

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Primrose Hill Church of England Academy

School Crescent, Lydney, Gloucestershire, GL15 5TA

Current SIAMS inspection grade

Outstanding

Diocese

Gloucester

Previous SIAMS inspection grade

Satisfactory

Date of Academy conversion

October 2013

Name of multi-academy trust

Diocese of Gloucester Academies Trust

Date/s of inspection

1 December 2016

Date of last inspection

2 March 2012

Type of school and unique reference number

Primary 139643

Principal

Vicki Henson

Inspector's name and number

Daphne Spitzer 37

School context

Primrose Hill Church of England Academy is located in the town of Lydney in the Forest of Dean. It is a similar size to most primary schools with 223 children on roll. The majority of children are from white British heritage families. The number of children with special educational needs and /or physical disabilities (SEND) is slightly below the national average. The number of children who are eligible to receive additional funding through the pupil premium grant is below the national average. In February 2012 the school was judged as inadequate by Ofsted. The principal was appointed in September 2014. Since then standards have risen and in September 2016 the school was judged as good.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Primrose Hill C of E Academy as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The school's distinctive Christian character has a profound impact on children's academic achievement and the whole life of the school.
- Outstanding relationships promoted by the school's Christian values of friendship, respect and trust have a strong impact on children's personal development and well-being.
- Excellent leadership from the principal, staff team and governors together with the support of the Diocese of Gloucester Academies Trust (DGAT) and the diocese have ensured the school has made excellent progress over the last three years.

Areas to improve

- Provide greater opportunities for prayer and reflection within the school day in order to widen and enhance children's sense of personal spirituality.

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

Primrose Hill Church of England Academy is a warm and friendly Christian community. The school promotes values, deeply rooted in Christian teaching, which are having a profound impact on children's academic achievement along with their personal and spiritual development. A secure and inclusive environment is created in which all children are cherished and grow in confidence and self-esteem from the knowledge that they are loved by God. As a result, academic achievement has risen considerably since the last inspection. The school's Christian character contributes

very effectively to children's developing spiritual life. This is evident from the way the value of peace is recognised within the school building and regarded by children as promoting learning. A spiritual garden now on the point of completion, is welcomed as a special space to reflect and 'be calm'. Relationships at all levels are outstanding. Children describe school as a place where love makes a real difference, 'love from God, love from friends and love from teachers'. They demonstrate a deep understanding of the value of friendship using examples of stories from Jesus's relationships with his friends. Children show compassion for others and work voluntarily to make a difference in ways such as fund raising on behalf of their own charities. The curriculum explicitly promotes Christian values, for example by linking mathematics with the core value of perseverance, as well as contributing well to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Children thoroughly enjoy religious education (RE) which makes an important contribution to their spiritual development. They say they value the opportunities provided to pose and explore questions in a non-judgemental way and to think deeply and then 'explain their thinking to others'. Respect for others' views and opinions is embedded in the school's very popular philosophy lessons. A recent visit to a local mosque and Gloucester Cathedral is a good example of the way the RE curriculum is used to promote open attitudes of mutual respect and tolerance, values which underpin British society.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is an important part of daily life at Primrose Hill. Both staff and children recognise and value the act of 'being together as a big family' as an expression of the school's strong sense of being a Christian community. Worship promotes distinctive Christian values very effectively. This is because the values are rooted within Bible stories which enable children to express a deep understanding. This was evident when children known as the Kaleidoscope CREW (Council for RE and Worship) led worship. They skilfully dramatised the story of David and Goliath linking it to the Christian value of hope. They then asked probing questions about the hopes and feelings of the two main characters, effectively promoting spiritual development. The school prayer, using the inspiring words of Charles Wesley, set to music by the school's volunteer pianist, contributes very well to the school's spiritual life. A time of prayer and guided reflection is an integral part of worship, often led by children. However, use made of class reflective spaces and class prayer books is not always interactive. This limits the children's ability to write and use their own prayers. Consequently times of prayer and reflection are underdeveloped, limiting opportunities for the development of a sense of personal spirituality. Worship develops children's understanding of Anglican practice and this can be seen in their response to the colours of the church's seasons and the use of liturgical greetings. Children are also developing an understanding of the Trinity and its importance in Christian worship. Values are linked explicitly to the church year for example the current theme of hope with Advent and harvest with thankfulness. Worship is distinctly Christian and children understand its strong focus on the person of Christ. They recognise the relevance of the teachings of Jesus to their own lives, identifying that they 'give you advice for life' so that you can 'follow in his footsteps'. Over the last year the role of children in planning and leading worship has developed well. The CREW meet regularly with the RE leader and have led worship in classes, enhancing their role within the school community. They have now started to plan and lead worship for the whole school enabling them to compare their impact with that of the highly acclaimed Open the Book team. Feedback from children is regularly sought and used effectively. Worship is planned well by the senior leadership team and takes into account the progression of themes and the needs of all ages. The RE leader supports staff very well by providing excellent resources for their use in class worship. She is part of the governors' Vision and Values committee which has a key role in monitoring and evaluating worship.

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

The improvement in the school's distinctive Christian character since the last inspection has been profound. The life of the whole school community has been transformed since the introduction of its new Christian vision and three core values two years ago. This vision led by the headteacher and lived out within the school community is the driving force at the heart of the school's success as a church school. The substantial support of the Diocese of Gloucester Academies Trust and that of the governors has played a central role in promoting the school's distinctive Christian character over the last few years. School leaders, including governors have addressed all areas for development from the last inspection in a way that has resulted in improvement. This is evident in the working of the new Vision and Values committee who monitor and evaluate the school's Christian character in a rigorous manner. Their excellent understanding of the school ensures that their challenge is a central means of driving the school forward. For instance, their recent homework suggestions have proved particularly successful in sharing the development of spirituality with parents. The school's self-evaluation as a church school is accurate. Strategic plans for school improvement are comprehensive and very effective. Parents are fully involved in the life of the school and exceptionally supportive of the school's Christian character. The leadership of RE is good ensuring that the subject is regarded as a core subject. The good partnership between the school and church supported by the vicar, has been further strengthened and reinvigorated by the wider use of local churches for special services; a practice that

had previously lapsed. The school is closely involved with the town's celebrations and commemorations in a variety of ways such as those for the recent Remembrance Day. Messy Church introduced last year as part of the school's community week, has now become a very popular enrichment activity. This is an example of the close partnership between church and school and the way the vicar's contributions to the life of the school have developed. She supports the leadership's monitoring process by talking to children and has been impressed with their understanding of Bible stories. Professional development for staff and governors is a high priority and of mutual benefit. It reflects the value school leaders place on each member of the staff team. The support from the Diocese of Gloucester Academies Trust has been used well to raise the school's Christian character and the school now supports others within the diocese and local area. The school meets its statutory requirements for collective worship and for RE.

SIAMS report December 2016, Primrose Hill C of E Academy, Lydney, GL15 5TA