

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Olave's and St Saviour's Grammar School (VA)

Goddington Lane, Orpington, Kent, BR6 9SH	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Rochester
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local Authority	Kent
Date/s of inspection	3-5 May 2017
Date of last inspection	February 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Secondary - 101676
Headteacher	Aydin Önaç
Inspector's name and number	Pamela Draycott 161

School context

This very successful and extremely popular boys grammar school began life 456 years ago within the Diocese of Southwark, receiving a Royal Charter from Queen Elizabeth I in 1571. It moved onto its present site within the Diocese of Rochester in 1968. Girls have been admitted into the sixth form for nearly 20 years. As a highly selective school, it welcomes students from a wide geographic area and from a range of ethnicities. Approximately 50 percent of students identify as Christian with a wide range of other religions also represented. Just over 20 percent of the cohort identifies as having no religion.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Olave's and St Saviour's Grammar School as a Church of England school are outstanding

- Students and adults are incredibly proud of belonging to their school with its long history and where relationships are strong and student behaviour is exemplary.
- The school's service is expressed in Christian terms and founded on biblical principles whilst being inclusive of its ethnic and religious diversity.
- Academic attainment is extremely high and the progress made is excellent. Students' personal development and wellbeing are given a high priority.
- School leadership is strong, guiding and effectively driving forward developments as a church school since the time of the previous denominational inspection.

Areas to improve

- Improve the explicit provision of religious education (RE) in Year 11 so that students continue to benefit from the deep level of understanding and appreciation of religious, moral and ethical issues explored from Years 7 to 10.
- Ensure that the school draws appropriately on support provided by the education team of the Rochester diocesan board of education in order to assist in the next phase of developing its distinctiveness and effectiveness as a church school.

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

The school's Christian foundation and motivation is explicitly related to the concept of duty – to self, others, the school and the community. This is clearly linked with appropriate biblical teachings, and for many it reflects duty to God through service to others. Its Christian underpinning is firmly embedded across school life, with students and staff readily articulating its importance in shaping relationships and in encouraging everyone to 'be the best you can be'. Thus, it contributes effectively to the very high academic attainment and excellent progress made by students, alongside their strong personal development and wellbeing. Students are confident, well-mannered and considerate. They have a keen awareness of moral and social issues and a desire to 'make a difference in whatever small way you can'. This motivates their involvement in charitable giving, both through raising funds and voluntary service. Charitable activity is clearly identified as an expression of Christian principles. 'Christianity, like other faiths, helps you to consider not only your own needs but the needs of others, so it is a duty and helps to make you a better, kinder person.' The school is rooted in its long history which is clearly of great significance to staff, students, parents and many 'old Olavians' who maintain links with their school. The number of incidents of less than good behaviour or poor attendance is minimal. These are dealt with compassionately through an effective pastoral support system, based on Christian concepts such as justice and restoration. This means that exclusions are extremely rare and that attendance is well above the national average. The calm, friendly and focused learning environment supports students' learning very well. Students show initiative and are able to work productively individually and in groups. They take their learning seriously and are respectful towards each other and towards the staff. This means that students effectively engage and give of their best. In response to a question about what he or she wanted to do on leaving, one student responded, 'I don't know yet but I'm sure the school will help me achieve it.' Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development is taken seriously and linked explicitly with the concept of duty. The curriculum is broad and balanced and appropriate opportunities are taken to address SMSC issues within it. Examples of this include addressing moral issues through texts in English or through deep discussions of ethical concerns in RE. Co-curricular and enrichment activities, along with international links, support this further. RE is enjoyed by students who value its relevance in helping them to understand the impact of religion and in appreciating difference and diversity. A Year 10 student said, 'When one considers what faiths different to your own teach, it helps you address your own faith and actually strengthens it in my experience.'

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

The value of worship in contributing to the school's Christian ethos and in supporting the spiritual and religious development of students is clearly recognised across the school community. Since the previous denominational inspection, there has been a renewed and successful focus on enhancing the worship programme. The weekly programme offers three whole school acts of worship and two tutor or house times. During these latter times, the theme for the week provides a brief time for discussion, reflection and prayer. The worship programme also plays a significant part, 'Our 'thought for the day' gives time to think and reflect and to relate it to being in school, or to a problem or to simply appreciating others'. This programme is augmented by a weekly voluntary Eucharist held during form time. This is attended by between 30 and 50 students and some staff. Special services at other times such as at Remembrance, Christmas, Easter, for leavers and for the annual founders and commemoration day service enhance provision further. Through worship, students develop a good understanding of the importance of Jesus for Christians and of key Christian beliefs such as that of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. They also develop an appreciation of structured Anglican styles of worship, including traditional hymns and music, and of key Christian prayers such as the Lord's Prayer. A staff prayer group, as well as a parent prayer group and a Christian Union for students, reflects the importance of prayer within the school community. The part-time chaplain, who came to the school in January 2016, leads in the planning of worship. Her involvement enhances the programme significantly. The themes take into account the Christian calendar, key Christian beliefs and values and events in the school year. They are related very effectively to daily life and to taking responsibility for self and for others as an expression of faith in God. The themes support high aspirations

