



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

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

### Wren Academy

Hilton Avenue, North Finchley,  
London, N12 9HB

**Previous SIAS grade** (at that time secondary phase only): **Outstanding**

**Current SIAMS grade: Outstanding**

**Diocese: London**

Local authority: Barnet

Date of inspection: 17 and 18 May 2016

Date of last inspection: March 2011

School's unique reference number: 135507

Executive Principal: Michael Whitworth

Inspector's name and number: Pamela Draycott 161

### School context

Wren academy has now expanded to include each year group in the secondary and Post 16 phases. A Reception age cohort entered the primary phase in September 2015. This will expand annually to include the whole primary age range. Half the learners are admitted from 'foundation' (Church) places and half from community places. Primary learners will have an automatic place in the secondary phase when they reach the end of Year 6. The academy has learners of different academic abilities and from a range of social, religious and ethnic backgrounds. The chaplain is a member of the leadership team.

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

- Wren's effective and inclusive Christian ethos and values promote high expectations and lead to very good attainment and progress across the academy and in core GCSE and optional A level Religious Studies (RS) in particular.
- The robust leadership of the executive principal, well supported by senior leaders, is underpinned by the academy's key Christian principles. This leads to a clear focus on high standards of academic achievement alongside strong personal development and wellbeing.
- Very strong relationships between learners themselves and between learners and adults leads to a caring atmosphere with a strong sense of community.
- Exemplary behaviour of learners reflects, and contributes effectively to, very good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Across all phases in the academy there are high standards of teaching, learning and progress in religious education (RE).

### Areas to improve

- Improve how the academic attainment and progress of all students is monitored and evaluated through the non-examination focus days and through tutorial time, especially in Key Stage 4.

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

The academy's inclusive Christian ethos clearly drives its successful quest to ensure that learners of all abilities achieve their best academically and personally. Staff and secondary learners can clearly articulate the impact that its Christian foundation has on day to day academy life. Learners are very well known and cared for as individuals, 'precious to God'. Consequently, attendance is above the national average and relationships are very supportive. These strong relationships are seen as key to learning and development as, 'we are called to contribute to the common good and not to be islands'. This contributes to a calm and purposeful atmosphere where learners are able to flourish within a caring Christian environment. Reflecting the academy's embedded Christian ethos very well, facing up to the consequences of actions and forgiveness are key to how behaviour is managed. As a result, behaviour is excellent and the number of external exclusions since the academy was formed in 2008 is extremely low. There are a very few instances where behaviour, attainment or progress may be a cause for concern. The academy, through its strong pastoral and support systems, works very effectively with these learners and their families. Learners enter both the primary and secondary phases with attainment around the national average. Current attainment data for both phases indicates very good progress being made against national averages. This is clearly linked to the academy's underpinning Christian vision where 'excellence is strived for in all areas because both God and our neighbours are worthy of our best'. Clear monitoring and evaluation is in place to ensure that the learning needs of all are met. Learners are friendly, confident and polite. In the secondary phase enrichment and extra-curricular activities and trips successfully supports its Christian ethos. These also enhance learners' strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. The primary phase curriculum is taking shape and effectively supports academic and personal development through learning inside and outside the classroom. RE makes a key contribution to the academy's Christian ethos. It is enjoyed and learners are appropriately supported and challenged by it. In age-appropriate ways they see its relevance to academy life and their personal development. Learners have a growing awareness that through RE they develop an appreciation for different beliefs and practices and of the beauty and diversity of God's world.

