

# Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Hardwicke Parochial Academy	
Poplar Way, Hardwicke, Gloucester, GL2 4QG	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Gloucester
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Date of academy conversion	1 December 2013
Name of multi-academy trust	Diocese of Gloucester Academy Trust (DGAT)
Date of inspection	21 November 2017
Date of last inspection	15 November 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Academy 141575
Headteacher	Jennie Dwight
Inspector's name and number	Daphne Spitzer NS No 37

## School context

Hardwicke Parochial Academy is a large two form entry primary school with 445 children on roll, situated in the southern suburbs of the city of Gloucester. The majority of children are from White British heritage families. The proportion of children with special educational needs and/or physical disabilities (SEND) is above the national average and the proportion eligible to receive the pupil premium grant is in line with the national average. A new headteacher took up her post in September 2017 following a period of uncertainty and change in leadership over the previous two years. The new school, Clearwater Academy has now opened in a temporary position in the school playground.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Hardwicke Parochial Academy as a Church of England school are  
good

- The school's Christian values are having a good impact on children's academic achievement, personal development and well-being.
- The school's distinctive Christian character is enabling children to express their thoughts and beliefs with confidence thereby raising their spiritual awareness.

- The profound impact of religious education (RE) in enhancing the school's distinctive Christian character.

#### Areas to improve

- Review the school's existing values and develop them to a greater extent in order to deepen children's understanding of their roots in Christian teaching.
- Monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the school's values in order that their impact on academic achievement, personal development and well-being are fully understood.

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

Hardwicke is a friendly and welcoming community where Christian values permeate daily life. Its Christian ethos creates a secure and inclusive environment in which children are nurtured and grow in confidence and self-belief. Children enjoy school and this is reflected in their improved attendance and good academic achievement. They say that the school's values of perseverance and trust help them learn because they trust their teachers and it is important to 'keep trying'. However children do not readily demonstrate a full understanding of the distinctive Christian characteristics of the school's values. Since the last inspection staff have developed a good understanding of spirituality and this is now having a strong impact. Class 'Spiritual Journals' are evidence of the very effective way that spiritual awareness is developed. Children recognise that the school places a high priority on listening to their views and opinions. This is evident, for example, in the very popular philosophy lessons focussed on Big Questions which, children say, transform their thinking. This is because they can give their opinions whilst listening to the views of others in an atmosphere of total respect. These lessons also enable children to explore a range of feelings such as those promoted by the recent Remembrance service which had a profound impact. Children held poppies which they said had created feelings of sadness as well as thankfulness. The curriculum promotes spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very effectively. Relationships at all levels are good. They are characterised by the Christian values of friendship and respect. Children understand the role of Christianity as a global faith. Visits to places of worship as part of the RE curriculum have promoted good understanding of diverse communities. As a result, children demonstrate respect, tolerance and acceptance of people of other faiths. These are values which underpin British society.

#### The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is central to the school day at Hardwicke. Children and staff find it enjoyable and relevant. They recognise the guidance it provides for living their lives, which can be seen in a child's comment that 'collective worship teaches us to be good people'. Worship makes very good use of biblical material drawing on stories and quotes to emphasise Christian messages. Children understand that their current value of trust is rooted in Christian teaching by the way it is explicitly linked to the story of Jesus stilling the storm. The singing of prayers, as well as hymns, creates a very spiritual experience which is integral to worship at Hardwicke. This promotes a range of emotions, from calming and

