

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Cathedral Academy			
Address	Thornes Road, Wakefield, WF2 8QF		
Dates of inspection	6-7 February 2020	Status of school	Academy inspected as VC within the Trinity Multi-Academy Trust (MAT)
Diocese	Leeds	URN	145579

<b>Overall Judgement</b>	How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
<b>Additional Judgement</b>	The impact of collective worship	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Excellent</b>

<p><b>School context</b></p> <p>Cathedral Academy is a secondary school with 939 pupils on roll. This has increased considerably in recent years. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is significantly above national average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above national averages. In 2018, the academy became a member of the Trinity Multi-Academy Trust (MAT). In 2019, the school received the TES Secondary School of the Year Award.</p>
<p><b>The school's Christian vision</b></p> <p>To develop conscientious and caring young people who are ambitious, work hard to achieve excellence and make a positive contribution to society. Our school strives to achieve this through the implementation of the teachings of Jesus. <i>'Everything is possible for one who believes'</i> (Mark 9:23 NIV)</p>
<p><b>Key findings</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This deeply Christian school transforms lives and is a living testament to the work of God. Cathedral Academy has a far-reaching impact on the local community, MAT and at a national level.</li> <li>• Inspired and motivated by the vision, there are no Lost Sheep, because adults and pupils serve as tenacious shepherds to each other. Personal interests and talents are nurtured, so all ages flourish.</li> <li>• Excellent pastoral care walks in tandem with phenomenal academic progress, especially for those who are more vulnerable and those whose sense of self-worth is low.</li> <li>• High quality religious education (RE) and inspiring, creative chaplaincy support academic outcomes, character development and the spiritual growth of all, irrespective of age and background.</li> <li>• Leaders know the school very well. Strategic decisions are ethical and consistent with living out the vision. However, the evaluation of the impact of the vision in some policies and systems is at an early stage.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Areas for development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make more explicit reference to the vision in policies and systems for monitoring so its impact directly informs improvements in the academy as a Church school.</li> <li>• Explore the use of a wider range of Anglican symbols, practices and traditions of worship to enhance the existing rich, spiritual offer and ensure pupils are aware of the variety of worship styles within Christianity.</li> </ul>

How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?

### **Inspection findings**

The vision of 'everything is possible' accurately captures the needs of the local community. It has a powerful and transformational impact on the lives of pupils and staff. At Cathedral the vision does not just remove barriers to learning, it obliterates them. The culture of aspiration is driven by the dedicated and passionate leadership of the principal, senior leaders and staff. Brave, ethical decisions to integrate performing arts' pupils (CAPA) into more of the timetable of the academy were not universally popular at the time. However, even the most anxious critics now acknowledge that this was the right decision for all groups of pupils and ensures inclusivity.

Academic progress continues to accelerate. This is testament to the innovative approach to character development, whereby all pupils receive experiences to give them a sense of their intrinsic potential, self-worth and value. These innovative 'defining experiences' build onto the rich curriculum which remains true to its vision of flourishing. There is no compromise on breadth of opportunity. As a result, pupils make outstanding progress, which has been recognised by the TES Secondary school of the Year award.

Governors and the MAT support at a strategic level and know the school very well. However, policies and systems for monitoring the impact of the vision are not fully developed. Several members of staff were seconded from Trinity Halifax and have chosen to remain at Cathedral. Rarely is such a degree of hope and positivity found amongst staff. They give selflessly of their time and talents to ensure all pupils are safe, feel secure and so are able to learn. From mentoring for Year 11s to forensic use of attendance and pastoral information, staff reach out to all pupils and uphold them through difficulties. For many pupils, the academy is their safe haven which gives them the confidence to face the world in a positive way. Those who face turmoil, even fear, in their home lives are enabled to move forward. Sensitive support for good emotional and mental health is key to this and is selflessly provided by skilled staff. Pastoral care is relentless and compassionate. Pupils who have had negative experiences elsewhere are able to settle and flourish. They attribute this to the staff who 'never give up on us, no matter what.' Attendance and exclusion figures are considerably improved as a result.

