

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Archbishop Holgate's School

Hull Road, York. YO10 5ZA	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	York
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Date of academy conversion	April 2011
Name of multi-academy trust	Pathfinder Multi Academy Trust (MAT)
Date/s of inspection	19 - 20 October 2017
Date of last inspection	4 - 5 October 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Secondary Academy 136617
Headteacher	Andrew Daly
Inspector's name and number	Kathryn Wright 436

School context

This large 11-18 school primarily serves its local community, particularly since the closure of a neighbouring school in 2012. The intake of the school has grown significantly since the last inspection, including an expanding sixth form. The proportion of pupils receiving pupil premium has increased (21%) as has the number of pupils with SEN and EAL. In August 2016, the school formed the Pathfinder MAT with like-minded church and community schools. There are currently eight schools in the MAT. The headteacher has been in post for seven years, although there have been some changes within the senior leadership since the last inspection. A building programme has taken place to accommodate the increasing numbers of students.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Archbishop Holgate's as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The Christian values of compassion, forgiveness, trust and justice permeate all aspects of school life leading to excellent academic outcomes and exceptional spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all students.
- The Christian vocation, passion and vision of the leadership team and governors ensure that the school faithfully upholds and celebrates its Christian foundation effectively serving the local and wider community.
- The importance placed on collective worship and spiritual reflection ensures that the Christian ethos is central to daily life and promotes an atmosphere of calmness and peace.
- The inspirational leadership and exceptionally high profile of religious education (RE) affirms its place as a core subject and leads to excellent achievement for all students.

Areas to improve

- As the school continues to expand, ensure the Christian vision and values drive all decision-making processes making sure that every member of the school community continues to be nurtured and allowed to flourish.
- Provide more regular and planned opportunities for students to lead, organise and evaluate all forms of collective worship to foster their spiritual development and confidence as worship leaders.
- Give students more opportunities to collaborate, debate and discuss complex theological beliefs and practices in RE in order to further support their skills of verbal reasoning, interpretation and analysis.

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

Archbishop Holgate's is a school where real opportunities for transformation exist. Students are inspired through the Christian vision and relentless outworking of the four values to live effectively as global citizens. These values are lived out in all aspects of school life resulting in confident, articulate young people who are ready to serve others in their community and the wider world; one student spoke of 'being a voice for change' and another of 'wanting to give something back to the community'. Students confidently link the values to biblical teachings including parables and in particular the notion of being 'living stones' (1 Peter 2 v5). Every individual is seen as a child of God, where each and every one matters. This is notable through the restorative and reconciliatory approaches to behaviour for learning, and creative and inventive approaches to pastoral care. This has resulted in increasing levels of attendance and a reduction in all forms of bullying. In addition, the importance of being an inclusive school has resulted in sensitive approaches to lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender awareness and to an increasingly varied range of curriculum pathways for Key Stage 4 and 5 students.

The effectiveness of the school's inclusive approach is evidenced through standards achieved by students. The school consistently performs significantly above the national average, including in Post 16 vocational provision as well as in A levels and GCSE. High aspirations for all ensure that progress is outstanding, including for vulnerable and disadvantaged students. Data and tracking show that gaps for all groups of learners is closing year on year.

The provision and promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development is prominent through the timetabled curriculum and enrichment opportunities. All curriculum subjects make explicit links to the living out of the values and this was particularly noticeable in English and history. Spiritual development is well understood by students in terms of thinking deeply, being aware of the intangible and having opportunities for reflection. Students benefit from taking part in the Archbishop of York's Young Leader's Award. This places Christian service at the heart of the school providing numerous opportunities for students to take part in fundraising, voluntary work and community action. Students have an excellent appreciation of the diverse nature of communities and society. They have a comprehensive understanding of Christianity as a global faith through explicit units of work in RE as well as wider whole school links with the Diocese of Cape Town and an optional annual pilgrimage to Taize for students. These experiences enabled students to grow in their own journey of faith, explore the meaning of life and meet people from around the world.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is intrinsic to the life of the school. Worship is a distinct part of the day and is inspirational, transformative and inclusive. It has a significant impact on the daily lives of students including in relation to their attitudes, behaviour and desire to undertake community service. The 'Thought for the Day' is well organised and an essential element to the start of the day providing a time of stillness and calm. These reflections allow pupils to become aware of the wider national and global church.

