

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Chiltern Hills Academy			
Address	Chartridge Lane, Chesham, Buckinghamshire. HP5 2RG		
Date of inspection	5-6 March 2020	Status of school	Secondary Academy inspected as VA
Diocese	Oxford	URN	137280

Overall Judgement	How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?	Grade	Good
Additional Judgements	The impact of collective worship	Grade	Good
	The effectiveness of religious education (RE)	Grade	Good

School context

Chiltern Hills Academy is a secondary school with 965 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage with just over one third coming from minority ethnic groups. Many pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is below national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and /or disabilities is above the national average. The largest group with a religious affiliation in the academy is Muslim.

The school's Christian vision

We encourage every person in our community to create, aspire and excel to 'Live life in all its fullness' (John 10:10) through our dedication to the seven Christian values of love, hope, self-discipline, compassion, forgiveness, respect and honesty.

We foster an environment within which all young people develop the moral and spiritual values which help them to become active, thoughtful and considerate citizens.

Key findings

- The academy's Christian vision and values are firmly rooted in the Bible. They powerfully infuse all areas of the life and mission of this diverse academy. This creates an environment where everyone flourishes and achieves well.
- The energetic commitment and integrity of the principal, strongly supported by leaders, governors and staff, brings a deep sense of community and purpose to the academy.
- The academy is highly inclusive, and tireless in supporting all of its pupils and staff. Because of this, each person is known, nurtured and inspired. This enables them to make strong progress from their starting points.
- Collective worship is a focal point for the whole school community. It strongly reflects the school's vision and values, and often provides opportunities for celebration, reflection and inspiration in a Christian context.
- Pupils find religious education to be inspiring and engaging. The subject is skilfully led and well taught. There are many worthwhile opportunities for pupils to safely explore and respond to religious themes and questions. This enables a thorough appreciation of Christianity and different faiths and of the importance and relevance of religion in today's world.

Areas for development

- Promote and embed in the curriculum, a deeper understanding of spirituality to enable pupils to fluently articulate its meaning and impact on themselves and others.
- Improve the monitoring and evaluation of collective worship during form time. This will ensure that all pupils benefit from opportunities to engage in meaningful worship and reflection.
- Extend and develop active links with churches or organisations at a global level in order to promote deeper perspectives on Christian life and experience.

How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?

Inspection findings

The academy's vision and values are firmly rooted in the Bible and infuse every area of its life and work. They are integral to all aspects of decision making and policy. This results in profound impact on the way in which all pupils flourish and become confident, successful and mature individuals. The strong, visionary leadership of the principal and his team is dedicated to meeting everyone's needs. The diocese is proactive in the academy through beneficial and supportive partnerships which are widely acknowledged and valued by the academy community. Together these contribute to the positive, purposeful, focused atmosphere which characterises the academy.

Provision for the welfare of pupils and staff is a significant strength and is driven by a determination to remove any barriers to learning. Highly effective teams who oversee special needs and pastoral care are rigorous in ensuring inclusion and wellbeing for every individual. Application of the academy vision and values mean that all are welcomed, respected and accepted for who they are. It helps pupils to build resilience and character and enables them to embrace and welcome difference and diversity. Additional support for mental health and wellbeing comes from members of the sixth form who have been trained through the MIND Peer Mentoring Scheme. This leads to the real sense that everyone in the academy looks out for those who may be experiencing troubles and offers care or signposting to further advice. This helps to ensure that no one who may be struggling or who has difficulties goes unnoticed. One sixth form student said, 'The academy and our Christian values helps me so much as a person. It has always helped me to improve myself'. Staff reported that they feel very well supported and cared for by colleagues, leaders and the chaplain.

The academy's Christian vision to 'Live life in all its fullness' drives the design for a relevant curriculum and effectively supports reflection on the Christian values. Great care is taken to ensure that all staff are aware of the needs of each individual. Academic data shows pupils moving towards, achieving and exceeding their targets. A varied range of extracurricular activities enable pupils to broaden perspectives. Because lessons are interesting, relevant and varied, pupils' attendance is good and there is a calm and purposeful atmosphere throughout the academy. Pupils look beyond their own community through fundraising for local, national and international charities and a biennial Global Challenge expedition. At present, there are limited opportunities to develop this into an understanding of how they can challenge injustice and engage in social action. However, in the local area, the compelling, courageous advocacy of one academy student is having a very significant and growing impact. The focus is the problem of vehicle emissions and the health of the community and the campaign's influence is reaching national and international television audiences.

Links with the local church are strong and the work of the academy chaplain and church youth worker are effective. Their role is significant in helping the academy community to understand, appreciate and apply the Chiltern Seven Christian Values. At present the academy has not established significant links at a global level with churches or organisations.

Behaviour in lessons and around the academy is very good and relationships are strong and respectful. One pupil said, 'We're not bothered about difference here. We all get along very well and let each other be themselves.' If pupils do fall short of the academy's high expectations, forgiveness, reconciliation and restorative justice are quickly offered and relationships are restored. Pupils are helped in various ways to develop their spirituality. However, there is only a limited shared language and vocabulary of spirituality in the school to take their understanding to a greater depth. Parents are enthusiastic about the academy and its work. They speak of the transformation which has taken place since becoming a Church academy. They identify how effective it is in living its Christian vision and values and the high regard in which it is held in the community. One parent said, 'It's such a happy school. It's a pleasure to be a part of it and know that Christian values are its heartbeat.'

Collective worship is a focal point of the life of the academy and unfailingly promotes and endorses its seven key Christian values. Well-planned themes linked to the academy vision, values and the church year, are often related to contemporary and world issues. Pupils and staff value times of worship. In a skilfully planned and very well led year-group worship, pupils were linked through video to people around the world. Through this, they were challenged about real cases of the negative impact of humans on God's creation and how they could individually respond. Pupils spoke of their appreciation of such relevant and thought-provoking ways to link Bible teaching

to real life application. Pupils are confident and willing to lead prayers and readings and they have some involvement in the planning of themes and content. Time for reflection and response is an important element of the academy's daily routine. Pupils speak reflectively about the Chiltern Seven Values which are applied equally to members of the academy community, whatever their background or belief. At present the Lord's Prayer and Anglican traditions of worship are not used. The monitoring and evaluation of form-group worship in some year groups is not effective or robust.

RE is skilfully and enthusiastically led and is well taught by specialist teachers. The carefully planned curriculum enables pupils to gain a clear understanding of the importance of faith. Pupils often talk enthusiastically about these lessons and can express their views and opinions confidently, safely and respectfully. One pupil said, 'I like how we go for big questions and have good arguments and challenge each other's thinking. Sometimes it all makes my brain hurt!' They develop a clear understanding of Christianity as a living, worldwide faith. Different world faiths are taught, helping pupils to compare, contrast and evaluate their own understanding of belief. They value the subject which provides opportunities for relevant, extended exploration of religious perspectives on contemporary themes and issues.

RE is an inclusive and safe space in which pupils flourish because of the effective teaching of challenging content. Opinions are valued and misconceptions are tackled with sensitivity. A-level Religious Studies is offered, and sixth form students highlight the value of a core RE programme which focuses on faith perspectives on contemporary issues.



The effectiveness of RE is Good.

Well-qualified teachers work with skill and focus. Teaching is targeted, challenging and supportive. This leads to strong levels of positive engagement from pupils. It secures sound progress through interesting learning opportunities which promote pupils' clear understanding. High attainment is the result of the effective teaching of a well-planned RE curriculum. Consequently, pupils make at least good, and often, very strong progress from their various starting points.

Principal	Kevin Patrick
Inspector's name and number	Peter Coates 937