

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Crompton House Church of England School

Rochdale Road, Shaw, Oldham, OL2 7HS

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Manchester
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Date of academy conversion	2011
Dates of inspection	6 – 7 July 2017
Dates of last inspection	28 – 29 June 2017
Type of school and unique reference number	Secondary academy 137294
Headteacher	Karl Newell
Inspector's name and number	Eleanor Benson
Quality Assurance	Carol Berry 324

School context

Crompton House is a larger than average 11-18 co-educational secondary academy. It became a converter academy in 2011 and is planning to establish itself as a multi-academy trust. The large majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is much lower than average. The number of SEN or disabled students is below the national average. Crompton House is an over-subscribed school planning a significant increase in admissions from 2019 and a new building to increase capacity. The headteacher was appointed in September 2014 following several short-term headteacher appointments.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness Crompton House Church of England School as a Church of England school are good

- The school's Christian ethos permeates every aspect of school life. It moulds relationships and contributes to excellent behaviour.
- The headteacher and senior leaders live out the Christian vision for the school and are committed to nurturing the Christian ethos.
- Religious education (RE) contributes effectively to pupils' personal development and understanding of a diversity of views. RE is well led by a very committed and capable head of department.
- Self-evaluation has not focussed on the impact of initiatives on students or their understanding of Christian beliefs and values. Consequently, accurate self-evaluation has not consistently contributed effectively to strategic planning.

Areas to improve

- Involve the whole school community, including governors and students, in more effective self-evaluation of the impact on pupils of the school's distinctive Christian character, worship and RE. This is in order that accurate understanding of impact informs strategic planning.
- Provide training for governors and staff to equip them to contribute more effectively to the development of the school as a church school.
- Provide appropriate resources and monitoring for collective worship and RE to secure a consistent standard of provision, in line with statutory requirements, for all students including the Sixth Form.
- Plan for teaching about explicitly Christian values in the wider curriculum beyond worship and RE so that students can clearly identify and articulate biblical teaching about Christian values.

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

The school's ethos of 'loving God, caring for each other, achieving excellence' is well established, owned and lived by the whole school community. The belief in caring for each other, including the most vulnerable, is deeply held and has a strong impact on all relationships. It informs the emphasis on giving to charity. A parent reported choosing the school because of seeing students' service to the community. Strong relationships ensure students' excellent behaviour, attendance and personal development, with the result that students make sound progress in this secure learning environment. Attendance is significantly higher than the national average and permanent exclusions rare. In dealing with behaviour, the school highlights forgiveness and the chance of a new beginning. A student who joined the school after Year 7 welcomed the fresh start, saying the school 'allowed me to show what I was, not what I had been.' Students and parents speak appreciatively of how effectively and promptly any bullying is dealt with and ascribe this to Christian principles. Relationships are marked by compassion and respect. Parents welcome the way that school promotes moral and spiritual values as much as academic achievement. One parent commented that children are valued 'not because of what they do but because of what they are – made by God'. Students enjoy RE and apply what they learn in RE to inform their own attitudes and actions. It makes a very positive impact on their attitudes to diversity. Aspects of Christian beliefs are explored across the curriculum in, for example, science, languages and the Literacy for Learning programme. However, the biblical teaching and Christian values behind the school's ethos are not always made clear. There is little in the school's environment to celebrate or challenge students to think about the school's distinctively Christian values. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues are often addressed in school but not always with a specifically Christian approach. Consequently, many students have little understanding of Christian teaching about the school's values.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship has an important role within school life. Occasions for whole school worship, in particular the communion services, are specially valued by staff and students. Students appreciate the fresh start marked by communion and that 'everyone's there together, all part of a big community.' Staff work hard to ensure that collective worship is engaging for students and encourages them to think about the way they live their lives. For example, in a whole school assembly, a 'Mr Bean' clip effectively promoted reflection on dealing with failure. However, although worship is often inspiring and makes a very positive contribution to the school's ethos, Christian content is sometimes added briefly at the end instead of being a theme developed throughout worship. Consequently, students have limited ability to explain Christian beliefs, including beliefs about God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Prayer is important in the life of the school and staff regularly pray together. The long tradition of saying the Grace at the end of assembly, form time and lessons is accepted by students as part of the routine of the school day. Students have occasional opportunities for quiet reflection and personal prayer, for example, in the recent Prayer Space Week. However, there is a lack of variety in students' experiences of prayer in collective worship. The use of silence to allow students to make a personal response is not common.

Form time does not contribute effectively to the daily development of personal spirituality because prayer or reflection does not consistently take place. In form time students often think about ethical, moral and spiritual subjects related to current news issues and Christian belief. In the form times visited, students discussed the set topic of over-population with interest. However, the biblical context about God as Creator was a brief addition at the end with the result that few students could explain how Christian beliefs linked to this topic. Form time has a limited impact on students' understanding of Christian values and beliefs because Christian content is often not central to the materials provided.

