



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Queen Elizabeth's Academy

150 Chesterfield Road South
Mansfield
Nottingham
NG19 7AP

Previous SIAMS grade: N/A

Current inspection grade: Satisfactory

Diocese: Southwell and Nottingham

Local authority: N/A

Dates of inspection: 8 and 9 October 2015

Date of last inspection: N/A

School's unique reference number: 137749

Principal: Mike Smith

Inspector's name and number: Jo Fageant (104)

Academy context

Queen Elizabeth School became an academy sponsored by the Schools Partnership Trust Academies (SPTA) in association with the Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham in January 2012 and a new principal took up post in April of that year. It was judged by Ofsted to require special measures in October 2013 and in April 2015 was assessed to be making reasonable progress. During this period there have been significant staff changes including an almost entirely new senior leadership team and education advisory board (governors). After a time without a chaplain, a teacher from within the academy was appointed to the role, alongside a teaching commitment, at the start of this academic year. Students are mainly of white British heritage with a higher than average number being eligible for pupil premium funding and having significantly lower than average attainment on entry. Currently undersubscribed, numbers in the sixth form and Year 7 have increased significantly.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Queen Elizabeth Academy as a Church of England academy are satisfactory

- The Christian faith of key leaders and a sense of Christian vocation experienced by a significant number of staff are strengthening the distinctiveness of the academy's ethos.
- Good relations with local churches and the diocese, along with the recent appointment of a new chaplain, provide a significant Christian influence in the life of the academy.
- Christian love for all members of the academy community underpins a commitment to challenge staff and students alike, to do the best they can and be the best they can be.
- Being explicit about the Christian status of the academy in the appointment of all new staff is ensuring a more coherent and shared sense of purpose supporting the journey of transformation.

Areas to improve

- Agree, articulate clearly and live out a distinctive Christian vision for the academy which is used to determine, explain and evaluate decisions and strategies aimed at providing the best education for all students.
- Enrich the worship life of the academy by engaging students in planning, leading and evaluating it in its various contexts.
- Enhance the distinctiveness of the academy by ensuring the statutory requirements for collective worship and religious education (RE) are fully met and appropriately resourced.

The academy, through its distinctive Christian character, is satisfactory at meeting the needs of all learners

This is an academy on a journey of improvement. The motivation for many leading this journey is founded in their Christian faith. It is consistently expressed through decisions and actions that are credited with making a positive difference in many aspects of academy life. Christian love for all staff and students is said to be about pastoral care which includes challenge to achieve professionally and academically. There are, however, ongoing inconsistencies in students' achievement in different areas of the curriculum. A clear system of rewards and sanctions motivates improved behaviour, relationships, application to learning and attendance. Students are enjoying the new experience of being grouped in mixed age tutor groups with the opportunities for new friendships, support and responsibilities this brings. Leaders have provided training and insisted on certain lesson protocols to bring about greater consistency in the experiences of learners. There is a very new initiative to ensure all teachers take account of students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development in their planning. Students acknowledge that behaviour and lessons have improved. They appreciate the efforts of teachers who make learning interesting and fun with a number identifying maths as an area of particular improvement. They say the academy is a caring place and express confidence that any problems are resolved swiftly through the use of restorative practices. Queen Elizabeth describes itself as 'an inclusive academy' and for some this has involved a focus on caring for the most vulnerable and troubled students. They go out of their way to provide personalised learning and pastoral support which, for some, enables and ensures their continued engagement with the academy. This level of care has resulted in there being no permanent and very few fixed term exclusions during the leadership of the current principal. A programme to explore values from a Christian perspective has been introduced this term through SMSC focused tutor time and collective worship. Students are able to talk about their thoughts on 'wisdom' which is the first of the values to be explored. It is not yet possible to judge the impact of the many new initiatives motivated by a Christian commitment to improve the life chances and choices for students. However, students appreciate the opportunity to learn about and explore faith and religious diversity through RE. The depth of their understanding can be seen in accounts of how some students, then in Year 9, arrived at designs for a stained glass window in the chapel and illustrations of stations of the cross for the cloisters. These are permanent illustrations of how their learning in RE has contributed to the Christian environment of this academy.

