complete. Since the last inspection pupil and governor evaluation of collective worship has developed, although there is no formal action planning arising from this. Pupils' opportunities for dialogue on deep questions of faith and life have increased, for example, through the introduction of worship group and in class-based discussion. The school's relationship with the local church is very strong and has been strengthened with the arrival of the rector who shares the school's values closely. A valuable link exists between the local church and the governing body as all governors are active members of the church in some capacity, official or otherwise. Governors and staff have been active in successfully promoting many church school links from Messy church to celebration of major Christian festivals. As a result, children feel at ease in church and families attend in increasing number. The RE subject leader is well supported by senior leaders and, as a result, she has made good provision for staff training including induction for the Understanding Christianity resource. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is enhanced through the clear emphasis on Christian values. The school values its active links with the diocese and benefits from the training and support it offers. There is a very strong partnership between parents and the school, and parents are very aware of the school's values and expectations.

SIAMS report November 2017 Clifton All Saints Academy, Church Street, Clifton SG17 5ES