and encourage high levels of spiritual and moral reflection. Senior leaders and sixth form students take part in leading whole school worship, with staff and students well engaged in the leadership of tutor or house time worship. Students are also involved in providing music for worship. The student body responds positively and engages closely during whole school acts of worship, recognising its positive impact on school life. 'There is a strong sense of being part of the community during assemblies in the Great Hall whether or not you are religious. For me as a Christian, it gives me time during the day to think about God and pray', was the summary of a Year 12 student. The impact of the worship programme is occasionally monitored and evaluated by a link member of the governing body. This feeds into governing body meetings and has some impact on further developments. The chaplain informally asks students and staff for feedback about particular themes or events but this is not systematic or rigorous enough to ensure continued improvement.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

Standards of attainment and the progress made across RE are very high. This is exemplified by results for the GCSE short course which students sit at the end of Year 10 and in the GCE results attained by sixth formers. Curriculum time given to RE is well used, with an appropriate balance between content that focuses on Christianity and that which addresses other world faiths, alongside ethical, moral and philosophical issues. Teachers whose specialism is not in RE teach the subject in Years 7 and 8. They are well supported through good and detailed resources provided by the subject leader so that standards are not affected. Some creative activities develop skills such as interpretation and evaluation. For example, in Year 8 students do a drawing of the significance of the crucifixion for Christians for homework. The work they produce, alongside their contribution to class discussion, indicates a very high standard of understanding of symbolism and of Christian beliefs in Jesus, forgiveness and redemption. Students in Year 10 are well aware of the GCSE criteria and they are effectively supported in exploring issues of spiritual and ethical significance from a variety of religious perspectives. Across the sixth form, students engage deeply with ethical and philosophical questions which are taught in challenging ways. Through effective teaching, students at all levels express their thoughts, beliefs and views in considerable depth. Leadership of the subject is good. For example, the subject leader regularly monitors and evaluates students' attainment and progress which the refines classroom activities. There is a detailed and accurate development plan to ensure continued improvement of the curriculum content. However, recent national developments in the teaching of Christianity, training of which has been offered by the Diocese of Rochester, has not been accessed.

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

Since the previous denominational inspection, the school has revisited its Christian vision and used the key issues for development as a springboard for continued improvement. Under the strong leadership of the headmaster, ably supported by other senior leaders, governors and the chaplain, the school's Christian vision has been refreshed and consolidated. It now expressly and effectively drives forward further developments. The school has strong links with its parents who are kept well informed of their sons' or daughters' progress. There is an effective Parents' Association that raises significant amounts of money to support different projects across the school. This includes providing a personal hymn and prayer book for every student and member of staff to use during worship times. This is an example of how it supports the school's spiritual and religious foundation very well. It also provides a forum for discussing occasional general concerns which are then appropriately addressed by senior leaders. Links with the Dioceses of Southwark and Rochester include governor appointees. The annual founders' day service is held in Southwark cathedral. Year 7 students visit Rochester cathedral and castle where they engage in a range of activities to better understand Christian history and culture. However, the school does not make sufficient or regular use of the expertise of the education department at the Diocese of Rochester, for example, through governors attending training courses or by the RE subject leader engaging with the secondary support provided. There are strong links with the Church of England Woodard Foundation, a family of independent and state schools and academies. St Olave's leads their Oxbridge and Medics support

programme, through for example, providing high quality lectures which are open to other schools. Governors are strongly committed to the school's Christian foundation and to securing its continued service to its diverse and highly academically able community. They appropriately support and challenge senior leaders and are well involved in school life. Governors have secured the services of an outstanding part-time chaplain and very good leadership for RE through both the faculty and the subject specialist. Worship and RE both meet statutory requirements. On completion of the GCSE short course in Year 10, all students receive RE as part of the PHSE programme, even if they opt to continue to the full course as an extra subject. This RE within the PHSE programme is not rigorous or challenging enough. RE learning outcomes are not clearly provided or assessed and the breadth of religious teaching is limited. Since the previous denominational inspection, the quality of general RE provided in the sixth form through the PHSE programme has improved. Explicit and appropriate RE links are now made. This is enhanced through the weekly lecture programme, some of which have an explicit religious and ethical dimension, and through voluntary evening lectures and events that enrich understanding further.

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