

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Archbishop Sancroft VA High School

Wilderness Lane, Harleston, Norfolk, IP20 9DD

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Norwich
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Norfolk
Name of multi-academy trust / federation	N/A
Date/s of inspection	17-18 May 2017
Date of last inspection	14 March 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Aided 121188
Headteacher	Richard Cranmer
Inspector's name and number	Canon Linda Burton 462

School context

The school is a smaller than average sized 11-16 secondary school with 367 pupils on roll. It serves Harleston and the surrounding villages. Its three catchment primary schools, with which in 2016 it created a formal partnership called the Sancroft Church Schools Trust, are all Church of England schools. Relationships between the four schools are very positive. Almost all pupils at Archbishop Sancroft are from White British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is above the national average and the proportion of those for whom pupil premium (deprivation) funding is received is slightly less than the national average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Archbishop Sancroft as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The school's Christian ethos is valued by all members of the school community, and has a significant positive impact on behaviour, relationships and attitudes to learning.
- Excellent pastoral and academic support of all pupils, arising from the school's Christian values, means that all are nurtured with compassion.
- The impact of outstanding practice in religious education (RE) permeates pupils' learning experiences throughout the school.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development is nurtured in a variety of practical ways, enabling pupils to play an important part in defining the Christian character of the school.

Areas to improve

- Improve the consistency and rigour of monitoring and evaluation of collective worship, by governors and all other members of the school's community, so that it drives future development and leads to effective improvement.

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

Its clear and embedded Christian ethos is at the heart of the life and work of Archbishop Sancroft High School (ASHS). Jesus' promise in John 10:10 of 'life in all its fullness' takes pride of place in the school and this aspiration resounds throughout the school's vision statement. It strengthens understanding of the school's core values (love, hope, forgiveness, trust, service) which are widely understood from a Christian perspective. These are set within a well-established wider set of key values, which are shared by all schools in the Sancroft Church Schools Trust. The depth of responses by pupils and adults to the deaths of former pupils in a road accident earlier this year demonstrated unmistakably the impact of the school's Christian values and the Gospel aspiration for full and fulfilling lives for all on the whole school community.

The headteacher is an outstanding Christian role model and, with his whole staff team, clearly has a hugely significant impact on relationships being of the highest quality throughout the school. All stakeholders readily describe the school as an inclusive 'family' in which pupils of all ability levels and backgrounds are known well as individuals, are cared for and supported, and are given the very best opportunities. In turn, these values underpin the excellent relationships between pupils that are evident throughout the school and impacts positively on their very good personal development and wellbeing. They are shown in daily school life, in outstanding pupil behaviour and attitudes. The school community recognises the importance of vertical tutor groups to its 'family life', as older and younger family members support, care for and celebrate with each other. The impact of pupil leadership on the school's life is very strong because pupils understand the nature of leadership and relate the expectations of pupil leadership to the school's Christian values. This was evident in the seriousness with which pupils prepared for and delivered their presentations for leadership positions, fully reflecting these values. Parents greatly appreciate the unstinting work by the school's head of student support and all staff for their children and other family members. Effective transition arrangements ensure that pupils begin Year 7 feeling happy and secure, so have every opportunity to flourish from the start of their life in the school. The increased impact of the school's distinctive Christian character and values since the last denominational inspection is seen in how successfully aspirations have been raised and developments have been driven.

Examination results over time show that this is a strong and improving school. Pupils make good progress across all subject areas, with all cohorts in the school on track to meet or exceed national expectations for progress between key stages 2 and 4. Progress by disadvantaged pupils has improved well over time and is strong. Sustained, imaginative and creative work with the 'A Team' (nurture provision for pupils with significant special educational needs) has major long-term impact on the lives of these most vulnerable pupils. It equips them to go 'from ASHS to anywhere' and shows clearly what 'living life to the full' means at this school.

Opportunities for SMSC development across the school are rich and diverse and pupils' responses, particularly in RE, show depth and maturity. Pupils recognise the importance of charitable giving as putting into practice the school's Christian values. RE makes a very significant contribution to pupils' appreciation of diversity and differences of belief within Christianity and in other faith communities, including opportunities to explore Christianity as a multicultural, worldwide faith. The school's Christian values permeate the RE scheme of learning in both key stages.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is a central and important part of school life. Pupils describe it as 'really good', 'inspiring', and 'captivating'. They recall vividly a large number of specific acts of worship, how relevant they were to their own lives and how their moral messages and values help, challenge and 'make you want to act upon them'. As a result, pupils are committed to charity work to support communities locally and globally. The Sancroft Church Schools Trust schools share a three year rolling programme of half termly worship themes based on its set of key values into which Christmas and Easter are incorporated. Founded on biblical material and Christian teaching, these are sufficiently inclusive to enable pupils to engage with Christianity without feeling their own personal beliefs to be at all compromised. Mixed age house worship, regularly led by a range of local clergy and foundation governors, enables pupils to experience different expressions of 'church' locally.

