

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Wren Academy, Finchley

Address Hilton Avenue, North Finchley, London, N12 9HB

School vision

Our Vision – Zacchaeus and Micah.
Do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with your God.

Micah 6v8

We are an all-through Church of England Academy inspired by an encounter between Jesus and a tax collector called Zacchaeus. We believe that fairness, kindness and walking humbly with God are the keys to full flourishing for all.

School strengths

- The motivating Christian vision drives strategic decisions and policies at Wren Academy. It is at the centre of its ethos, represented by the academy's values. Adults and pupils thrive because the Christian vision is lived out daily.
- Wren Academy offers a rich curriculum, including academic, creative and spiritual development from Early Years through to the Sixth Form. It provides well for vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).
- Inspirational collective worship is a strong expression of the vision. Its inclusive and relevant approach offers welcoming and invitational opportunities for worship and spiritual development.
- The effective climate for learning and promotion of exemplary behaviour transforms the lives of pupils. Relationships are warm and harmonious because of the culture of kindness.
- The vision instils a sense of fairness and justice in the pupils. Leadership roles and development programmes offer pupils opportunities to take responsibility.

Areas for development

- Reflecting the academy's vision, address religious education (RE) provision in Key Stage 4 and the Sixth Form for those pupils who are not following an examination course. This is to ensure that pupils flourish academically through further developing their knowledge and understanding of religion and worldviews.
- Extend opportunities for pupils to broaden their experience by initiating decisions about social action. This is to enable them to take greater personal responsibility as agents of change within their community and beyond.

Inspection findings

The Zacchaeus story effectively underpins Wren Academy's inclusive vision that nobody should feel lost or marginalised. It is lived out through six values, expressed as '6Rs'. Leaders include reverent and redemptive

to reinforce the Christian ethos. Characterisation as superheroes in the primary phase makes the 6Rs meaningful for the youngest pupils. Guiding strategic decisions and daily life, the vision embeds a culture of positive learning habits and warm relationships. Thorough monitoring and evaluation ensure that leaders have a strong awareness of the impact of the vision across the academy.

The primary curriculum is rich and inviting, with a clear focus on pupils' spiritual development. Topics feature 'big questions' linked to academy values such as 'were the Tudors 'heartsmart?'' Pupils are enriched spiritually as they reflect on newly acquired knowledge and develop uniquely personal responses. This approach extends to the secondary curriculum. Where authentic points arise, pupils have opportunity to reflect. For example, they consider ethical matters such as world trade in geography. Each subject area features questions and quotations on chalk boards in walkway displays. These stimulate pupils to think critically about relevant, topical issues. Wide-ranging educational visits, such as a Sixth Form visit to Keats' house, provide immersive experiences which strengthen pupils' spiritual development.

Collective worship has a major impact in enabling pupils and adults to flourish spiritually. Consistent themes are crafted carefully to match various contexts from the reception classroom to large-scale 'house' assemblies. Chaplaincy contributes significantly by supporting staff in their preparation of worship, ensuring it is grounded in biblical teaching. Clergy from local churches representing a range of traditions contribute positively to offering a well-rounded experience of worship. The faith council (primary) and chaplaincy advisers (secondary) engage pupils in planning and leading aspects of worship. They set up 'Lent stations' outdoors as well as in the chapel, for example. Parents of various religions and worldviews are invited to share their viewpoints. For example, they offer different perspectives on questions of life and spirituality when sharing 'What's in your suitcase of faith?' As a result of these extensive and varied experiences, pupils and adults at Wren Academy have many opportunities to flourish spiritually.

Behaviour across the academy is calm and purposeful because pupils' interactions with adults are characterised by respect and affirmation. When issues arise, pupils have confidence in the processes in place to address them. Restorative conversations and time for reflection ensure an emphasis on forgiveness. Leaders make thoughtful decisions to nurture harmonious relationships. Pupils from Year 7 to Year 10 thrive in mixed-age tutor groups, which provide substantial pastoral support. Pupils in Year 11 and the Sixth Form benefit from tutorial arrangements by year group. This has a positive impact on their wellbeing as they prepare for examinations. Primary and secondary pupils enjoy joint reading. The shared restaurant enables secondary pupils and staff to relax together. Framed by the Christian value of welcoming all, pupils with SEND are integrated in the community. Knowledgeable leaders show great expertise, enabling pupils to learn alongside their peers. Comprehensive provision includes a wide range of therapies, emotional and mental health support. This is carefully planned for each individual. As a result of this detailed, caring approach, vulnerable pupils make remarkable social and educational progress and flourish. Support extends to parents and carers of pupils with SEND or health issues. They appreciate this practical, compassionate help, which is a direct impact of the academy's vision. Compassion extends to staff, whose wellbeing is a high priority. They have wide-ranging routes for professional development and fulfilment. This outworking of the vision is reciprocal. As staff are well supported, they in turn support pupils.

At Wren Academy, it is a priority for each person, like Zacchaeus, to become the best version of themselves. Pupils care deeply about the academy's links with charity led sponsorship of children overseas. Extensive leadership roles include prefects, curriculum and chaplaincy advisers, and the primary faith council. These are inclusive, embracing all who wish to accept responsibility and make a difference. As a result, they have a strong and positive impact. Awards schemes involving social action projects are on offer to pupils of all ages. Pupils gain experience of volunteering and making a difference to others' lives through these. A few pupils set up independent, ambitious initiatives, but this is unusual. The majority take part in school initiated activities with younger pupils or in the locality. Nonetheless, pupils learn how they can make a difference in their own community through these projects.

The status given to RE in the primary phase of the academy strongly reflects its importance in this Church school. The curriculum is expertly planned and sequenced to ensure that pupils develop a good understanding of world religions. Learning includes thoughtful reflection and developing skills in discussion work. For example Year 4 respond to the concept of betrayal from a personal perspective, and Year 6 discuss what sacrifice means to them. Visits to the local church and mosque, a synagogue and a mandir bring learning to life. Throughout the primary phase, pupils have well developed ideas and views, based on their strong knowledge and understanding.

Provision in Key Stage 3 is planned clearly and includes study of major religions and worldviews. Pupils continue to be taught to think critically and reflectively, which extends their philosophical and theological understanding. For example, they evaluate the significance of covenant, and of the Holocaust, for Jewish people in a modern context. This prepares them effectively for Religious Studies (RS) GCSE. This is popular and studied by a third of pupils. Effective teaching enables Year 11 pupils to explore theological and philosophical arguments confidently, for example comparing holy war versus just war theories. Pupils who do not take GCSE RS follow an interesting programme, focused on the philosophy of religion, which they enjoy. They do not, however, receive adequate dedicated curriculum time. As a result, they are not able to strengthen their knowledge and understanding of religion and worldviews systematically. A leadership and service programme which includes elements of RE is provided for all Sixth Formers. However insufficient time is allocated to RE, to continue to develop students' understanding of Christianity and other religions and worldviews. A good uptake of Sixth Form pupils achieve well at A Level RS, with several continuing to university study.

The inspection findings indicate that Wren Academy has strengths, but that there are also issues that leaders need to address as a matter of priority. These issues relate to RE and are listed in the areas for development.

Information

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| Inspection date | 1-2 February 2024 | URN | 135507 |
| VA/VC/Academy | Academy | Pupils on roll | 1633 |
| Diocese | London | | |
| MAT/Federation | Wren Academies Trust | | |
| Executive Headteachers | Louisa Taylor and Gavin Smith | | |
| Chair | Jeremy Turner | | |
| Inspector | Rachel A Jones | No. | 2237 |