



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

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

### The National Academy

Annesley Road  
Hucknall  
Nottingham  
NG15 7DB

**Previous SIAMS grade:** Good

**Current inspection grade:** Outstanding

**Diocese:** Southwell and Nottingham

Local authority: N/A

Dates of inspection: 17 and 18 September 2015

Date of last inspection: 8 and 9 February 2010

School's unique reference number: 137159

Principal: Simon Jones

Inspector's name and number: Jo Fageant 104

### School context

The National Academy is a larger than average secondary school with a growing sixth form. It serves a socially diverse community. It became an academy on 1 August 2011. The majority of students are of white British heritage with fewer than the national average entitled to free school meals or additional funding known as 'Pupil Premium'. The school works in partnership with the Diverse Academies Learning Partnership (DALP) both giving and receiving support through this network. The last Ofsted report in October 2014 judged the academy to be 'good'.

### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of The National Academy as a Church of England academy are outstanding

- Explicitly articulated Christian vision and values are deeply embedded in the daily life of the academy and have a positive impact on behaviours, attitudes and achievements.
- The commitment to the Christian notion of achieving 'life in all its fullness' is exemplified in the school's drive to ensure the best possible provision and outcomes for all individuals, staff and students alike.
- The openly expressed Christian vision and values creates an ethos in which it is possible for staff as well as students to explore their personal responses to issues of faith and belief.
- The strong, positive presence of the chaplain and chaplaincy team brings an overt, explicit and accessible Christian presence into the academy which is built into the support strategies for those in need as well as the governance and worship life of the community.

### Areas to improve

- In order to ensure its relevance to all, review ways of delivering explicitly Christian worship which enables engagement with Anglican tradition and practice and also openly recognises the diversity of belief and commitment amongst students and staff.
- Enrich the engagement with and development of collective worship in all its contexts by enabling students and staff to contribute regularly to its planning and the evaluation of its impact.

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

This is a school, informed by clearly expressed and highly influential Christian values, where nothing is too much trouble in its efforts to ensure the achievements and wellbeing of all students. The trend of improving achievement and examination successes is the result of careful attention to detail and appropriate support in relation to the progress of each student. A strong commitment to the implications of a quotation from John's Gospel about enabling life to be lived to the full is applied to the care of students even before they join the academy. Transition arrangements help to develop confidence which enables children to settle quickly and engage with the school's purposeful learning ethos. The ARCH values (achievement, respect, charity and humility along with wisdom and service) are quickly learned in vertically organised tutor groups about which students are enthusiastic. They believe this arrangement strengthens the impact of the values and enriches relationships by encouraging variety in friendships and a sense of responsibility for one another. This is strongly illustrated in the sense of service exhibited by those accepting the role of peer mentor. All the values and the statement from John's Gospel are well illustrated in the students' awareness of others' need in wide-ranging contexts and their efforts to help through a variety of initiatives. They value the 'councils' system believing it truly gives them a voice and influence in their school. They recognise the impact of the values and vision on behaviour and attitudes with a characteristic expression being, 'they make you want to be a better person and aim high'. They appreciate the efforts of their teachers to support their learning and are confident that problems are resolved quickly and effectively through the Christian inspired support structures. They also value the rich variety of extra-curricular opportunities provided and recognise life lived to the full is about more than lessons and academic achievement. Where necessary students are targeted for involvement in activities and groups to build confidence and enrich their all-round development. This level of Christian attentive care results in high levels of attendance and very few exclusions. Values-related challenges help all students to apply the academy's values to all aspects of their lives so they become deeply embedded in the way things are done throughout the school. The curriculum in general and particularly in RE, 'personal development' (PD) and elements of sixth form studies engages students with religious and cultural diversity and ethical considerations. Many enjoy wrestling with challenging questions of faith, belief and morality which support their spiritual, moral, social and cultural SMSC development well.