The impact of the vision goes beyond the academy transforming pupils' lives. It extends to pupils transforming their own lives and those of others, particularly around good behaviour. As one pupil said, 'I did bad things, now I make good choices and I help others to do the same.' Pupils act in the service of others and make positive changes to the daily life of the school and beyond. Whether it be uniform ties made of recycled plastic to 'toilet twinning,' to support for the local foodbank and students in Uganda, pupils are courageous advocates. They act out of a deeply held desire to improve the life chances of others. They express conviction that it is right for them to do so, 'If we don't, who will?' said one.

Leaders model Christian service. Cathedral supports the wider MAT in aspects such as RE and assessment. Leaders engage with and apply Church of England policy and have much to contribute to that agenda. Cathedral is leading the way in developing a new Church school in Barnsley. Support from the Diocese has been much appreciated in giving leaders greater confidence to link their work to Jesus' life and teaching. This outworking of the vision also includes chaplaincy. Cathedral's chaplain embodies the best of Christian possibilities. Her empathy and willingness to serve shine. She has re-energised the chaplaincy, so it is widely acknowledged as essential in the life of the school. Her work with primary schools around worship exemplifies that everything is possible, for both current and prospective pupils alike. It is no surprise, therefore, that she was invited to speak to the Church of England leadership conference on chaplaincy. The principal demonstrates an unwavering commitment to make everything possible. Senior staff are exceptionally gifted in their roles. Staff wellbeing and professional development is exemplary. Staff speak of their mission, 'To be the best we can be, for the students.' Staff feel their lives are transformed by the pupils. They express a strong vocation.

Collective worship has developed to be a pivotal experience in the school day. Time to reflect in silence and to say or listen to the school prayer, written by pupils, focuses all within the academy. At 11.10am the quiet is palpable and all pupils, including those without a faith, value the time to pause in their busy days. Staff too cherish the moment to be still and reflect. Form and year group worship is relevant and engaging. Pupils increasingly lead

aspects of this. Worship has a constant reference point in Scripture and also skilfully addresses topics of interest to pupils. Planning for worship is responsive to pupils' needs. For example, pupil-led worship on gender identity was well-received and thought-provoking. After an inspiring worship focused on the environment, pupils considered Christian stewardship and founded their own club to address eco issues. The spiritual offer through worship and the wider curriculum is a constant thread throughout the academy. 'Big questions' and consideration of the worship word of the week allow all to explore their emerging views and individual spiritual journey. Prayer is a natural and unforced part of the day. Those who wish to are invited to pray. Worship includes a growing range of Anglican traditions. Leaders acknowledge this may extend so that pupils have a wider experience of the different customs that belong to both the Anglican and world-wide Christian church.

The number of pupils entered for GCSE full course religious studies is growing. This decision exemplifies leaders' commitment to making all possible. Pupils have an impressive knowledge of Christianity and Islam. Use of the 'Understanding Christianity' resource supports this. Pupils are well-informed about different world religions, for example, Judaism. Pupils confidently articulate the importance of the subject. 'It opens doors to other people and parts of the world,' was a comment echoed by different ages of pupils. RE is exceptionally well-led and taught. The subject leader shares her considerable degree of expertise across the MAT. Systems to assess progress are robust and capture the impact the subject has within the curriculum.

The Cathedral is an excellent Church academy. As one pupil said of the impact on him, 'A chain binds us and if someone breaks the chain, we help them to return to it. It is constantly locked.' Constant love, following Jesus' example is the chain which binds the Cathedral community. As another pupil expressed, 'this school has unlocked my gifts.' This academy's gift to its pupils is life-lasting and life-enhancing. It gives them the keys to their future.

Principal	Robert Marsh
Inspector's name and number	Allyson Taylor 768