

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Charlton Church of England Primary school

Barton Road, Dover, Kent. CT16 2LX

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Canterbury
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Date of academy conversion	March 2015
Name of multi-academy trust	Aquila (Diocese of Canterbury Academies Trust)
Date of inspection	7 July 2017
Date of last inspection	6 May 2011
Type of school and unique reference number	Academy (formerly voluntary aided) 141659
Headteacher	Kim Werth
Inspector's name and number	Canon Linda Burton 462

School context

Charlton is an average size voluntary aided primary school, serving Dover. It became part of Aquila, Canterbury Diocese's academies trust, in March 2015. The school is oversubscribed. Pupils are predominantly white British. The proportion of pupils with English as an additional language has increased from 9% to 21% in the last three years. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is substantially above local authority and national averages. The school receives pupil premium funding for 18% of its pupils. Many families who do not qualify for pupil premium are on low incomes, working shifts in industries related to the docks.

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

- Strong and visionary leadership, clearly articulating the school's distinctive Christian values, has been integral to the recent rapid improvement of standards of attainment and progress.
- Pupils, parents, staff and governors recognise and greatly value the impact which the school's Christian character has on the life of the whole school community.
- Outstanding care and support for all pupils, especially those experiencing any kind of difficulty, mean that any potential barriers to their success are minimised.
- Pupils respond positively and thoughtfully to challenging questions and issues raised in religious education (RE) lessons. Through this, RE makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual development.

Areas to improve

- Create systems and structures to support pupils in developing their own acts of worship, in order to offer leadership opportunities for pupils in worship, both in class and within the whole school.
- Establish a process of monitoring, evaluating and developing collective worship by all members of the community, in order to contribute to a process of substantial ongoing improvement.

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

The last four years have seen significant growth in the Christian character of the school. Its clear Christian ethos is now embedded in its life and work. Its mission statement, 'Living, learning and growing in God's love', determines the school's engagement with all of its pupils and their families. This Christian community is built around Jesus' commandment in John 13: 34 to 'love one another as I have loved you.' In September 2013, the school community together agreed on how to live out God's love day by day through its distinctive Christian values of listening, encouragement, forgiveness, thoughtfulness, patience and sharing. These values are made explicit in relevant school policies. Pupils confidently root these values in parables and relate them to their own lives. The values have been integral to the rapid improvement in standards of pupil attainment and progress over the last four years and to sustaining those good standards. The vast majority of pupils achieve well. Disadvantaged pupils often make accelerated progress from low starting points. The headteacher is an outstanding Christian role model. She and her whole staff team live out the school's values. This is seen on a daily basis in the high quality of relationships throughout the school community. Parents report that their children enjoy coming to school. All stakeholders readily describe the school as an inclusive 'family'. Pupils of all ability levels and backgrounds are loved, supported and known as individuals. They are kept safe, cared for, and given the very best opportunities possible. The impact of this is that pupils' behaviour throughout the school day is excellent. The school's extensive provision for those pupils who experience significant emotional or behavioural difficulties, or who are at risk of exclusion, is integral to its Christian ethos and a clear expression of its Christian service. Parents remarked on how, at the recent school sports day, pupils showed great care and support towards each other. Older pupils showed very responsible attitudes towards younger ones and pupils celebrated the efforts and contributions of each other, rather than focusing on their own individual success. Parents greatly appreciate the unstinting care and support given by all the adults in the school community for their children and for other family members who are facing any challenges. The school has a broad and creative curriculum which contributes very well to the personal and emotional development of all pupils, including the disadvantaged. This in turn has a positive impact on their academic learning. Through a range of creative learning opportunities, pupils are encouraged and enabled to reflect on the school's Christian values, and to explore and develop their spirituality. For example, in the school's Faith in Art week in June 2017, pupils in the Reception class had the opportunity to explore ways in which they are special. Responding to 'I wonder' questions in RE lessons encourages pupils to think and reflect. Vibrant, imaginative displays throughout the building and in every classroom celebrate the school's Christian character and contribute strongly to pupils' development. Pupils show their love in action through their engagement locally with the food bank and are involved in a range of charitable work for local, national and international causes.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

