

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Ark All Saints Academy

140 Wyndham Road, Camberwell, London SE5 0UB

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Southwark
Previous SIAS inspection grade	n/a
Date of establishment	September 2013
Name of multi-academy trust	Ark
Date/s of inspection	29-30 November 2016
Date of last inspection	n/a
Type of school and unique reference number	139718
Principal	Lucy Frame
Inspector's name and number	Anne Southgate 820

School context

The academy is part of the Ark network. It is smaller than the average sized school, having opened in September 2013 and comprising of 478 scholars in Years 7-10 only. Scholars reflect the range of ethnic groups in the local area. A very high proportion of scholars are from disadvantaged backgrounds. The proportions of those with special needs and for whom English is not their first language, are significantly higher than average. Most scholars come from a range of different Christian traditions and there is a significant group who are Muslim. The academy moved into new buildings adjacent to the church in January 2014. Although a few staff transferred from the previous school, most were appointed to the new academy.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Ark All Saints as a Church of England school are outstanding

- There are exceptionally strong relationships based on God's love, which ensure that everyone feels safe, supported, and able to achieve.
- The principal's commitment to keep scholars safe and to help them become the person God created them to be is shared by all staff, and this has a deeply positive impact on learning and on well-being.
- The unique and distinctive Christian ethos, which pervades all that the academy does, means that the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of scholars is extremely strong.
- Everyone feels equally valued in this highly inclusive Christian academy.

Areas to improve

- Increase scholars' leadership of collective worship to strengthen their sense of ownership of worship.
- Make the strong Christian character of the academy explicit in documentation, so that it is clear to the community that this is a church academy.

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

The rapid progress that the academy has made is driven by exceptionally supportive relationships. These are underpinned by a shared belief that each individual is made in the image of God. This has a profound impact on behaviour, which is outstanding. Scholars and staff alike take care of each other and believe, 'I am because we are'. This reflects the Christian understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It means that bullying is rare and that every member of the Ark All Saints Academy (AASA) family feels loved and supported. As a result, attendance is high. The pastoral system offers scholars forgiveness and a fresh start each day. This means that exclusion is a very last resort. Scholars feel that adults listen to their problems and help them to find solutions. As a result, they can focus better on their learning. Consequently, all scholars, regardless of ability or background make rapid progress from lower than average starting points. Scholars take responsibility for their learning and for their behaviour. They utilise the academy's Christian values of responsibility, confidence, success and integrity extremely well. This creates an environment in which everyone's beliefs are genuinely respected. The principal teaches Year 7 for a series of lessons when they join the academy. She teaches them about the importance of the values and about their roots in biblical teaching. Scholars therefore quickly gain an understanding of the way in which the Christian character of the academy impacts on daily life. Scholars of all faiths and of none express their thoughts and beliefs confidently in the knowledge that their views will be respected. This includes Muslim scholars, who feel valued by the inclusive ethos. As a result, scholars from all backgrounds develop very well spiritually, and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very strong. AASA serves the local community by admitting scholars who live closest to the academy. This results in a rich cultural and social mix of scholars. Scholars value the opportunities this affords for them to understand and appreciate cultural diversity. Religious education (RE) provides scholars with a secure grounding in Christianity, and RE lessons promote the academy's Christian values very well. Overwhelmingly, scholars feel that staff care for them, want them to succeed and work hard to keep them safe. The sense of being a Christian family is palpable.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Scholars and adults really appreciate worship as a time of quiet reflection. It allows them to prepare themselves to learn and to pray. The academy gathers in a range of settings and groupings for worship each day. This is supported by the chaplain, who is also the parish priest, and includes using the church daily, with a weekly Communion service. Scholars are therefore familiar with local Anglican practice, and they are regarded as an important part of the church congregation. Collective worship is completely inclusive. Muslim scholars are comfortable in collective worship, but are also affirmed by the opportunity to offer their own Friday prayers. Therefore worship is highly valued by those of all faiths or no faith. The academy is a deeply prayerful community, with staff and governor meetings all starting with prayer. Whole school prayers are offered regularly when members of the community are anxious or thankful, such as during assessment week. The varied programme of biblical readings and reflections is structured by the chaplain and principal. It follows the church's year, but also responds sensitively to current events. Scholars therefore relate worship themes to their own lives with ease. Worship clearly sets the school's values in their Christian context and prompts scholars to help others. A Year 9 scholar spoke passionately about how collective worship had made her want to help homeless people. This was because Jesus said that if you have two shirts, you should give one to someone who has none. Worship frequently moves scholars to raise money to support others, including those in their local community. The rich provision has a profound impact on scholars' spiritual development. They often reflect on the worship message at home with their parents. Parents value the way that collective worship includes all scholars, whatever their beliefs, whilst providing a strong experience of Anglican Christian traditions. Parents join the AASA community in worship at special events, particularly at the inspirational Founders' Day service in Southwark cathedral.