### **The impact of collective worship on the academy community is good**

Collective worship takes place in a variety of contexts representing an imaginative and effective response to suggestions for development made in the last inspection report. It is carefully planned by staff and the chaplain and supports SMSC development through engaging with the 'ARCH' values of the school as well as key Christian teachings and traditions. This means students develop some measure of understanding of Christian beliefs about God, the importance of Jesus and the festivals of the Christian year. Biblical teachings and prayer are features of worship in all its contexts. As a consequence when invited to submit prayers for Education Sunday services a significant number of students from all year groups provided a rich supply to be distributed for use in local churches. Students state that worship themes are relevant and 'make you think in a different way.' They recognise it is 'good for people to hear and learn.' Students and staff acknowledge that the strong focus on the school's Christian values has a very positive impact on behaviour and relationships, making the school 'a pleasant place'. It heightens awareness of local and global issues and inspires a great deal of social and charitable action. Through the 'thought for the day' programme followed in tutor groups all students are actively engaged in sharing ideas and taking planning and leadership responsibilities. Excellent resources are provided to support this programme as a result of monitoring which has highlighted requests from tutors about what they need. House 'assemblies', which are more formal occasions, also provide a forum for student participation and leadership. Sessions called 'encounter' are planned and led by clergy from a variety of churches providing explicitly Christian worship for small groups on a rota basis. Although they are recognised to be thought provoking and students are always well behaved and attentive, there is a degree of resistance when the tone does not seem to acknowledge the diversity of beliefs and commitments present. However, planning has responded to feedback from last year's 'mission week' so that upcoming themes address challenging questions of interest to students. Arrangements also enable those in the sixth form to

engage with questions they raise about the Christian faith. Such feedback is not gathered in a systematic way from all concerned in order to inform continuing innovation and enrichment.

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

Religious education (RE) is an increasingly popular subject at the academy with a record of improving examination results year on year. Year 7 pupils express enthusiasm for the lessons and it is in the top five subjects students choose to study at A level. Students make good and often better progress with recognised gaps in the achievement of different groups of pupils being successfully narrowed. Where this has not yet been achieved so well, strategies are in place to bring about improvement. In both the short and full GCSE courses results are above the national averages. The department, working within a successful humanities faculty, is led with enthusiasm, expertise and vision by a subject specialist. She has ambitious expectations for the subject and develops her own understanding and vision by being involved in and leading networks beyond the school. The department is often in the forefront of innovation within the academy, introducing strategies which become whole school initiatives. Effective marking practice helps students understand what they have done well, highlights what they need to do to improve and encourages them to engage with this feedback. Records of lesson observations show a trend of improved teaching which is consistently good and increasingly outstanding. This, together with the school's recognition that improvement is still possible, for example in the quality of questioning, was verified during the inspection. There is rigorous monitoring, evaluation and assessment which ensure a thorough understanding of what is going well and inform effective action planning. As a consequence, students' learning is appropriately supported and the course is well planned and structured to suit the growing maturity of students. The curriculum develops students' understanding of Christianity and helps them draw out similarities and differences with other religious perspectives. A focus on ethics and philosophy means they develop a range of skills and enjoy applying them to questions of meaning and purpose supporting well their own SMSC development. They understand the impact of beliefs and values on people's lives.

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

A thorough review of the vision and values of the school in 2011/12 has ensured that they are clearly communicated to and understood by all members of the school community. They are explained from a distinctively Christian perspective, included in the induction of all new staff and students, and shared prominently on the school's website. Governors and senior leaders give examples of how they inform their thinking and decisions. As a consequence, the values are richly understood, commonly used in general reflective conversations and applied within all aspects of school life. The commitment to enabling life to be lived in all its fullness (from John's Gospel 10:10) motivates the continual drive to improve the achievements of students as well as their personal development and wellbeing. This is well illustrated in wide-ranging self-evaluation and the detailed analysis of data which is used to inform provision and planning. This leads to appropriate levels of challenge and gives prominence to the inclusion of all students and nurture of those who are vulnerable in a variety of ways. The school's values have a clear impact on students' SMSC development; conversations reveal their growing wisdom and commitment to respect for and service to others. The values and vision also inform the care extended to staff through training opportunities to develop their professional skills including those related to leadership in church schools. In addition, provision is also made for their personal and spiritual wellbeing through social and health related opportunities, prayer meetings and the establishment of a group which enables the exploration of faith matters. These initiatives result in high morale and a particularly low staff absence rate. One member of staff explained this as having a 'sense of people looking out for you' and the general application of 'Christian care for all'. Essential elements of a church school, collective worship and RE, are given a very high priority with excellent support which enables continual improvement in practice. Expectations about class based worship are made clear to all staff with support provided as needed. Prayer is a feature of staff and governors meetings and communion is a part of all staff training days. The chaplain and chaplaincy team, comprising clergy from a number of local churches, enrich the Christian and worship life of the school. They are a highly valued presence and also strategically included in the listening structures established to support students in need. The academy plays an active role in the local community well illustrated by the particularly strong links with a nearby care home which have developed a rich and mutually beneficial relationship.

