



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

ARK Burlington Danes Academy

Wood Lane

London W12 0HR

Previous SIAS grade: 2

Diocese: London

Local authority: N/A

Dates of inspection: 21st - 22nd November 2014

Date of last inspection: 5th - 6th March 2009

School's unique reference number: 131752

Interim Principal: Michael Ribton

Inspector's name and number: Peter Hullah

Additional Quality Assurance Inspector: Nick McKemey 280

School context

ARK Burlington Danes Academy is jointly sponsored by ARK (Absolute Return for Kids) and the Diocese of London. There are 1,111 students on roll, including the sixth-form, and the Academy is significantly oversubscribed. A Burlington Danes feeder primary school is planned to provide an all-through Church of England academy. Two of the three clusters where the students live are in the lowest one percent of the most deprived areas nationally. Over a third of students come from an Islamic background. Ofsted graded the academy outstanding in all categories in November 2013. The present Interim Principal was appointed in September 2014 having previously been Senior Vice Principal since 2008.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of ARK Burlington Danes Academy as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The achievement and personal development of learners is outstanding
- Religious education (RE), focussing on Christianity is inspired by outstanding teaching
- The powerful academy ethos is based on inclusive Christian values
- Students and parents are proud that their academy is a Church School which values diversity and difference

Areas to improve

- There is insufficiently effective monitoring, challenge and support by the Governors to ensure that Burlington Danes Academy reaches its full potential as a Church School. A clearly articulated vision and strategy to promote the Christian ethos of Burlington Danes is not fully in place.

- There is insufficient monitoring and evaluation of the impact of collective worship, assemblies and the chaplaincy to ensure the sustained effectiveness and embedding of the Christian ethos. A clearly thought out and agreed strategy is required to facilitate this.

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

Burlington Danes Academy is a welcoming and hard working, inclusive community. The Christian ethos makes a salient contribution to the outstanding achievement and personal development of all learners. This can be seen in the way students consistently make significant progress, performing above national expectations both academically and in their personal development. The academy has high rates of attendance and very low exclusion rates with no permanent exclusions in 2013-2014. No racist, sexist or homophobic bullying incidents are recorded. Learners are excited by RE, which is inspirationally taught. It plays a major part in shaping the Christian character of the academy. Students say that their understanding of the Christian religion and the life and teaching of Jesus helps them make informed moral choices. A strong leadership team ensure that learners fulfil their potential and are well prepared and aspirational for life after school. The atmosphere around the academy is purposeful and friendly with learners engaging in mature open discussion and debate in lessons. Students from all faith backgrounds feel happy and safe, secure that their beliefs are respected and valued. Students are fully aware that Christian values are at the heart of daily life in the academy because reflection time, worship and assemblies are a fundamental feature of academy life. The Muslim head boy commented that the Christian character of academy meant that it is “for everyone” and that different faith traditions are fully respected. The Berwick Learning Centre for vulnerable students is a secure place where students feel they talk freely and gain confidence. The strong supportive relationships which exist between staff and students to help learners achieve are the product of the academy’s distinctive Christian character. Students from a range of religious backgrounds say how important it is to them that the academy promotes Christian values and has a chapel and chaplain.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Daily reflection time, worship and assemblies are valued and positively affect the way students learn and form a caring community. Teaching staff gather for a time of reflection each morning. They pray together, often using prayers which are in the name of the Trinity and staff comment on how this makes a favourable difference to their own spiritual journey and well-being. Collective worship is based on a Theme of the Week, which is chosen from the Church of England Lectionary to promote the spiritual and moral development of learners. In the academy’s house system references are made to the life and teaching of Jesus, with students belonging to houses named after St Paul’s letters. For some the house system exists to promote competition, for others it is a way of celebrating a distinctive spiritual identity. The meaning of the values which lie beneath the house names are not universally well understood. Students value their participation in celebrating major Christian festivals and the visits of invited local Anglican Church leaders, to lead worship and discussion groups. Students have open access to the chapel and, in addition to leading voluntary services, the chaplain acts as a pastoral counsellor both to students and staff. The chaplaincy structure, line managed at present by the Interim Principal, is being reviewed. In a time of transition the chaplaincy is valued and respected by both staff and learners. One student remarked that the chapel is a “special quiet place.” Parents comment on the respect their children give for the life and teaching of Jesus as discovered through RE, collective worship and private prayer at the academy. They feel this makes a positive impact on the behaviour and the attitudes shown by their children towards other people less fortunate than themselves.

There is, however, insufficient monitoring and evaluation of the impact of collective worship,

assemblies and the chaplaincy to ensure its full and sustained effectiveness.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

RE is an invaluable central element in the effectiveness of the distinctive Christian character of Burlington Danes Academy. Attainment and progress in RE are outstanding. Students make excellent progress in line with or better than national expectations. At KS3 over three-quarters of the students are above target. Careful attention is paid to students with educational needs and School Action students who make above average progress. All students on free school meals also make above average progress. At KS4, most students achieved an A*-C grade. The RE department is exceptionally well led by an experienced and inspirational senior leader. The teaching staff, including those new to teaching, are enthusiastic, well supported and mentored. Standards of written work in all key stages are outstanding and students are able to communicate their knowledge, thoughts and feelings confidently. An example was a Year 9 middle ability class who were exploring openly the topic of gay marriage and were fully aware of the religious issues raised in Christianity and other religions. In two Year 11 classes the concept of stewardship as found in Islam and Christianity was explored in a way that was both informative and openly debated. The RE curriculum from Year 7 to Year 13, focusing on the teaching of Christianity, contributes to high academic standards and impacts positively on progress in other curriculum areas. Students make excellent links between the value systems of all faiths to underpin outstanding progress in theological literacy. A Year 8 class studying the 8 fold paths of Buddhism successfully explored the connection this teaching makes with the teaching of Jesus Christ relating to the sacred nature of life. In a Year 12 Health and Social Care class, a discussion on the spiritual issues behind palliative care of cancer patients was underpinned by an understanding of Christian values. The overall quality of teaching in RE is outstanding. Students feel challenged and are exceptionally positive about the contribution RE makes to their development.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is good

The Interim Principal leads a team of senior and middle leaders in a clear and sensitive manner and, at every opportunity, articulates the distinctive Christian values of the academy. Leaders appreciate how the Christian ethos of the academy has made a positive contribution to the raising of academic standards. They value the collaboration that exists between ARK and the Diocese of London although some are unclear about the impact this has on the academy as a Church School. Highly effective self-evaluation strategies enable the leadership to have a clear understanding of the academy's academic performance and it has been judged outstanding by Ofsted in every category. Students in Year 12 and 13, both those who had been at the academy from Year 7 and those newly arrived in Year 12, comment favourably upon the impact the leadership of the sixth form make on promoting Christian values. The RE faculty is led in an outstanding manner and leadership of RE has contributed significantly to the academic development of the academy both in RE and in other subjects. Senior leaders are aspirational for the students and for themselves as potential leaders of church schools in the future. Effective partnerships exist with local churches and one church leader commented positively on how students engage in joint community charity projects with local Anglican churches. The Chair and governors are passionate about the academy and they value highly the outstanding work done by ARK and senior academy leaders in raising standards. The governors nominated by the diocese and bishop are supportive of the academy. The governance, however, is insufficiently rigorous in strategically monitoring and evaluating the impact, which the inclusive and distinctive Christian ethos makes on the learning and development of the students. A clearly articulated vision and strategy to sustain and develop the Christian ethos of Burlington Danes is not fully in place. This aspect of academy life is not yet a regular item in the cycle of the governing body's business meetings.