Students enjoy participating in and helping to lead some collective worship. For communion services, students volunteer to write and lead prayers, distribute communion and make inspiring contributions to leading the music. Sixth Form students have input into planning, leading and evaluating. They give their views on assemblies through Twitter polls, choose some themes and regularly lead assemblies. A recent powerful assembly on discrimination against those with Down's syndrome was instigated and led by a Sixth Former. She drew on personal experience and attitudes among students changed as a result. However, the Sixth Form do not have collective worship daily. The school has made some evaluation of collective worship but there has not been a focus on its impact on students. The conduct and impact of form time is not regularly monitored. Consequently, the school does not have a full understanding of the limited impact of worship on students' understanding of Christian beliefs and values. This means self-evaluation does not accurately inform strategic planning.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Almost all students take GCSE RE and make excellent progress in Key Stage 4. RE GCSE progress and achievement are above the national average and results among the highest in the school. A level results are in line with the

national average. The two year Key Stage 3 RE curriculum supports students' understanding of the school's Christian ethos and introduces the skills needed for success in the three year GCSE course.

The quality of teaching and learning is varied. Students enjoy RE lessons because they value the opportunities to examine and discuss different views. A student compared RE with other subjects saying, 'There are a lot more debates – you don't just learn things.' In one lesson, probing questioning was observed, leading to the sustained examination of issues by students. A relatively small number take A level philosophy and ethics but those who do are enthusiastic about the impact of the subject on their thinking skills. One Sixth Former said, 'It helps me think about challenges - it's changed my approach.'

RE is well led by a very capable and highly committed head of department. There are currently 15 non-specialists teaching RE at Key Stages 3 and 4. Many non-specialists are highly committed and bring creative approaches from their own main subjects. A Muslim Maths teacher made effective use of his own religious practice to bring the topic of the Hajj alive for students. Nevertheless, providing appropriate support for non-specialist teaching is a significant challenge for the head of department. She has tackled this by supporting the well-balanced curriculum with tightly structured, comprehensive schemes of work and lesson plans. She has engaged the commitment of staff who teach RE and given individual support and advice. An excellent framework for Key Stage 3 assessment has been developed within the department by the subject leader, drawing on informal partnerships with other schools. Although at an early stage of implementation, this helps to improve progress for all students irrespective of the specialism of the teacher.

There are very positive attitudes to people of other faiths and students value the way in which staff of other faiths share their beliefs. However, although the majority of students are of White British heritage, they have no opportunities to explore other world faiths through visiting places of worship. Extra funds for text-books to resource new RE courses have been provided. This has helped staff to deliver the new GCSE courses more effectively. In Key Stages 3 and 4 RE's time allocation is appropriate and comparable with other subjects. However, general RE for those who not study A level philosophy and ethics was removed from the Sixth Form curriculum four years ago with the result that most students do not study RE during their course.

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

The headteacher and leaders are thoroughly committed to the Christian ethos of the school and live it out in their care for students, families and staff. Since his appointment following a period of disruption in the school's leadership, the headteacher has stabilised the school. He has emphasised the Christian ethos so that it runs through the whole school. The reinforcement of the school's ethos, driven by senior leadership, has effectively moulded relationships, behaviour and achievement. The result is a caring, nurturing school community whose leaders are open in their dealings and want to foster the school's Christian ethos. They have been creative and determined in their successful application for a grant from the Unlocking Gifts scheme in order to benefit the most disadvantaged pupils. The collective worship co-ordinator has developed a strong partnership with local clergy which enriches collective worship and has resulted in exciting plans for a chaplaincy to begin in September. Parents contribute very supportively to many aspects of school life and appreciate the school's helpful communication.

However, leaders are not effectively monitoring the impact of the Christian vision and then using the resulting analysis to inform strategic planning and enhance the Christian ethos. This is because current self-evaluation is often descriptive and lacks focus on impact on students. Issues raised in the previous SIAS report have not been rigorously addressed to bring about significant improvements. Students' experience of RE is weakened by the lack of sufficient specialists to teach RE. Although a new appointment has been made to improve the situation next year, there will still be a significant amount of non-specialist teaching of RE. The non-specialists are enthusiastic and committed, but they are not always able to support progress effectively. Monitoring of RE is also carried out by non-specialist teachers, with the result that subject specific issues are not always identified. Leadership has not secured provision in line with statutory requirements for collective worship and RE. Arrangements for worship in Key Stage 5 and in some forms in Years 7 to 11 do not meet statutory requirements. There is no provision for RE in Key Stage 5.

Trustees and governors are very experienced, have gained the Governor Mark and regularly discuss the Christian foundation. However, most governors have not recently attended training specifically to develop their skills in relation to a church school. Governors and leaders have not recognised some of the issues facing the school and, therefore, have not secured improvement as a church school. Nevertheless, the headteacher and leaders are committed to bringing about changes to deepen the school's Christian distinctiveness. They are facing the future with determination to enrich the Christian ethos as the school expands.

SIAMS report July 2017 Crompton House Church of England School, Rochdale Road, Shaw, Oldham, OL2 7HS