reverential to lively and uplifting. The visit of 'I sing Pop' was an enjoyable and inspirational experience for the whole school community. Prayer in worship creates an intimate family setting, which was evident when prayers were said for individual members of the school community in need. The central role of Christ in worship is understood very well. The lighting of three candles with responses at the start of worship is also promoting a good understanding of the role of the Trinity in the Christian faith. The use of coloured cloths to represent the church's seasons, together with simple liturgical greetings are very effective in developing children's understanding of Anglican practice. The vicar's involvement with the Open the Book team is much appreciated and the team enrich worship with their dramatisation of Bible stories. Times of prayer and reflection are embedded in the school day. Children say that their classroom reflection corners help them think of Jesus and their relationship with God. As a result, children are developing a good sense of personal spirituality. The spiritual garden is used to very good effect for worship. Children say that the open sky, seen above the willows, creates a calming peaceful setting, where they feel 'united together in prayer' as they listen to the sounds around them. Worship is led and managed very well. The detailed programme for worship is effective in supporting staff as well as older children who lead worship in their classrooms. Although planning highlights biblical teaching linked to the school's values, nevertheless children have not developed a full understanding of their roots. The children's worship team known as the 'Lighting the Candle' group lead worship very well for the young children at Clearwater Academy as well as for the whole school. Worship is monitored and evaluated very effectively by school leaders including governors and this has brought about improvements over this last year.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

Standards in RE are at least in line with national expectations with a significant number attaining higher than this. Monitoring by the subject leader provides evidence that teaching is at least good and often outstanding and this was verified in lessons seen. Progress between key stages is good as seen by records showing continuous tracking of children's learning since the previous inspection. Learning is of high quality because teachers use well-chosen activities, often based on enquiry methods, which are inspiring and transformational. This was evident in a lesson when young children were closely examining gold, frankincense and myrrh using their senses. They were thinking deeply about reasons why these gifts might have been presented to baby Jesus. The Christian value of generosity was linked very effectively to the themes of giving and receiving gifts at Christmas. A child's comment that his best gift had been Jesus 'because he follows us wherever we go', demonstrates the highly effective way that RE promotes the school's Christian character. Questioning is open-ended, challenging children to explore their thinking and reflect. Children regard the subject highly, recognising its prominence in the school curriculum. They enjoy their learning in RE and say it is 'fun'. They say it teaches them 'to trust and respect God and learn about other faiths'. The curriculum is interesting, exciting and relevant to children's needs. For example, older children were highly absorbed in the Big Question of whether scientists could be Christians. They were thoroughly engaged and challenged by developing their viewpoints and beliefs. As a result, RE is highly effective in developing children's spirituality. The leadership of RE is shared, which has led to very effective practice. These two members are highly supportive of one another and the whole staff. New systems have been adopted for tracking children's

learning, which is raising teachers' expectations and thereby standards of attainment. Leaders have attended the relevant training and adopted a very well-considered approach to the transition and implementation of the new RE curriculum.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is good. The recently appointed headteacher has made an excellent start in providing direction for the school's distinctive Christian character. In a very short time she has built on the school's historical strapline 'love your neighbour as yourself' ensuring that it is lived out at Hardwicke. She has led the development of a vision statement with the whole school community, which embodies a greater understanding of the school's Christian distinctiveness. The whole school community value the stability brought by the appointment of the headteacher and her work in drawing them together. The staff are a caring and cohesive team who value the headteacher's collaborative style of leadership. Governors have ensured that the school's Christian character has been maintained during the recent difficulties. Issues from the previous inspection have been addressed very well. The self- evaluation of collective worship and RE is good. The process places a high regard on children's views which are promptly and effectively addressed. However monitoring of the school's Christian values has not been sufficiently rigorous. As a consequence, children's understanding of the Christian teaching associated with their values is not embedded. Parents are very supportive of the school. They recognise the good impact of the school's Christian character on their children's spiritual awareness, strong interest in RE and respectful attitudes towards others' space. The partnership with the Diocese of Gloucester Multi-Academy Trust has had a profound impact. It has helped sustain the school's Christian character and created the foundations from which the school can now move forward. Its support at several levels, and particularly for professional development, has been highly valued in raising standards throughout the curriculum. The school's partnership with the parish is strong. The vicar plays a crucial role in collective worship, as a governor and as a highly valued presence. The school hosts the regular 'café church' for the parish community. An 'Easter Experience' at the church had a significant impact, enhancing children's learning of the Christian story and uniting the school and church communities. The school meets the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship.

SIAMS report November 2017, Hardwicke Parochial Academy, Poplar Way, Gloucester, GL2 4QG