Planning for worship follows a four-fold structure and includes biblical material, a prayer and a stimulus for reflection and in these ways contains elements of Anglican liturgical practice. Worship encourages pupils to develop a sound understanding of key Christian beliefs. Pupil leadership of worship has increased since the last inspection, particularly of tutor group worship. Pupils value the increased provision for reflection and prayer available through the range of creative opportunities at the school's Oasis Prayer Space, created since the previous inspection. These include an annual prayer space event and the weekly meeting there of the local community church.

Progress has been made on the issue identified in the previous inspection report in that some foundation governor monitoring of worship now occurs; recently a small group of pupils has begun to monitor, evaluate and develop the collective worship programme. However, tools used to monitor and evaluate the quality and impact of worship throughout the school are limited and their use is not sufficiently systematic or longstanding to enable monitoring to feed into a process of substantial ongoing improvement.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

RE has a very high profile in the school and its positive impact on the school's Christian ethos and values is recognised throughout the school community. Its popularity and the high esteem in which it is held by pupils and school leaders led to the introduction of full course GCSE for all pupils in 2014. In this way, its high standing in the school has been strengthened further since the previous inspection. Through RE, pupils gain a rich appreciation and understanding of Christianity, other religions, difference and diversity. The whole school community recognises fully that the value of the subject is about more than examination success and understands that what pupils learn prepares and equips them exceptionally well for their adult lives in the wider world. The well-established Subject Leader brings to the department significant subject expertise, clarity of vision and understanding, and a huge passion for the subject. Her inspiring leadership and motivation of non-specialist staff, and the resourcing of their teaching, ensures that all pupils equally have access to high-quality learning experiences in RE. Planning, teaching and assessment practices are of the highest quality in RE.

The particularly creative and engaging learning opportunities provided by the Subject Leader and her colleagues enable each individual pupil to be effectively challenged, achieve their personal best and experience a sense of achievement in their learning. As a result, pupils make exceptional progress. They consistently perform as well or better at GCSE than in other subjects in the school and better than pupils in other schools nationally. The proportion of A*/A grades is higher than for any other subject in the school and above national trends. Leadership and management of RE is highly effective. Having been one of the first schools nationally to achieve the Gold RE Quality Mark in 2012, it was re-accredited in 2015. The department keeps up to date and is well informed about national developments and best practice in RE and this drives ongoing curriculum development. In recent years, learning in RE has become increasingly led by pupils as they engage with highly challenging issues and theological questions. Creative teaching strategies enable pupils to develop and use a range of skills including enquiry, analysis, interpretation, evaluation and reflection. The standing of RE in the whole school has increased since the previous inspection. The Subject Leader has taken a lead role in whole school initiatives to improve assessment practices, make effective use of practice examinations and improve the provision of revision materials for A/A* pupils. All of these initiatives have had a positive impact on standards of teaching and learning across the school.

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

The headteacher articulates a passionate Christian vision for the community of ASHS to experience 'life in all its fullness' and this vision is embraced fully by the senior leadership team and governors. School leaders have brought about significant improvements in the school since the last inspection. They take pride in the school's distinctive Christian character, and their depth of commitment is evident in significant decisions taken about the school's direction and curriculum. For example, the value of minority curriculum subjects in adding to the 'fullness' of life for pupils has been recognised and safeguarded, despite financial pressures. The introduction of full course GCSE RE for all pupils demonstrates the importance leaders give to pupils' SMSC development and their view of the fundamental importance of RE within the life of this church school. The status and influence of RE within the school, and the high standards attained by pupils in this subject, go well beyond statutory requirements.

Foundation governors encourage and challenge the headteacher in promoting the vision of the school. Revision of the school's vision statement in 2015 reflected the school's focus on raising aspirations and increasing levels of challenge across the school. This was led by foundation governors, who consulted and involved representatives of the diocese and the wider community. The formation of the Sancroft Church Schools Trust in 2016 was a clear indicator to the wider community of how highly the cluster schools value their unique status. Parents are very supportive of the school's Christian foundation.

Leaders, including governors, prioritise monitoring and improvement of the effectiveness and distinctiveness of the school through the work of a dedicated committee, led by a foundation governor. Their role does not currently extend to the effective monitoring and evaluation of collective worship, however. Pupils, members of staff and governors are extensively involved with local churches and their activities, to their mutual benefit. A joint project with Rotary and Pulham Church focussed on pupils training as peace advocates, delivering a weekly peace programme. Relationships between the school and parents are excellent. The school works closely with the diocese; a recent best practice video, made at the request of the diocese, featured outstanding models of Christian leadership at the school. The headteacher makes a significant contribution to church school education nationally and is a regular contributor to the education pages of the Diocese of Norwich's magazine. Governors ensure that statutory requirements for worship are met.

SIAMS report May 2017 Archbishop Sancroft Church of England High School Harleston Norfolk IP20 9DD