

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

### St Botolph's CE Voluntary Aided Primary School

Dover Road, Northfleet, Gravesend, Kent, DA11 9PL

<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Rochester</b>
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Date of academy conversion	December 2014
Name of multi-academy trust	Aletheia Anglican Trust
Date/s of inspection	2 December 2016
Date of last inspection	10 October 2011
Type of school and unique reference number	141579
Headteacher	Amy Chitty
Inspector's name and number	Niki Paterson 883

#### School context

St Botolph's serves an urban area of deprivation in the north of Kent. The school has expanded rapidly in recent years and there are 390 pupils on roll. There have been changes in headship since the last denominational inspection and a high changeover in staff. The school converted to Academy status in 2014 joining a Multi Academy Trust (MAT) with two other Anglican schools, one secondary and one primary. The school has no current Ofsted grading. The school is part of a local collaboration with other church primary schools. Just over half of the pupils attend church regularly and 8 per cent are drawn from the Sikh community.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Botolph's as a Church of England school are outstanding

- Well developed and embedded Christian values are integral in driving forward school improvement and enabling all pupils to realise their God-given potential.
- A clear inclusive vision for the school, rooted in the model of Christ, is well supported by the wider community, including by parents from other faiths.
- Collective worship which is well matched to the pupils' needs is integral to raising aspirations and reflects the inherent spirituality of the school.
- Effective and enthusiastic leadership of religious education (RE) has ensured significant improvements in provision since the last denominational inspection.

#### Areas to improve

- Develop teachers' subject knowledge for RE, in particular for Christianity, so that staff grow in confidence and are more able to challenge pupils' thinking.
- Develop a coherent system of monitoring collective worship so that practice remains consistently effective in both whole school and in class worship.

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

The school embodies explicit and deeply embedded Christian values of respect, resilience and responsibility which permeate both the curriculum and the physical environment. Every available space, from the stairwells to the entrance area, creates a vibrant and prominent Christian ethos which means that it is explicitly understood by the whole school community. Parents are also asked to reflect on the personal meaning of the values which has resulted in high levels of engagement with the school's distinctive vision. Both parents and staff value the hospitable and inclusive ethos extended to those new to the school, which has a particularly diverse population. Pupils can clearly articulate how the school's values drive forward pupil achievement and are passionate about the distinctive character of their school. For example, one pupil explained, 'the values help me to be the person I want to be'. Extensive opportunities such as trips to the London Natural History Museum, encourage aspiration by providing life changing experiences for pupils who might not otherwise experience life beyond their immediate community. This is one example of how social, moral, spiritual, and cultural (SMSC) education is embedded within the school's ethos. School leaders are relentless in their focus to achieve the best for pupils and use the school's values as a vehicle for nurturing the whole child. This means that academic progress for all pupils is higher than the national average and that gaps for vulnerable groups are closing. Pupils describe how the model of Jesus Christ helps them to know how to look after one another and to live well together. As a result, the behaviour and attitudes of pupils is exemplary. An outward expression of the values of respect and responsibility means that even the youngest pupils talk about the importance of saying sorry and being kind in the playground. Warm and caring relationships exist at all levels between staff, who feel highly valued by the school leadership team. RE has a high profile and a rich curriculum which means that successful links exist between Christian teaching and pupils' understanding and respect for other faiths.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding.**

Distinctively Christian collective worship, which has a strong focus on the teaching and inspiration of Jesus, is central to the aspirational life of the school. Leaders are mindful of the need to make worship inclusive and to encourage pupils to reflect personally on the messages being shared. Pupils take part enthusiastically and are confident in helping to lead the weekly Eucharist. A recently established 'leading lights group', which develops pupils as leaders of worship, is one example of how highly worship is valued. Christian values are integral to the content of worship, which is well supported by Diocesan planning and by other resources rooted in biblical teaching. Pupils as young as those in Year 1 are able to express an understanding of the Trinity as 'God in three parts', whilst older pupils are able to express a deeper understanding through the medium of art. Pupils are familiar with Anglican tradition, being well versed in the Lord's prayer and in liturgical responses as well as through a weekly invitational Eucharist. A variety of Christian festivals is attended by the whole school community, both at church and in school which means that pupils have a secure knowledge of the Christian calendar. Church leaders and parishioners make a significant contribution to the school's spirituality and sense of Anglican practice by leading and modeling this on a regular basis. Extra-curricular confirmation classes have led to staff as well as pupils being confirmed. Other opportunities for prayer and reflection are both meaningful and relevant to the pupils' daily lives because they make regular use of the prominent prayer spaces in every classroom and in communal areas. A pupil in the Reception class described his reflection area as a 'special place where I can tell God anything'. Monitoring of worship is carried out by a range of stakeholders. Pupils keep worship journals and staff members carry out peer evaluations of class worship. However, the system is not developed sufficiently to ensure consistency of practice.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is good**

A creative RE curriculum, which is well planned and resourced, ensures that pupils have a good quality of provision. Well-pitched lessons which take account of grade descriptors, assessment and tracking practices, demonstrate that attainment and progress are in line with other subjects. Highly effective professional development from both the diocese and within the school has resulted in teaching which is at least good and occasionally outstanding. Staff subject knowledge has generally improved since the last denomination inspection. There is some evidence that teachers are able to challenge and encourage deeper thinking but this has yet to be embedded especially in the teaching of Christianity. A lesson observed in Year 5, exemplified how the school uses RE to sensitively explore issues such as the refugee crisis and how this is relevant to the Christmas story. Pupils describe their lessons as fun and 'a time when we have freedom to express our ideas'. Well-tailored subject leader development has enabled

the subject leader to emerge as a strong practitioner who can drive forward a well-focused action plan. Extensive monitoring of books, planning and the learning environment, is beginning to show evidence of growing confidence in the teaching of RE across all year groups. Developmental marking means that pupils respond to personalised questions and reflect upon their life experiences. Their learning about other world faiths is well supported by visits to diverse places of worship available in the local area. However, pupils' knowledge of Christianity as a worldwide religion is not yet secure.

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

School leaders, governors and MAT representatives clearly express a shared vision of how the school's Christian ethos makes a difference to the life of the community which they serve. The inclusive belief that every child has God-given potential has supported a continuous upward trend in academic standards and has closed the gaps for disadvantaged pupils. Both staff and pupils readily articulate the school's particular values as a driver for improving learning underpinned by the importance of putting their trust and faith in God. A strong relationship with the church of St Botolph's and the Huggens College Christian community are clearly evidenced through the active role of the priests and other members of the congregation in the life of the school. The school, through its open door policy, has close links with the church. Good communication with parents about the school's values means that they are highly supportive of the school's distinctive ethos. The school embodies its own value of responsibility to its local and wider global community by regularly supporting local projects and Christian charities. This, in turn, supports pupils' understanding of the links between Christian values and SMSC. Collective worship and RE leaders have developed significantly in their capacity and effectiveness in recent years. Their roles are well supported by professional development at diocesan and national level. Areas for development from the previous denominational inspection have been well addressed. A continuous cycle of reflective and insightful self-evaluation incorporates a range of stakeholder views, including those of pupils and parents. Monitoring by leaders and governors is beginning to bring about school improvement although this is not yet consistently embedded in the school's systems. Christian values are an integral part of the school's policies demonstrating leaders' understanding of their mission to their community. Statutory requirements for the provision of RE and collective worship are met.

SIAMS report December 2016 St Botolph's Church of England Primary School DA11 9PL