The daily act of collective worship is central to the life of the school and is highly valued. Pupils speak about it as a time to be calm and to enjoy singing, learning Bible stories and praying. One said 'it makes you feel safe and feel God looking after you and holding onto you.' Worship is Christian and biblical. It supports pupils in their knowledge and understanding of the importance of Jesus to Christians and enables them to have an age-related understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Exploration of the school's Christian values lies at the heart of worship. These values provide the basis through which worship is inclusive and ensure that members of the school community can put the moral messages from worship into action in their lives. Worship follows a four-fold structure and reflects elements of Anglican liturgical practice. Times of stillness and reflection during worship help pupils consider the themes more deeply. Members of school staff, and the local priest, lead worship, providing different perspectives and approaches which make worship engaging for pupils. Pupils are involved in planning and leading the services held in the local church to celebrate Christmas, Easter, Harvest and Mothers' Day, to which parents are invited. Pupils are involved in Friday class and Key Stage celebration worship. There is, however, no organised group to support pupils in developing their own acts of worship. Leadership opportunities for pupils, in class and within the whole school, are therefore limited. In the last year the local priest has led the singing of traditional and contemporary worship songs in Thursday's worship. Pupils enjoy this and a small number of pupils playing percussion instruments have recently joined him as a worship band. In the last year, progress has begun on the requirement in the last inspection report to adopt a more rigorous and regular approach to monitoring individual acts of worship. Governor monitoring of Key Stage 1 worship has led to individual pupils offering spontaneous 'thank you', 'sorry' and 'please' prayers becoming a valued part of whole school worship. However, the process of monitoring, evaluating and developing collective worship by all members of the community is not established. Tools used to monitor and evaluate the quality and impact of worship effectively began to be used in June 2017. These have not yet fed into a process of substantial ongoing improvement. Prayer is integral to school life. There are opportunities for pupils to contribute their own prayers to the various prayer stations in the public areas of the school and in the reflection areas in each classroom. Pupils also pray at fixed points during the day. Pupils have been involved in developing the school's new prayer garden, enhancing the school's provision.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

RE is a core subject in the school and has a high profile. Pupils speak enthusiastically about RE and are excited and engaged by what they learn. Parents are very happy with what their children learn about in RE and they are clear about why it is an important area of the curriculum for their children to study in the school. Pupil and parental survey data confirm high levels of satisfaction. The school follows the revised diocesan scheme of work. This enables pupils to acquire a thorough knowledge and understanding of Christianity, in addition to helping develop their appreciation of other world faiths. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity are strong, and they are able to make links between it and other world faiths. The teaching of RE makes a significant contribution to the Christian character of the school. Pupils are confident in discussing Christian beliefs and values and the impact they can have on their own lives and the lives of others. In their RE lesson, Year 5 pupils considered how the faith of the inspirational Christians they had studied in recent weeks was shown in their actions. They explored in depth how these Christians had overcome challenges to their faith. Standards of progress and attainment in RE are comparable with those in other core subjects. The RE subject leader, who took up post in 2015, is passionate about her subject. She enthuses her colleagues and is effective in her role. Imaginative and varied teaching and learning strategies are embedded in this curriculum area, including field visits and thinking skills techniques. Visits to a local gurdwara and synagogue this year enhanced and enriched Key Stage 2 pupils' knowledge and understanding of Sikh and Jewish worship, and made a considerable impact on their appreciation of both religions. Pupils, including those in reception class, are able to respond positively and thoughtfully to the challenging questions and issues raised in RE lessons. Through this, RE makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual development. Regular and rigorous monitoring of RE by the School Improvement Partner, headteacher and RE leader judges the majority of teaching to be outstanding and never less than consistently good. The two lessons observed during this inspection confirmed this judgment. Teaching is confident and secure, while allowing pupils to think for themselves and be creative. The requirement in the last inspection report to develop a consistent approach to marking throughout both Key Stages to provide pupils with feedback for future progress has been met.

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

The headteacher has a very clear vision, based on the teachings of Jesus, for developing the school as a distinctive church school. Loving support for all pupils and their families underpin its culture, relationships and decisions. The headteacher believes that enabling all pupils to achieve their very best, both academically and personally, is at the heart of this vision. Consequently, she sets high standards and expectations for everyone. She has developed a strong team of senior leaders and staff, who share this same vision and determination. They are very well supported by knowledgeable and active governors, who are aware of their obligation to hold the headteacher to account, and intent on helping to shape the school's Christian ethos. For example, they raise issues of wellbeing and support for pupils at governor meetings, and they monitor the provision made for vulnerable groups. Faced with many challenges, following the Ofsted inspection of September 2013, their commitment to the school's distinctive Christian character drove its leaders to take the rapid and robust action necessary to bring about significant and sustained improvement in school performance. The school has also made clear progress since its last denominational inspection, as evidenced in a number of measures. The school's six Christian values have been successfully embedded since their introduction in September 2013. The RE curriculum leader was appointed in 2015, and the school has prioritised the leadership of RE. This has led to highly effective practice. The RE leader has undertaken extensive diocesan training and continuing professional development, and priority has been given for her to undertake relevant inset with other school staff members. Pupils contribute to Canterbury Cathedral days and this helps them to understand the importance of the national church. Arrangements for RE and collective worship meet statutory requirements. The process of monitoring, evaluating and developing collective worship by all members of the community is not yet established. Consequently, progress has been limited on the requirement in the last inspection report to adopt a more rigorous and regular approach to monitoring individual acts of worship. The other requirements in the last inspection report have been met fully. The school enjoys very positive, supportive relationships with its local community and with parents. One recent example of this is the collaborative work undertaken on the development of the school's new prayer garden with Transition Dover, an initiative through which local residents can make a lasting positive difference to their community. This is an outward-looking school in which effective and mutually supportive partnerships with other schools have been well established. These have led to further improvement and enrichment of practice in the school. The school works closely with the diocese within the multi academy trust and benefits greatly from its support and expertise. The school enables and encourages the professional development of its staff, equipping them with the knowledge, skills and experience to enable them to make progress in their careers.