

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

### Minchinhampton Church of England (VC) Academy

School Road, Minchinhampton, Stroud, Gloucestershire, GL69BP	
<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Gloucester</b>
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Date of academy conversion	1 November 2014
Name of multi-academy trust	Diocese of Gloucester Academies Trust (DGAT)
Date/s of inspection	28 June 2017
Date of last inspection	12 June 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Controlled 141547
Principal	Nick Moss
Inspector's name and number	David Crunkhurn 884

#### School context

Minchinhampton Church of England primary academy is larger than average. It serves the town of Minchinhampton and surrounding hamlets. It became part of the Diocese of Gloucester Academy Trust (DGAT) in 2014. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well-below the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) is well-below the national average. There are currently 342 pupils on roll. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Minchinhampton as a Church of England Academy are outstanding

- The Principal, supported by a highly effective governing body, provides inspiring leadership. Together, they have created an ethos underpinned by Christian teaching, which has built a strong harmonious learning community.
- Religious Education (RE) is enthusiastically led by a highly motivated subject leader. She works hard to ensure that RE makes a significant contribution to the spiritual development of all pupils.
- There is a demonstrative commitment to sharing God's love with the whole community, through the development of a strong, compassionate pastoral team.
- The excellent partnership between the academy and local churches has an exceptional impact on the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils at the academy.

#### Areas to improve

- Further develop the training for pupils leading collective worship (CW) and the frequency they lead, in order to develop their confidence and spiritual awareness.
- Strengthen the distinctiveness of the school's values so that their Christian underpinning is well-known as they are lived out in the daily life of the academy.
- Make references to the academy's distinctive nature more prominent in documentation so that the Christian character of the academy is clearly evident.

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

Minchinhampton Church of England primary academy is an exceptionally reflective learning community. The principal has worked tirelessly to ensure that all decisions made reflect the academy's Christian character and impact positively on the outcomes of all pupils. The academy provides pupils with excellent and varied opportunities to discuss and reflect deeply on the big questions of life, whilst drawing meaning from its Christian values. Everyone is encouraged and supported to live out those values, which are woven effectively into the school's rich and varied curriculum. However, there are times when the pupils do not demonstrate a clear understanding of the distinctive Christian characteristics of the academy's values.

Relationships across all members of the academy are shaped by its Christian character and built upon its core Christian values of responsibility, perseverance and forgiveness. These provide the bedrock for all interactions with people inside the academy and in the wider community. There is a great deal of respect and courtesy between the adults and pupils and between the pupils themselves. Pupils are taught kindness and consideration to each other and to the adults who help them. Behaviour in classrooms and around the academy is excellent. The setting provides a stimulating environment in which pupils can learn and thrive. Displays are vibrant and thought-provoking, with many linking to Christian values. They provide both reflection and discussion opportunities, which contribute to a deep spiritual understanding of Christian life.

The extremely supportive and caring approach shown towards all families, is based upon a clear understanding of each pupil's unique needs. This is supported by the work of the academy's very effective pastoral team. Poor attendance and punctuality is rare. The self-esteem nurtured in this loving Christian academy enables the pupils to give of their best and make contributions, without fear of failure. Consequently pupils, including those with SEND, make at least the progress expected of them with some achieving better outcomes, because they enjoy coming to the academy.

Religious Education (RE) is led enthusiastically. The subject leader works diligently alongside staff and pupils, to ensure exciting learning experiences are provided. Pupils' comment on their enjoyment of RE and the opportunities it gives them to think deeply about matters of faith. RE lessons give the pupils an excellent understanding of both Christianity and other faiths. It contributes well towards pupils' spiritual and moral development and provides many opportunities for personal reflection. As Minchinhampton is a predominantly white British community, RE plays an important role in developing pupils understanding of more diverse communities. This is demonstrated in the way in which pupils show a high level of respect when talking about those of other faiths. Pupils also talk positively about their partnership with Nkokoto in Tanzania and the associated work that they have done in this area. The proactive approach to implementing the new locally agreed syllabus is ensuring there is continuous improvement in learning and teaching.

