



## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

### **Bluecoat Academy**

Aspley Lane and Sutton Passeys Crescent, Wollaton Rd,  
Nottingham Nottingham,  
NG8 5GY NG8 1EA

**Previous SIAMS grade:** Outstanding

**Current inspection grade:** Outstanding

**Diocese: Southwell and Nottingham**

Local authority: N/A

Dates of inspection: 12 and 13 May 2016

Date of last inspection: 11 and 12 April 2011

School's unique reference number: 137798

Principal: Sian Hampton

Inspector's name and number: Jo Fageant 104

### **School context**

Bluecoat is a larger than average secondary school with two sites. It became an academy in January 2012, sponsors another secondary school and opened a primary department in January 2015 (not included in this inspection). The school serves a community of significant socio-economic, cultural, ethnic and religious diversity. It includes more than twice the national average number of students from ethnic minorities. It includes provision for students who are on the autistic spectrum and others who have auditory, visual and physical impairments. Admissions arrangements prioritise students from families of faith.

### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Bluecoat Academy as a Church of England school are outstanding**

- Proud of its Christian foundation, the academy is explicit about its beliefs, values and ethos which are lived out in ways which exemplify both distinctiveness and inclusivity. The result is a harmonious community where all are respected and valued for who they are.
- Belief in the value of each individual is expressed confidently by leaders as understanding each to be a child of God. This motivates detailed tracking which enables celebration, support and intervention specific to the needs of each individual.
- Collective worship and religious education (RE) are seen as important. This, together with the involvement of the chaplain and Christian youth workers, ensures that the exploration of faith and beliefs is a natural part of the day to day life of the academy.
- The positive relationship enjoyed with St Margaret's Church in particular enriches the life of both the academy and the church.

- A Christian commitment to high quality educational opportunities for all motivates generous and mutually beneficial relationships with other schools and institutions.

### **Areas to improve**

Ensure, as the academy grows, that there is coherence of vision and provision through the primary and secondary phases so that:

- pupils moving from the primary phase can make a discernible difference to the Christian ethos and vision in Year 7;
- the learning potential for all students and professional development of all staff are maximised.

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

The academy's mission statement *believe in yourself, in others, in God* is widely understood to be based on a verse from Luke's Gospel. It sets out clearly the academy's commitment to the importance and value of every individual, emphasising the development of self-worth, care of others and the nurture of faith. The direct result is a harmonious community where behaviour and relationships are excellent and everyone is respected. The focus on each individual as a child of God leads to forensically detailed monitoring and record keeping to enable a thorough understanding of each student's academic and wellbeing needs. The information available through the tracking system, together with staffing arrangements, which include non-teaching heads of year and Christian youth workers, enables the early identification of problems. Rare incidents of bullying and insulting language are quickly dealt with. Appropriate support tailored to the needs of each student, and in some cases their families, underpins the excellent records of progress, attainment and attendance that are achieved. The impact of the mission statement is seen in the way fixed term exclusions are almost all managed internally and in partnership with other schools because in the words of the chair of governors, 'some students are too vulnerable to be excluded.' The sophisticated tracking system developed by staff who lead on safeguarding issues also ensures the highest level of care for vulnerable students. Parents attest to the care their children receive. Demonstrating its Christian care for all, the academy accepts students with significant and diverse special needs offering expert support through staff who are passionate about their work. This is transformational not only for the students but also, in some cases, for their families who are highly appreciative of the care provided. Other students benefit from the experience of living and working alongside these young people. Central to the academy's commitment to helping students believe in themselves is the provision of an appropriate curriculum enriched by a wide range of lunchtime, Thursday afternoon and after-school activities. Alongside these, students are working towards a Bluecoat diploma through the PiXL Edge programme which focuses on all round development through initiative taking and personal responsibility. The academy is also developing ways in which students can take leadership responsibilities. At the Wollaton Park site students are leading on five key areas including literacy, sport and charity and at Aspley Lane there is a group of worship leaders. Those involved are very enthusiastic about the contributions they can make. Faith is an important aspect of day to day life within the academy. Survey information shows students value the inclusive ethos which enables them to speak openly about faith and belief and share their questions with one another. Religious education contributes to this ethos by developing students' natural curiosity about the similarities and differences between people. An early RE unit in Year 7 about 'life in a church school' sets the tone and lessons also prepare students for their engagement in Eucharist services. As a consequence, students' understanding of and respect for diversity within Christianity and between faiths is exemplary. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development is intrinsic to the inclusive Christian character of the academy and undoubtedly one of its strengths.