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

Worship takes place daily in either classes, tutor groups or houses. There is a well developed programme appropriately linked to the Church calendar of readings and themes. Worship regularly includes biblical material and explorations of Christian belief and practice. It contributes deeply to supporting the academy in raising the aspirations of learners, inspiring a good level of spiritual and moral reflection. Taking responsibility for themselves and others in terms of prayer and charitable giving is well recognised as an outcome of worship. Daily worship is appropriately extended by periodic visits to deanery and Wren churches in London, after whom the academy's houses are named. A weekly voluntary Eucharist attended by a few staff and secondary learners extends the programme further. Learners and staff respond positively, valuing and enjoying worship. Whilst being Christian in nature it is planned to allow all to participate. This effectively reflects the academy's strong emphasis on inclusion as part of its Christian, and indeed Anglican, distinctiveness. The quality and variety provided is co-ordinated very well in the primary phase by the head of school and in the secondary phase by the chaplain. The involvement of secondary learners in planning, leading and evaluating worship has improved since the previous denominational inspection. In the primary phase learners' engagement and participation is already very strong, through for example singing, writing their own prayers and acting out Bible stories. The worship programme contributes clearly and effectively to learners' spiritual and moral development. Learners have an appropriate understanding of the importance of Jesus for Christians and an age appropriate understanding of the Trinity. Prayer and reflection is rightly valued in both phases for its contribution to the academy's Christian ethos and also to the personal development of learners. For example, prayers are said periodically throughout the day in both phases and learners and staff have the opportunity to ask for prayer either directly or through the prayer board in the chapel. When asked about worship one primary learner said, 'We say thank you to God'. Secondary learners appreciate the 'space to think, pray or reflect which can be very helpful'. Primary learners are already writing their own prayers and know that there are

different types of prayer, such as for example, 'thanking and sorry prayers'. Secondary learners know the Lord's prayer which is said weekly in tutor groups. Opening sentences with responses and in the primary phase the lighting of a candle successfully mark the pattern of daily school worship and help with an understanding of Anglican worship.

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

In the primary phase the profile and importance of RE as a 'core subject' is high. Clear and very effective leadership of RE is in place. This is already impacting extremely positively on the academic and personal development of learners. In the secondary phase RE's contribution to the academy's ethos is very well embedded. GCSE Religious Studies (RS) is currently taken by all Year 10 learners. Two RE focus days take place in Years 11, 12 and 13 respectively. This is supplemented by some RE provision through tutor periods. Results for the GCSE examination are strong demonstrating high attainment and very good progress across Key Stage 4 and in the Sixth form. The focus days provide a useful enrichment to the GCSE provision in Key Stage 4. Planning for these days is good in terms of content and approaches. As part of wider curriculum discussions, the decision was made that, from September 2016, GCSE RS will be an option subject in Key Stage 4. This means that the RE focus days will be extended to cover Year 10. The focus days provide good opportunities to support the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of secondary learners. Their impact on personal development is evident but how academic attainment and progress is assessed in RE terms is not well defined. The chaplain is currently leading RE on an interim basis. A new head of department is due to begin work imminently. Across the academy there is a clear and appropriate balance between study addressing Christianity and other world faiths, such as Judaism, Islam and Sikhism. Learners engage well in RE. They benefit from a wide range of activities and approaches to help them develop their knowledge, understanding and skills, to ask appropriate questions and reflect on issues of religious, spiritual and moral concern. Teaching is at least good and often outstanding and successfully focuses on ensuring progress which leads to high standards.

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

The academy's distinctive Christian foundation is confidently articulated and promoted by the executive principal, ably supported by the leadership team. Their vision, working in close partnership with governors, is well shared by colleagues across the academy. This is supported by, for example, periodic training and discussions about the academy's Christian and inclusive ethos. It is very well understood and shared by learners and their parents. Clergy from around the deanery play a key role in developing the academy's ethos through presiding at the weekly voluntary Eucharist and hosting period visits from learners to their respective churches. The chair of governors is knowledgeable and committed to the academy's continuing success. In this she is well supported by the governing body who are appropriately engaged in Wren's life and work. Arrangements for both worship and RE meet statutory requirements. The recent decision to change the RE curriculum offer in Key Stage 4 was thoroughly discussed by governors. They are aware of the need to monitor and evaluate the impact of this decision on both RE and on the overall Christian ethos. Parents are very supportive of the academy's Christian foundation. How the academy is supporting and helping their children to flourish both academically and personally is rightly seen as a clear expression of the school's Christian values. Assistance provided by the Diocese in terms of visits from the area bishop, training courses and adviser input is welcomed and supportive.

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