



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

All Saints Church of England Academy

Pennycross
Plymouth
PL5 3NE

Diocese: Exeter

Local authority: Plymouth City Council
 Dates of inspection: 30 April & 1 May 2013
 Date of last inspection: No previous inspection
 School's unique reference number: 136142
 Headteacher: Mr P Grainger
 Inspector's name and number: John Rudge (704)

School context

In 2010, All Saints was established as an academy sponsored by the Church of England in partnership with the University of St Mark and St John and Plymouth City Council. It is of average size, set in a socially challenging area. Ability on entry is low and very few students come from Christian family backgrounds. The curriculum operates on the basis of a 2-year Key Stage 3 and a 3-year Key Stage 4, and post-16 provision. A current extensive building programme includes a chapel on site. A chaplain has been appointed, and combines the role with that of assistant principal. The school is situated close to St Pancras church, with which it has community links.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of All Saints Academy as a Church of England school are good

The school has a strong sense of its Christian distinctiveness and vision. This is expressed throughout its educational provision and community life. It also maintains a clearly inclusive ethos in which all students, whatever their background, are valued and supported in their learning. Effective progress has been made in developing the spiritual, moral, social and cultural life of the school community.

Established strengths

- The deepening and evolving Christian vision and commitment of the school's leadership to carrying this forward
- The effectiveness of Christian values in underpinning support for learning for students across the ability range
- The central role of collective worship in the daily life of the whole school

Focus for development

- Strengthening the school's role and involvement in the local community
- Raising the status of Religious Education (RE) by enhancing its profile and esteem within

the whole school curriculum, particularly through its provision for examination courses

- Ensuring that there is effective formal monitoring and evaluation of collective worship

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

Five core values (truth, justice, forgiveness, generosity and respect) underpin the school's daily life. They inform all the school's policies. The values are inclusive for all students, at the same time providing a focus for the school's Christian ethos. They are becoming embedded in the life of the school. Consequently, a positive learning environment is helping students to make much better progress, particularly in core subjects and among disadvantaged students. Students are starting to show understanding of the Christian teaching and practice which underpins and exemplifies the core values. This is seen in the way in which respect for all is understood in the context of the teaching to 'treat others as you would wish to be treated yourself.' Older students are particularly enthusiastic about changes for the better which they have experienced. Arrangements for pastoral care, through vertically grouped Learning Families, keep the focus on values and on providing a supportive context for learning. Students are aware of the growing role of the chaplaincy, offering support and challenge at a personal and community level. Good relationships between students, and with members of staff, are supported by positive ideals for behaviour. When relationships do break down, the school has effective strategies for dealing with them. These strategies provide a clear expression of Christian values, for example through the process of restorative justice. Good behaviour is rooted in secure and supportive relationships and improvement is encouraged through Christian renewal. Students are clear that the atmosphere and ethos of the school are of central importance in supporting their learning and enhancing their progress in a secure and respectful atmosphere. Consequently all students, including those with widely varying educational needs and abilities, recognise these influences on their learning and are grateful for them. The school's physical environment is currently undergoing major changes and developments. Nevertheless, the appropriate use of symbols and informative and imaginative displays around the school give a clear sense of its status as a church school, and of the expected ideals for interaction within a Christian context.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship has a central role in promoting the Christian ethos of the whole school. Arrangements for collective worship are structured mainly around the school's Learning Families, with separate provision for the sixth form. This helps to highlight the importance of all the school's caring and support systems and their impact on enhancing learning and promoting achievement. It also helps to show that Christian faith is the foundation of the daily life of the school. Students are becoming increasingly aware of this and what it means for their own experience of and progress through the school. At the same time, students feel a sense of inclusion through worship, whatever their background. A key feature of school worship is the way in which the main themes are followed up with discussions and reflections on the following day to develop understanding of the school's core values. Collective worship is carefully planned by an active and committed representative group, and planning includes outlines for the reflections on 'thought for the day', led by form tutors. The main acts of collective worship follow the broad patterns of Anglican tradition. They also marry this ethos very effectively with the educational context of the school, so that they combine an appeal to the senses as well as opportunities for prayer and reflection. In the observed act of worship, students were very well focused on the activities and were fully engaged with the presentation, based on the theme of Light, which had a strong visual and reflective impact. Younger students took a leading part in the presentation. Although those responsible for collective worship take many informal soundings from staff and students, there is currently little formal monitoring and evaluation of this aspect of the life of the learning community.

The effectiveness of the religious education is satisfactory

The RE department is staffed by well-informed subject specialists, and teaching is good. Students made good progress in the observed lessons, based on careful planning, with clear learning goals. Teachers used a variety of activities and resources. Lessons had good pace and interaction; strategies for students with differing abilities and assessment to support learning were all deployed. Classroom management was also effective in encouraging learning. In lessons generally, teachers use a wide range of questions to engage students but do not always probe the issues they are raising in sufficient depth. A more extended use of learning based on the students' own enquiries would also add depth to their studies. RE teaching helps students to explore Christian faith and its impact in the modern world. It also supports and clarifies the core values of the school and helps students to understand how they are underpinned by Christian teaching. Occasionally, however, opportunities for making these links with the school's core values are missed. Students have a growing understanding of Christian faith and practice. They also acquire a sound knowledge of other religious traditions such as Buddhism and Islam. A basic programme of RE is provided for all students in accordance with the Devon Agreed Syllabus. The school has, nevertheless, started to expand its RE curriculum across the Key Stages, and has well-advanced plans to carry this forward into the sixth form. It is also extending its current provision for examination courses at GCSE. Leadership of the subject is effectively supported and monitored by senior staff. Tracking shows that most students are starting to make good progress although their attainments have been below average until now. Their progress is in line with the main expectations of the Agreed Syllabus and with their attainment in English.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a Church school is good

The school had no church affiliation or background before the formation of the academy, and therefore no points for action from any previous denominational inspection. Leadership and management is now making good progress in establishing the school's Christian distinctiveness. The headteacher and senior staff, along with governors, provide a clear Christian vision for the school. The governing body gives effective impetus to this aspect of the school's development, particularly through its ethos committee. This is one of the driving forces behind the school's progress as a Church school and draws together a number of strands in its community life. In particular, it helps to keep students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development at the forefront of its provision. The chaplain has a key role in promoting the ethos of the school and nurturing its spiritual life. This is carried out in a way which is highly supportive of students and staff and is helping to carry forward the school's transparent aim to educate the whole person. The Diocese has also given effective support, for example through staff training. The school's self-evaluation, to which a range of stakeholders contributed with a shared sense of 'work-in-progress', is broadly accurate with clear targets. For this reason, there is good potential for further development. Involvement in the neighbouring community, and growing interaction between the school and the community, are seen as key targets for future development, in association with parents, local community organisations and the City Council. The school is also forging effective links with families through a range of carefully targeted support structures in school and in the local community. Interaction between the school and clergy locally and elsewhere in the city serves to enhance this expansion of the school's influence. All these factors give impetus to the school's drive to extend further its very imaginative programme for promoting cohesion in the local community.

SIAMS report May 2013 All Saints C of E Academy, Plymouth PL5 3NE