Worship supports respectful behaviour and results in scholars who are extremely thoughtful and considerate towards others. It motivates and inspires scholars to achieve their best academically, as they each strive to be the person that God intended them to be. Scholars have a secure understanding of key Christian beliefs, including that God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. They particularly appreciate the chaplain's Friday blessing, which makes them feel safe and protected by God. Many different adults lead worship, and scholars plan and lead aspects of worship, including reading biblical stories and contributing prayers. Scholars are very confident in contributing to worship and they show excellent support for each other by clicking their fingers. This is a sign of their high engagement and of their mutual interdependence. Scholar leadership is however not developed fully. Scholars and adults readily give their views about worship in a regular cycle of self-evaluation. This has led to improvements, such as shortening readings and relating them more closely to scholars' own lives. As a result, both scholars and adults are highly engaged in collective worship and they find it easy to reflect on the impact of the themes on their lives. The ways in which worship leads to a desire to help others in adults and scholars alike, is exceptional. This includes buying goats for Oxfam and scholars supporting adults to spend a night sleeping rough to support the homeless.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

From lower than average starting points, scholars make sustained and rapid progress in RE. There is highly effective support for individuals, including those with little English and in vulnerable groups. This means that progress made by all scholars is higher than average. Standards achieved are at least in line with national expectations for the majority and a significant number achieve higher than average standards. All teaching, including that by the newly qualified teacher, is at least good and often outstanding. Scholars rate RE highly in terms of its challenge, their enjoyment and its relevance to their lives. They are confident in expressing their ideas, secure in the knowledge that these will be respected. RE therefore helps scholars to develop and to promote mutual respect in their diverse community. Scholars' use of key vocabulary is very impressive. They reflect on their learning, often asking challenging questions. A wide range of creative and engaging activities ensure that effective learning takes place in many different ways. Assessment is thorough and regular. As a result, interventions are targeted accurately and quickly to prevent any scholar from falling behind. RE teachers model new ideas in staff training, so that other subject areas can benefit. The syllabus has been skilfully designed in partnership with governors and the diocese. It provides scholars with a secure grounding in theological language and in Christian belief and practice, as well as learning about other world faiths. As a result, scholars have a deep understanding of both Christianity and of other faiths. The head of department is very enthusiastic, and she is extremely committed to helping scholars to achieve highly. She leads the department exceptionally well and provides strong support for the newly qualified teacher. Monitoring is robust and it results in effective action plans, which bring about constant improvements. Therefore scholars are very well prepared to take GCSE examinations for the first time next year. As a qualified RE teacher, the principal provides exceptional challenge and support to the department. She ensures that RE has a very high profile within the academy. The head of department regularly accesses appropriate training, including that provided by the diocese. There are helpful partnerships with other church schools, which allow moderation of standards, as well as the sharing of ideas. As a result, classroom practice is highly effective.

The culture for learning in RE is excellent and it embodies the academy's Christian values. Scholars are confident to ask challenging questions about the meaning of life and about God. They reflect deeply on the issues that their learning raises, and they acquire a mature understanding of the significance of religions in people's lives. Scholars display an impressive ability to discuss links between religions. They show responsibility for their own learning. Teachers show genuine concern for scholars' well-being. As a result, scholars learn and progress exceptionally well.

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

The principal's passion and clarity of vision have created an academy, which is securely rooted in God's love for each individual. She clearly believes that she is called to save the lives of scholars, raising their aspirations and keeping them safe. All members of the AASA community share this vision. They feel that they are part of a Christian family that cares for and challenges each other to be the best they can be. Leaders model the Christian values, and as a result they are highly respected by scholars. Self-evaluation is rigorous, and good practice is shared regularly. As a result, improvement is constant. This has created a consistent drive from all to create a safe and secure learning environment for scholars, which allows them to make very rapid progress. The shared vision of 'I am because we are' has resulted in an environment in which everyone reflects carefully on their actions, and is aware of their mutual interdependence. RE and collective worship meet statutory requirements. RE is very much a successful core subject in the academy, helping to drive improvement.

Governors know the academy very well and they share in the regular evaluation of and planning for Christian distinctiveness. The efforts of the governing body to support the principal in developing the Christian character of the school are exceptional. All scholars are able to benefit from residential visits because a governor has created an endowment fund to subsidise the cost. Leaders have established a culture in which everyone wants to achieve the best they can, but where they also feel supported to do so. A scholar commented that AASA gives them the confidence to 'walk on water like St Peter'. Whilst the Christian character of AASA is obvious to all who belong to the academy, it is not as clear to the wider community from the website and other documentation. The partnership with the church has strengthened considerably in recent years and it is now highly effective. The relationship of the school with parishioners has deepened and they are mutually supportive as a result. Parents and carers are delighted with the support the academy offers them and their children. This means that they feel part of the AASA family. Diocesan support, training and expertise have helped the academy to deepen its distinctive Christian character. The Ark Trust supports systems for school improvement, but it has allowed and encouraged the uniqueness of AASA as a church school. All staff are extremely well prepared to be leaders in church schools, both by the training provided and by seeing the exceptional example set by senior leaders. This means that the principal is really well supported in her mission to increase the life chances of local children.