The impact of collective worship on the academy community is satisfactory

The new chaplain, working with the chaplaincy support group, has developed a consistent approach to collective worship. It happens for each house group once a week. It is firmly focused on twelve values selected by the academy for exploration from a Christian perspective. As a consequence, there is always a strong focus on Biblical teachings along with profound statements from other sources. These are chosen to help students reflect on their relevance to their own lives. Music, the lighting of a candle and an invitation to pray are consistent elements which help to create an appropriate experience. This is sometimes disturbed by noise from the kitchen area attached to the hall, making it difficult for everyone to hear clearly. There are also occasions when worship takes place in church and church style services are held in school enabling the experience of Anglican tradition and practice. This means students develop an understanding of festivals associated with the person of Jesus and they hear the language of the Christian belief in God as three in one. There is no formal evaluation of the extent to which staff and students value time given to worship and the messages shared within it. However, relationships, attitudes and behaviour have been improved through reflective engagement with Christian values. The long tradition of worship in the school, enriched by clergy and chaplain involvement, and the existence of a chapel within the building were sources of support and comfort when the community had to deal with a recent tragedy. A small number of staff value the opportunity to attend a regular early morning Holy Communion in the chapel led by a variety of clergy. Procedures to monitor and evaluate worship have only just been introduced and have mainly commented on what has happened rather than its impact. Chance conversations often reveal profound responses. However, there is no strategy in place to collect reflections from students and staff of all persuasions which could help leaders gauge the success of the current programme and inform future developments. Worship is led by a variety of staff and visitors but there are too few opportunities for students to plan and lead.

The effectiveness of the religious education is satisfactory

The introduction of the new Nottinghamshire syllabus for the subject, together with recent staff absence and changes in role means RE has been, and continues to be, in a time of transition. The two experienced RE teachers work part time within the humanities faculty. Initiatives introduced to improve the quality and variety of teaching within the academy are reflected in their work. As a consequence, students in Years 7-9 learn well and are fully engaged in RE because teachers structure their lessons to address the varying needs and abilities of all students. They use positive language, develop good classroom relationships and successfully communicate high expectations of effort and behaviour. Their approach demonstrates the academy's aspiration: *Inspire, Transform, Succeed*. Their good resources help students understand their targets and how to achieve them. Detailed marking ensures they understand what they have done well and what they need to do to improve. Using guidance information and the academy-wide green and red pen marking scheme develops students' ability to mark one another's work and reflect upon their own. Units of work, planned around big questions, have a strong emphasis on students' own SMSC development as well as the improvement of their understanding of Christianity and other religions. Standards of attainment are in line with the expectations of the previous Nottinghamshire RE syllabus. The systems of assessment in the new syllabus have not yet been established. In previous years there have been students following GCSE RE courses. However, understood to be the result of several factors, no one opted for the subject this year. 'Drop down' days are said to include elements of RE for Key Stage 4 students. However, the topics identified include too little focus on knowledge and understanding of religion(s), as opposed to personal and spiritual development, to allow students to make discernible progress in the subject. The same is true of the situation for post 16 students, where there is also no opportunity to study for an A level in RE.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the academy as a church academy is satisfactory

The Christian faith of the principal, some governors, and a significant number of other staff provides their motivation to bring about improvement in this academy. Some staff openly express a sense of vocation, and even Christian calling, to work in the academy. This is now a place where people feel confident to express their faith openly, knowing it will be respected. The principal is widely appreciated for his visible presence around the academy, his open door policy, commitment and consistency. Initiatives he has led and supported are perceived to have made the academy a calmer place where behaviour has significantly improved. The appointment of a replacement chaplain, good links with local churches and a well-used chapel within the academy all provide clear evidence of the academy's Christian foundation. However, despite this, there is no clearly articulated vision, rooted in distinctively Christian teachings and values, to enable everyone within and beyond the academy to understand the significance of this. Ideals expressed in the words *Inspire, Transform, Achieve*, together with Christian values explored through the collective worship and SMSC programmes, underpin initiatives in an implicit way. However, they do not provide an explicit, shared rationale for evaluation, decisions and actions. Including a focus on the Christian status of the academy in the appointment of the large number of new staff has, nevertheless, brought about a more coherent and shared sense of purpose. This has resulted in rigorous systems of monitoring, evaluation and data analysis which inform the work of leaders and governors. They have a thorough understanding of the strengths and continuing areas of challenge within the academy. Using this they have dealt with many problems which were, and continue to be, barriers to improvement with resolution and respect for the dignity of all individuals. Training opportunities for staff are linked with the outcomes of monitoring and represent a mix of targeted support, directed training and self-selected opportunities. Providers include the National College, SPTA and the Diocese. Some staff have worked towards becoming outstanding teachers and others have developed leadership skills, some with particular focus on church schools. An innovative programme of in-house training draws on the expertise of teachers across the academy to share their skills and support one another. This, together with the inspired 'Teaching and Learning Oscars' evening, builds confidence within an inclusive, valuing ethos. New staff identify this as something they appreciate. Collective worship and RE are regarded as important and influential elements of church schools. In this academy good provision has been made, through the appointment of a new chaplain, for the further development of collective worship. However, neither this nor RE currently meet statutory requirements because worship is not provided every day for all students and there is no RE in Years 10-13 which would enable students to continue to make progress with their learning in this subject.