



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Christ Church Academy

Old Road
Stone
Staffordshire
ST15 8JD

Diocese: Lichfield

Local authority: Staffordshire

Dates of inspection: 16th October 2014

Date of last inspection: 15th October 2008

School's unique reference number: 124457

Principal: Chris Wright

Inspector's name and number: Mark Cooper 425

School context

Christ Church Academy larger than average middle school consisting of 505 pupils. The school became an academy August 2011. The current principal has been in post since 2012. The large majority of pupils are white British. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties, who are learning English as an additional language or who belong to minority groups is below average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Christ Church Academy as a Church of England school are good

- The leadership and vision of the principal which promotes the Christian distinctiveness of the academy.
- The effectiveness of the religious education (RE) lessons where all children learn irrespective of their academic ability.
- The passion of the RE coordinator and the work she does to promote the Christian distinctiveness of the academy.
- The five core Christian values which clearly underpin many aspects of the academy.

Areas to improve

- Develop robust evaluative procedures that inform the academy on how to strengthen its Christian distinctiveness.
- Establish strategies that will encourage further active participation of students in the various forms of worship on offer.
- Introduce quality training for governors to further strengthen their understanding of the Christian distinctiveness of the academy.

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

The Principal's Christian vision is clearly having a positive impact on the ethos of the academy. Five core Christian values have been identified to form the Christian foundation stones of the academy; forgiveness, friendship, compassion, thankfulness and trust. These permeate many aspects of the academy's life, from the pastoral systems, subject lessons to acts of worship. The work of the RE coordinator and the RE lessons themselves contribute well towards establishing these values and the SMSC (Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural) across the academy. It is clear that these values underpin the very good behaviour of pupils seen in lessons and around school and the relationships between pupils and their teachers and pupils with each other. Links are made between the good behaviour, resulting from the Christian values, and the academic attainment and progression of the pupils which is on a par to, or exceeds in some cases, national targets at Key Stage 2. The pupils talk with clarity about these values and make links between these and Christian teachings such as the Golden Rule, '*Treat others as you would want to be treated.*' Teachers talk about how the pupils look out of each other and show compassion towards one another. This is re-affirmed by parents who believe that the Christian ethos of the academy helps their children to learn the difference between right and wrong and basic moral principles. This clearly shows that the impact of the SMSC is good across the academy. Governors comment that exclusion rates have gone down dramatically and they pin point this to the Christian values of the school, particularly the value of forgiveness. Various charity events take place which the pupils talk enthusiastically about. Through these the pupils understand the meaning of compassion and service, realising that there are people in the world who are less fortunate than themselves. The ethos of the school is further strengthened by a 'Christian Seekers' club which is led by the youth worker and generally well attended. These pupils have opportunities to reflect on the big questions of life, which strengthens their spiritual learning.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Worship in its various forms is a clear part of the academy's life. The local clergy and youth worker take an active interest and lead worship on a weekly basis. This enhances the strong relationship between the academy and local church which in turn has a positive effect on pupils. Worship is well organised and there is a clear programme that is followed by Form Tutors and those that deliver worship. This programme includes both core Christian beliefs, such as the Trinity, the importance of Jesus and the academy's Christian values. Worship is conducted in a well organised and peaceful way. Music is an intrinsic part of worship using pupil musicians and through the enthusiastic singing of all pupils. There is a clear spiritual atmosphere to the acts of worship through the lighting of the Trinity candle, bible readings, talk and prayers. Children listen and take part when they have the opportunity to do so. Further opportunities do need to be developed that allow pupils to take more of a lead in the acts of worship. However pupils speak positively about worship, both in Form or when they meet collectively. They expressed how worship makes them feel thankful and that praying helps them to come to decisions about things. Through worship the Christian values of the academy are re-enforced. Pupils felt that worship helped them to behave better around school and aspire to the Christian values of friendship and trust. In Form worship pupils have an opportunity to reflect on what they have seen or heard and contribute in prayer. Pupils celebrate important Christian festivals in the local parish church. It is in these that pupils take a more active role from planning to delivery. However there is no opportunity for pupils to experience the Anglican Eucharistic liturgy as part of these special services.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Teaching and learning in RE is good and curriculum time meets required expectations. Pupils are able to make progress irrespective of their ability. Lessons are well planned and imaginatively delivered. Pupils take an active part in lessons, contribute well and clearly enjoy

their learning experience. Their skills of enquiry, interpretation and reflection are clearly developed. Pupils are taught key Christian beliefs such as the Trinity. In addition pupils have the opportunity to learn about other faiths such as Islam, Judaism and Hinduism. This enables pupils to develop a broader perspective about religion worldwide, and challenges any misconception they might have. This is strengthened by various trips to various places of worship and through visiting speakers from faith communities. Pupils spoke clearly about their understanding of Christianity and other religions. They understood the importance of the life of Jesus and talked about his teachings and miracles. They could make links between these teachings and their own behaviour recognising that through the Golden Rule bullying can be prevented or resolved. They were able to talk about the Five Pillars of Islam and understood why these were significant for Muslims. They talked enthusiastically about their R.E. lessons and their teachers, in particular the RE coordinator. The RE coordinator contributes significantly in promoting the Christian values of the school through RE lessons and the organisation of Form Worship activities. Pupils clearly grow in their spiritual awareness and understanding due to the work undertaken by the RE coordinator. Further work needs to take place to improve attainment at the end of Year 6, to be compatible with attainment in English. Development in teacher/pupil dialogue with regard to written work and targets set is yet to be fully implemented.

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

In a relatively short time the Principal and his leadership team have been effective in establishing a firm Christian foundation through the five Christian values. The leadership team recognise the importance and value of RE, Worship, and the work done by the RE coordinator, in promoting the Christian distinctiveness of the academy. Teaching staff can clearly see the importance of the Christian values on the behaviour and academic performance of pupils and life of the academy. Teaching staff speak very highly of the Principal identifying specific qualities that he has; trust, faith, approachability, professionalism, vision and integrity. They can clearly see that the academy is what it is due to his leadership and that of the leadership team. This has a positive impact on the pupils who regard the academy as a, *'second home, a place that is safe, where you are cared for and listened to.'* Parents also comment on the approachability of the Principal and the teachers and the caring nature of the academy. This they pin point to the leadership of the Principal and his Christian vision. A good professional development programme enhances and develops leadership within the academy. Relationships between the academy and the local Church are very good. The local Church, vicar and youth worker support the Principal and the academy both practically and spiritually. Monitoring and evaluating the school as a distinctive Christian academy, by all stakeholders is limited. Governors, in particular, are yet to fulfil this important role as leaders of the school. Evidence from robust evaluation is required by the leadership team to inform future action planning, as well as enabling the academy to celebrate what it does well.

SIAMS report October 2014 Christ Church Academy, Stone ST15 8JD