

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Kennington Church of England Academy			
Address	Upper Vicarage Road, Kennington, Ashford, Kent, TN24 9AG		
Date of inspection	10 March 2020	Status of school	Academy – inspected as Voluntary Controlled Aquila The Diocese of Canterbury Academies Trust
Diocese	Canterbury	URN	141329
Overall Judgement	How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?	Grade	Excellent
Additional Judgement	The impact of collective worship	Grade	Excellent
School context			
<p>Kennington is a junior academy with 356 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage with a range of other ethnic groups represented. Around 12 percent of pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is above the national average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is slightly below national averages. Around 90 percent of its pupils enter the academy in Year 3 from a local infant school. The academy is part of the diocesan Aquila Multi Academy Trust (MAT).</p>			
The school's Christian vision			
<p>We are an inclusive community where Christian values empower us. With God's guidance, we work with pride and passion to create life-long learners who fulfil their potential. If we work together, we will be the very best that we can be: achieving, celebrating and succeeding whilst having fun. (Matthew 25: 14-30)</p>			
Key findings			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent leadership based on the academy's Christian vision focuses on relating the Parable of the Talents to the work of education. Developing and using God-given talents consistently supports and drives the academy's Christian service to its pupils and their families. • An inclusive and rounded approach to pupils flourishing academically and personally is strongly reflected in the improved attainment and progress of pupils and in the excellent attitudes to learning and behaviour in evidence. To support its aspirational and inclusive vision, the academy has rightly identified working towards an award for mental health and wellbeing to refine its already strong practice further. • The creative curriculum is excellently focussed on pupils' learning needs. It is enriched through a termly theme week. Opportunities for spiritual development are strong although an explicit focus on the role of the creative arts in supporting spiritual development is less well expressed. • Collective worship is central to school life with excellent engagement from both pupils and staff. • RE is given a high priority and is very well led by an experienced and committed subject leader. Pupils' academic outcomes and progress in RE are high. 			
Areas for development			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refine the existing approaches to the mental health and wellbeing of staff and pupils so that the academy develops its strong and consistent practice. • Make explicit the ways in which the creative arts are used in order to maximise their impact on and enrich the spiritual development and responses of pupils. 			

How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?

Inspection findings

The academy's Christian vision is biblically based and theologically underpinned with an emphasis on sharing individual God-given gifts for the good of all. Pupils and adults link this with the life and teaching of Jesus, particularly through the Parable of the Talents. As one pupil reflected, 'the parable helps us to live a good life, sharing our talents with others'. The vision is aspirational and spurs on the work of the academy. It supports the academy's compassionate and effective pastoral care. Respectful relationships positively reflect the associated Christian values, for example, through practically showing love and care. The importance of the individual and of using whatever talents one has are consistently emphasised. This leads to the academy being outward looking and addressing others' needs locally and more widely, for example, through a range of charitable fundraising opportunities. Pupils are aware of issues of justice and equality. They have a deepening awareness that they can be actively involved in positive change in different ways. The vision and associated values permeate the exemplary behaviour. Pupils and staff are mutually respectful of each other.

Leaders strongly celebrate and guide the academy's Christian vision. MAT membership and the opportunities it provides are excellently taken. In turn, this means that staff are commendably supported professionally and personally. They have the opportunity to develop and share their own talents. For example, specific educational projects are undertaken by staff and then implemented across the academy to mutual benefit. There is a robust coaching system in place. Leaders at all levels are ambitious for the continuing success of their pupils. Outcomes are high with many pupils making accelerated progress from their various starting points. A fitting focus on academic progress is extended through a fitting emphasis on pupils' personal and character development. This holistic approach, along with the rigorous monitoring of learning and progress and well targeted teaching, excellently underpins the inter-relationship between the academic and the personal. It enables all, including the most vulnerable, to flourish. In keeping with its vision of enabling all to reach their full potential, the mental health and wellbeing of pupils and of staff is well addressed. In order to enhance the strong support given, there is a current focus on refining practice further through working towards a national award.

Since the previous denominational inspection, the academy has sustained and improved the strengths that were identified and also positively addressed the areas for improvement. They have implemented subsequent advice from the Diocese showing how this has had positive impact through referencing it in their detailed and accurate self-evaluation procedures.

The curriculum is creative, broad and balanced. It is closely matched to pupil need, providing constructive support and challenge. This leads to consistently improved attainment and progress since the previous denominational report. The curriculum is enhanced using visits and visitors and through termly Theme Weeks. The latter clearly broadens pupils' understanding, engagement and enjoyment and provides excellent examples of how the curriculum can be enriched. A strong extra-curricular programme is well engaged in by pupils. Clearly targeted interventions are in place to support the most vulnerable. This includes, for example, a Nurture Group. Its programme successfully helps pupils who find it difficult to be in class full time.

There is a shared understanding of the importance of spiritual development in academic and personal flourishing, as evidenced by the gaining of a national silver award for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Whilst spiritual development opportunities and responses are strong, not enough emphasis is placed on the impact of the creative arts in supporting spiritual growth. However, opportunities, for example, to promote deep thinking, reflection and discussion are consistently taken. Approaches drawing on Philosophy for Children effectively support open-ended questioning providing excellent encouragement for spiritual development and enhancing pupils' learning and attitudes strongly. During theme weeks, biblical stories are explored by each year group using a reflective approach called Godly Play. Whilst originally designed for young children, the academy has excellently adapted the principles to meet the needs of older pupils. This enhances their awareness and application of biblical stories to life in the world today.

Links with the parish church are longstanding. Parish representatives are actively involved in the local governing board and the academy visits the church regularly. Academy displays in church enhance the relationship. When Year 6 pupils are leaving, they receive a book from the church about moving on. Their names are placed on a Wise Owl in church for the ensuing year as a reminder that they are cared for and prayed for. Excellent and productive links with the local first school are in place. This enables a very smooth transition for the 90 percent of pupils who enter the school in Year 3 from there. Pupils who come from other schools are similarly welcomed and integrated quickly and effectively.

Collective worship is 'the heartbeat of our school'. It is recognised by pupils and staff as a very special time, 'that sets the tone for the day'. The programme is thought provoking and engaging. Staff, as well as pupils, are excellently involved and participate with enthusiasm. Effective planning focuses on the academy's vision and associated values, biblical themes and teaching and the Christian calendar. These are strongly related to life within and outside the academy. Thus, pupils and staff see the relevance of worship in school and, for many, to their daily lives. Pupils have a growing appreciation of various Christian beliefs and festivals. This includes an age-appropriate appreciation of key Christian concepts which is enhanced further through some of the work undertaken in RE. Relevant opportunities for pupils and staff to reflect or pray are given. Pupils know the Lord's Prayer and speak of the significance of the school prayer in, 'helping us be thankful and work hard'. Worship warriors are a pupil group that effectively plan, lead and consider evaluations of worship to refine practice further.

RE is highly valued. In keeping with ways of planning across the curriculum RE is planned by the subject leader and then discussed by year group teachers who adapt it to meet the specific learning needs of their pupils. This brings about a consistency of experience for both pupils and staff. A variety of well-chosen strategies engage pupils strongly. Big questions are explored through open discussions in which all views are respected which means that RE provides a safe learning environment for pupils. In keeping with academy protocols, RE assessment provides regular opportunities for pupils to reflect on their learning. The experienced and committed subject leader keeps assessment practice under review to ensure that it continues to meet the learning needs of pupils.

Executive Headteacher Head of School	Katie Wratten Lynn Seal
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