## **The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding**

Collective worship is given a high priority across the whole school community. It provides important moments for all pupils and staff of the academy to develop their collective and personal spirituality. It is fully inclusive and inspires pupils with faith as well as those with none. The planning of worship is based on the academy's Christian values and strong links with the church enable pupils to become familiar with aspects of church services, which they then use in academy-based worship. Monitoring and evaluating of worship by different groups within the academy, ensure that it is continually developing and making a positive impact. Parents join with pupils to celebrate class-led worship and at special times within church, such as Easter, Harvest and Christmas. These celebrations strengthen links between academy, church and community and are highly valued by parents.

The creation of a worship team has significantly increased the contribution that pupils make when they are able to take a leadership role. The principal and RE subject leader provide excellent support to pupils as they plan their worship times. This is developing pupils' confidence for sharing the key biblical messages within the values being shared. The engaging way that pupils lead worship, ask questions and lead reflection, not only develops their understanding of Anglican practice, but inspires their peers as future worship leaders within the academy. However, more opportunities should be given for the worship team to take a lead in church services, so they can further their leadership skills.

Collective worship includes teaching about the centrality of Jesus Christ and the Trinity and pupils understand who Jesus is and are aware that God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Pupils talk excitedly about the contribution that

worship makes to their daily lives. They recognise the importance of worship in shaping their personal relationships. For example, a group of pupils shared how the parable of the lost son showed them the importance of forgiving others. Another group explained how exploring values in worship pointed them back to the example of Jesus.

The prayer life of the academy has been strengthened using reflection spaces in different locations. Pupils talk with appreciation about the water garden as a place to pray and be still. They say that it is just one of the places that they can go to reflect or share quiet moments of friendship. 'Experience' journeys, led by the local church, provide additional opportunities for pupils to engage in spiritual reflection and connect with biblical messages. The development of personal reflection journals is supporting spiritual development and providing pupils with space to reflect on the Christian values explored in worship.

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

The principal is committed to leading the academy as a vibrant Christian community serving the locality. His strong leadership, supported by governors and the leader of RE, ensures that the school continues to grow as a distinctly Christian academy. The teachers, their assistants and other support staff are supportive and hard-working towards this common purpose. The vision is both nurturing and challenging and staff feel valued and respected in a school where morale is high and improvements are driven by values. One member of staff commented that he felt proud to be a member of the academy.

Governors and members of the academy trust are highly supportive of the school. They have a clear and well-informed understanding of the school's Christian distinctiveness and this is informed and led by their commitment to ongoing monitoring and evaluation. This includes conversations with pupils to gauge their experience and understanding and then incorporating improvements from their insightful observations and suggestions. Support from the Diocese of Gloucester Academy Trust (DGAT) is also ensuring that the academy continues to reflect and improve on its practice. It provides beneficial professional development and support for all staff, ensuring that leaders are fully equipped to lead with commitment to the academy's vision.

The commitment to the academy's Christian values results in strong pupil progress. This is enabling pupils to develop into caring, thoughtful and very well-behaved individuals. The academy's Christian character has a positive impact upon the well-being of the whole school community. All staff strive to provide a supportive and nurturing environment in which pupils, including the most vulnerable, achieve the best outcomes possible. Excellent relationships exist between both children and adults, and the academy and the church. The relationship with the parish church is a particular strength of the academy and very much an integral part of school life. The local clergy play a key part in the development of its distinctively Christian character. They lead acts of worship, spend time with pupils and come alongside staff to support and guide the planning process for RE and collective worship.

There is a clear focus on meeting the needs of the individual child through a well-developed and effective self-evaluation process that places the uniqueness of each child at the heart of school improvement. However, the Christian distinctiveness of the school needs to be made clearer on key documentation so that the Christian foundation for policy and procedure is made obvious. All statutory requirements for collective worship and religious education are met.

SIAMS report June 2017 Minchinhampton Church of England Primary Academy, Stroud, Gloucestershire GL6 9BP