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

Collective worship is central to the life of the academy. The different contexts in which it takes place provide a rich variety of leadership, style and venue. It is, however, consistently and explicitly Christian, always including biblical teaching and prayer. Christians and non-Christians alike report that themes are always relevant and thought-provoking for everyone thereby enriching their SMSC development. They inspire deep reflection and active response evidenced in the significant social and charitable action

undertaken by members of the academy. Worship led by Christian youth workers is particularly highly appreciated. Students enjoy worship in the church for festival and other special occasions and on a weekly basis by the sixth form. For some students on the Aspley Lane site in particular this develops a sense of relationship with St Margaret's Church. Many staff appreciate the opportunities throughout each year for Eucharistic worship. It is also provided for all year groups each term and is expertly made accessible by the chaplain and volunteers from the Church acting as Bluecoat pastors. Active participation varies from group to group but students understand this to be an important element in the Christian identity of the academy. Through these worship experiences students from all backgrounds have a good understanding of the importance for Christians of Jesus. They also speak knowledgeably about the distinctively Christian understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Prayer is an important part of academy life. There are well-used multi-faith prayer rooms on both sites. Students and staff value the opportunity to express and respond to prayer requests: staff meet for prayer once a week on each site. There are increasing opportunities for students to contribute to the planning and leading of worship and the newly established worship leaders group is already enthusiastically active. Staff value the excellent training and resources which support their delivery and facilitation of worship in tutor time settings. These worship times are monitored and the views of staff and students gathered anecdotally and on a selective basis. The information collected indicates positive responses but is focused more on people's response to what is provided than on personal and community impact.

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

Teaching in RE is consistently at least good and often outstanding. Teachers work well as a team. They are passionate about the subject and their high levels of expertise are recognised and appreciated by students. Nevertheless, they are keen to continue to improve their skills and they access training opportunities which ensure they are well informed about developments locally and nationally. The result is a carefully considered curriculum focused on essential concepts, the nature of the academy community and a realistic understanding of time available. Two teachers undertook the marking of GCSE papers for an examination board so they could be sure they were preparing their students as well as possible for their examinations. Teachers make excellent use of data and their personal understanding about students to prepare engaging and appropriately accessible lessons and resources. They emphasise the development of reading and literacy skills in line with the current academy initiative. As a consequence of teachers' excellent planning, students are able to develop and apply skills such as those of enquiry, analysis, interpretation and reflection. They are also able to demonstrate very good understanding of Christianity and the other faiths they study. Students make expected progress, many making better than expected progress, and attain examination results which are higher than those generally achieved nationally. Religious studies is also a popular and successful subject at AS/A level where attention to their needs and interests has enabled students to make a choice from two courses offered. The department exemplifies the academy's mission statement, organising lessons so that students have opportunities to learn from one another. Students value the way the subject helps them to understand religion and beliefs in real life contexts rather than being solely focused on examination success.

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

The biblically inspired mission statement sets out the Christian vision of the academy's leaders. This is explicitly, consistently and confidently articulated so that everyone is aware of the expectations that arise from it. Leaders are highly respected for the ways in which they ensure the vision is lived out in practice. Their belief that every individual is valued as a child of God motivates detailed tracking and analysis of data. This supports excellent and highly valued two-way communication with parents. It also helps the academy understand what initiatives are likely to have the greatest impact. This has led to the introduction of the 'building better learners' strategy focused this year on raising the reading ages of all students. Leaders have invested in training for staff and analysis shows reading ages are improving. Leaders ensure the provision of a rich and appropriate curriculum which enables students' SMSC development. They emphasise the importance of RE and collective worship and invest in both areas to develop and sustain high quality provision meeting statutory requirements. In response to the Christian idea that everyone is loved by God, the academy welcomes a higher than average number of students with significant and specific learning difficulties. They are well supported by staff whose expertise and dedication help to transform lives. A commitment to the wellbeing and achievement of all individuals is also applied to staff through targeted training which helps them improve their skills including leadership skills. This has enabled one member of

staff, as the result of diocesan leadership training, to gain the headteacher post in another church school. Governors have shown, and continue to show, their commitment and effectiveness as Bluecoat develops as a multi-academy trust. Links with the local church, diocese and wider community are mutually and substantially beneficial. The chair of governors, local vicar at the Aspley Lane site and the chaplain, plays a valued role in the worship life of the academy and offers pastoral support in addition to his well respected governor role. The academy provides a context in which members of the church as well as the Christian youth workers can offer Christian service. Some pray regularly for the academy and the vicar says these forms of engagement 'are enlivening for the church'. Leaders extend their commitment to the care and support of others beyond the academy itself. Accepting a sponsorship role for another school, establishing a school centred initial teacher training (SCITT) programme, providing support for assessment and safeguarding for other schools are just some examples of the outward facing Christian mission of the academy. The focus on continuing improvement has ensured all areas for improvement highlighted in the last inspection report have been successfully addressed and self-evaluation is thorough and accurate.

SIAMS report May 2016, Bluecoat Academy, Aspley Lane, Nottingham, NG8 5GY