The role of both a full-time lay chaplain and part-time ordained chaplain are well established and central to the leadership of the school. The lay chaplain has key role in ensuring the school's distinctiveness has a positive impact on every student and the wider school community. Worship is exceptionally well planned and structured to ensure links with the liturgical calendar, and the core Christian values of the school, whilst allowing for opportunities to reflect on national and global events. Students participate actively in Form Time worship which enables them to consider and critique a range of Christian teachings and narratives. Some students have opportunities to give readings, lead music and perform drama especially during the annual Minster carol service. However, although chapel worship provides excellent opportunities for thoughtful contemplation, students are largely non-participative and some would like to be more actively engaged and have more opportunities to lead and organise worship. Students have a good grasp of a range of worship styles and traditions, including Anglican practice. Clergy from a range of local denominations, as well as teaching staff, lead chapel and year group worship. Many students are able to express an understanding of the Trinitarian nature of God and give explicit examples of the teachings of Jesus that have challenged or inspired them.

Students have a well-developed understanding of prayer, which has been enhanced through the introduction of prayer spaces events in Key Stage 3 and the creation of a spiritual garden. The school places importance on Holy Communion giving all students the opportunity to learn about it and participate as appropriate. This is linked closely to RE lessons so pupils understand its meaning and significance for Christians. Monitoring of worship by the leadership and governors is robust, and leads to regular re-evaluation of practice.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

Religious education (RE) is regarded as 'The Jewel in the Crown' of the school. It is a top priority being seen as a core subject, essential to the living out of the Christian vision. Strategic decisions have been taken to ensure that RE is taught by a highly qualified and experienced team who are innovative and inspirational. RE is a leading department demonstrating consistently effective teaching and learning, providing a challenging curriculum and enthusing young people to be game changers in the world. Students hold the subject in high esteem, valuing its role in terms of understanding the world around them and supporting community cohesion. The emphasis on developing religious and theological literacy leads to a significant number of students developing a life-long interest in the study of religion and belief. The most effective teaching establishes robust tasks and higher order questioning with opportunities for students to debate and discuss amongst themselves. Students have a good command of religious and philosophical language and are able to deliberate questions relating to truth and morality.

Progress and standards are outstanding. GCSE (89.1% A*-C) and A level (100% A*-E) performance is exceptional, and a continually improving picture. High aspirations and the desire to meet the needs of all learners means teachers are focused on effective differentiation and closing the gaps for the most vulnerable students. Assessment, marking and feedback procedures are well established, and students are very confident about how to make progress in the subject. The curriculum is well designed in Key Stage 3 to prepare students for GCSE study and reflect the new Diocesan syllabus. The introduction of the 'Understanding Christianity' resource is supporting students theological thinking. The inclusion of comparative religious study, thematic units and encounters with religious believers ensure a balanced approach and enable students to consider the impact of belief on authentic believers in their community. The curriculum and priority given to the subject reflects the Church of England Education Office Statement of Entitlement (2016).

The subject is exceptionally well led. The Head of RE is innovative and forward thinking in her role. She, and her team, take advantage of professional development opportunities and the impact of this is seen classroom practice, planning and curriculum development. The department are developing their role in leading RE beyond their school through supporting primaries and other schools. The department priorities are clear and developed through vigorous monitoring and self-evaluation.

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

The leadership team and governors articulate a comprehensive Christian vision which is implemented and lived out with passion, drive and commitment. This underpins all strategic and policy decisions the school makes, including those in its role as a lead school within the Pathfinder MAT and the Teaching School Alliance. The headteacher models this through servant leadership inspiring all his staff to approach everything they do with compassion and love. The 'threefold' vision of values, care and achievement expresses clearly the desire of the school to provide the best possible education to students. The use of the biblical analogy of 'living stones' emphasises the importance of each individual being uniquely gifted and all being part of the foundation of the community. A distributive leadership model means Christian distinctiveness permeates all aspects of school life including staff and student wellbeing, induction for new staff, performance management and pastoral care. Regular times of spiritual reflection for all staff, led by the ordained chaplain, establish the Christian gospel as central in school life.

The local governors and MAT board provide a significant level of challenge and critique in terms of holding the school to account in relation to specific Christian dimensions. The one key issue from the previous inspection relating to increasing visits to places of worship has been met comprehensively. In addition, the school set its own development points in light of increasing expansion to ensure that the values and vision were embedded and strengthened. This has been identified by the school as an area for continued focus over the coming years. The school's self-evaluation is robust, detailed and honest. Religious education, collective worship and the chaplaincy lie at the heart of the school. This is reflected in the senior leadership structure and the priority given to RE in terms of timetabling and professional development opportunities. All statutory requirements for worship and RE are met.

Partnerships with the community, universities, local churches, Christian groups and Diocese are highly effective. Parents feel part of a family where all are cared for. They have a coherent understanding of the school's vision and many chose to send their children to the school because of its reputation of providing outstanding support for the most vulnerable. Parents feel listened to and well informed through face to face conversations as well as through newsletters and use of social media. Relationships with other schools within the MAT, university partners through the Teaching School Alliance, and with the Diocese are regarded as a priority in terms of implementing the Christian vision and serving the wider educational community. This forward-thinking approach promotes the sustainability and growth of future Church school leadership.