

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

The Hereford Academy	
Address	Marlbrook Road, Hereford, HR2 7NG
How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?	
Overall grade	Good
The impact of collective worship	Good
The effectiveness of religious education (RE)	Good

School's vision
<p>'Seek to do good to one another and to everyone' (1 Thessalonians 5:15).</p> <p>Our vision is to equip all our students to be well-rounded and caring citizens who will make a positive contribution to society. We do this by providing the best possible education and serving the whole community of all faiths and none.</p>
Key findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The vision and its intrinsic values give rise to pupils and adults full of hope and aspiration. Pupil understanding of spirituality, however, is less well developed. • Extremely committed leaders put the wellbeing of pupils and adults at the heart of their actions. Consequently, the academy is characterised by mutually strong relationships. The understanding of courageous advocacy, however, is underdeveloped. • The partnership with the local church is mutually beneficial and contributes highly to the flourishing of pupils and adults. • Collective worship lifts pupils and adults beyond the everyday and acts as a real focus for the community. Pupils, however, do not have enough opportunities to lead collective worship. • Religious education (RE) offers a well appreciated safe space where pupils explore beliefs across a full range of religions and worldviews.
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Devise an academy-wide definition of spirituality so that pupils explore further their understanding of their own and others' beliefs. • Extend the range of opportunities for pupil leadership in collective worship so that they are more actively involved in its delivery and its evaluation. • Develop understanding of courageous advocacy so that charitable efforts at the academy are more closely aligned to pupils' commitment to justice.

Inspection findings

The Hereford Academy is moving forwards confidently. This is directly attributable to the quality of its leaders, its vision and the efforts of staff and pupils. The Bible verse at the heart of the vision is 'seek to do good to one another and to everyone' (1 Thessalonians 5:15). Leaders articulate with passion how this both simple and profound concept motivates them. This is especially after the academy has been through some difficult times. They use powerful, relevant illustrations about its application in the academy and in the local community. The intrinsic, associated values of aspiration, care, trust, resilience and respect also have biblical underpinning. Pupils consider them to be fundamental to life in the academy. The values are also preparing them to play a full part in society in the future. Staff and governors are very effective role models in applying the vision and values. Leaders constantly encourage staff to deepen their understanding of Church school developments.

A deeply caring family is an image frequently used for the ethos of the academy. It is an apt way to describe the impact of its key partners. The Multi-Academy Trust and the diocese more generally, resonate so much that successes are felt as joint achievements. They also afford opportunities for the academy to play a wider role. For example, they facilitated a day's training for curates and a diocesan vision day at the academy. At both of these, pupils and staff contributed meaningfully. The partnership with the parish church is equally strong. Clergy from the church give unstintingly of their time and care. They support individuals and groups of pupils through, for instance, the Christian Union and by being governors. The academy holds significant, liturgical services at the church.

Pupils are thriving through learning opportunities that encourage aspiration and resilience. Carefully structured lessons give confidence to all pupils. A focus on a key learning question helps them to be clear about what they are concentrating on. Pupils consolidate their learning through time spent thinking and writing on their own. This is building independence and ownership of learning. Pupils with additional learning needs are given bespoke support in classrooms to enable them to make good progress. The vision encourages community development so sharing good practice is a common feature of staff meetings. Extending cultural awareness is prioritised through the form reading programme. However, learners are not so aware of how their spirituality is developed in the curriculum, apart from in RE. Pupil leaders, such as prefects, mentors and ambassadors are a notable feature of the academy. The concept of service is fundamental to this and to some of the extensive extra-curricular activities.

The vision and values lead rightly to an emphasis on character development. Leaders give priority to personal, social, health and careers education. This helps pupils to make positive choices about how they live, learn, approach difficult situations and behave. Respect is freely offered and given between pupils and adults. Codes of conduct ensure that the academy is harmonious. Pupils are motivated by the rewards on offer. Points and badges are based on demonstrating the values, which build up character and the community of the academy. Leaders tellingly use the endowment fund to support vulnerable pupils in particular. This enables these learners to follow the character-building Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme.

Pupils are outward looking and wish to help those less fortunate than themselves, for instance by donating to the local foodbank. There has been pioneering work which supports and values pupils who identify as LGBTQI+. This has included a joint act of worship with the local church. However, the understanding of courageous advocacy is underdeveloped. Charitable efforts at the academy are not always closely aligned to pupils' commitment to justice in the wider world.




The concept of a deeply caring family also underpins the academy's approach to pastoral care. Four houses, named after cathedrals, reinforce a sense of belonging. Leaders ensure that wellbeing, of both pupils and adults, is a high priority. This is seen in their formal agendas and in their day to day work. Outstanding support is offered to pupils, especially those who are vulnerable. This is one instance of how the 'seek good' of the vision is lived out. The academy has recently appointed a chaplain with a brief for extending its provision for positive mental health. This is a tangible commitment that pupils and adults understand that they are unique, valued children of God.

The weekly whole school collective worship is keenly anticipated and key to enhancing the vision of the academy. All are invited sensitively to participate and pupil response is strong, especially in the hearty singing. The values are explored in turn. This is through an inspirational mixture of biblical illustration, Christian teaching and potential application into life today. Prayer and reflection are natural elements in worship and pupils and adults appreciate the space that these afford. They understand the significance of the Eucharist for Christians. Steps are being taken to make this a more regular feature of academy life. Other collective worship, often in house form, particularly develops a sense of belonging and celebration. Pupils do not have many chances, however, to be involved in the planning and leading of collective worship.

The teaching of RE has undergone a recent resurgence and now has a full cohort entry at GCSE. The study of Christianity and Buddhism is deliberately chosen as a contrast in approaches to religion. It also encourages many questions and reflections that enhance spiritual development. Key stage 3 units lay a good foundation with their mixture of enquiry, analysis and interpretation. This is from a full range of religions and worldviews. RE teachers create a safe space where pupils feel free to air and to discuss important, and often sensitive, issues. Respect for all viewpoints is nurtured. Great trouble is taken to ensure that pupils hear from the authentic voices of believers and non-believers alike. The subject lead readily shares good practice with the other teachers. The skill sheets, for example, are used very effectively to track progress, highlight areas for improvement and to communicate with parents and carers.



	The effectiveness of RE is		Good	
	<p>The RE curriculum is relevant to pupils and reflects current developments in the subject. Pupils throughout the school respond well as they value RE, like the structure of lessons and enjoy deepening their understanding. Teaching and learning is consistently good, as evidenced through book scrutiny and discussions with learners. Pupils learn and progress well, especially in the examination classes. This includes pupils with additional learning needs and the most able.</p>			
Information				
School	The Hereford Academy	Inspection date	8 February 2023 - 9 February 2023	
URN	135662	VC/VA/Academy	Academy	
Diocese/District	Hereford	Pupils on roll	607	
MAT/Federation	Diocese of Hereford MAT			
Headteacher	Michael Stoppard			
Chair of Trust Board	Andrew Teale			
Inspector	Simon Stevens	No.	953	