

**STATUTORY  
INSPECTION OF  
ANGLICAN SCHOOLS**



Name & address of school: **Burlington Danes Academy**  
Wood Lane, London, W12 0HR

Diocese of London

Date of inspection: 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> March 2009

Name of Headteacher: Ms Sally Coates

Type of School: An Ark and Church of England Secondary Academy

School's unique reference number: 131752

Date of last inspection: 28<sup>th</sup> April – 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1997

SIAS Inspector: Catherine Large (N.S. 482)

### **School Context**

Burlington Danes Academy has its roots in over three hundred years of Christian – based education. Two single - sex schools merged in 1976 to form the Burlington Danes School on the current 10 acre site. In 2006, the school opened as an academy, sponsored by ARK (Absolute Return for Kids). It retained its Church of England status. It currently caters for 784 boys and girls between the ages of 11 and 16. This is smaller than the average sized secondary school. It has a higher proportion of boys than girls. Many of the students come from areas where there is economic and social challenge. Nearly half are eligible for free school meals, significantly above the national average. Students come from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. 44% are from Black British, African and Caribbean backgrounds, 14% from White British backgrounds and about 40% come from other ethnic groups. An above average proportion of students have special educational needs, mainly severe or moderate learning difficulties and emotional and behavioural difficulties. About 47% of students come from Christian backgrounds and 41% from Muslim backgrounds. The academy has specialist status in mathematics and the performing arts. It has been awarded 'Sportsmark' status. It is currently undergoing a major building project which will provide purpose-built facilities for the performing arts as well as additional classrooms for the new sixth form, which opens in September 2009. The school is now over-subscribed.

### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Burlington Danes Academy as a Church of England school are good.**

There is an overwhelming view, from governors, students, staff and parents, that the last year has seen a transformation in the academy. The newly appointed Principal has a strong Christian vision for the academy. Her leadership is outstanding and she is supported by a senior leadership team and staff who share this vision. There is a clear sense of purpose and commitment pervading the academy. The changes that are recognised by so many are reflected in the very positive quality of relationships and the rising levels of achievement and progress. The governing body supports the Christian ethos of the academy but has not yet fully explored the implications of its church status.

### **Established strengths**

- The outstanding leadership of the Principal and the support she has from her team in working to develop the Christian vision for the school.
- The sense of community and mutual respect in the academy and the harmonious way in which students from diverse backgrounds relate to each other.
- The outstanding quality of leadership, attitudes and achievement in religious education.
- The opportunities provided by the newly refurbished chapel for students to explore matters of faith and the support provided by the chaplaincy team.

### **Focus for development**

- Strengthen the opportunities for spiritual development and daily collective worship.
- Increase opportunities for students to encounter local clergy and other faith leaders.
- Make the systems for reviewing the church school status more systematic.

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

Students are happy at the academy and feel safe, cared for and respected. Students from diverse faith backgrounds are clear about the Christian nature of the academy and regard this as fundamental to its ethos. They appreciate the respect that is shown to non - Christian faiths. For example, Muslim students are able to use the chapel for prayer. There are daily and different groups that meet at lunchtimes in the chapel, some of which are organised by the students and others which are led by the chaplain or local clergy. Over the last year, changes and developments in academy planning, policy and practice have focussed strongly on raising the standards and achievements of all the students and these are bearing fruit. Progress of all groups of students is good. Attendance is greatly improved and there is clear and consistent application of the academy's behaviour policy. This policy sets out the stages of response and action but provides opportunity for reconciliation and a fresh start. The working atmosphere is generally calm and positive. The academy appoints some students in roles of responsibility, including subject and faith 'Ambassadors', and these students show high levels of maturity and support for their academy. Planning for the new Sixth Form involves a 'Pioneer Group' of students. Students have good opportunities to participate in extra-curricular activities at the end of the day and at weekends. This represents a significant commitment on the part of a wide range of staff. The Academy Council is active and effective and it organises some of the charity events. Generally, there are good responses to helping people in need such as entertaining local elderly people. Their links with, and understanding of, wider groups in the community are satisfactory. Students feel their views are taken seriously. They are adamant that they have no concerns about bullying and racism and feel the role of their 'Advisor' is effective in supporting them on a daily basis. The social, moral and cultural development of all students is good. The impact of provision for their overall spiritual development is not yet as consistent and the academy recognises that it is an area to address. It also recognises that there are still areas for improvement in meeting the needs of all students, such as the promotion of their independent learning skills. However, the academy is not complacent and has accomplished much in the last year. It has a very strong commitment to meeting the needs of the whole child and its capacity to build on early achievement is outstanding.

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

Collective worship is regarded as important by the academy and there is a clear programme of themes linked to Bible verses. These are displayed in classrooms and on the plasma screens in key parts of the building. They form the basis of the two main weekly gatherings of the students in their year groups and are led by members of the senior management team and the staff year leaders. The quality of these is good. Students enter respectfully, are attentive and respond positively when given the opportunity. Preparation and presentation are good. For example, effective use is made of PowerPoint presentations. The Academy Prayer is regularly featured in worship and it promotes the Christian values of the academy very well. The themes are broadly Christian and appropriate although, apart from Christmas and Easter, there is some lack of breadth in the references to the Christian Year. Highlights for the students are the Christmas and Easter special services held for the whole academy in the main hall. These are very well planned and presented and are appreciated by the students. The chaplain is central to their planning. In addition to these festival times, the chaplain and local clergy offer opportunities for students to share in worship in the chapel. These opportunities include Holy Communion on Ascension day, pre-GCSE dedication service for Year 11 students and an Induction Service for all Year 7 students at the local parish church. Generally, there are insufficient opportunities for most students to experience worship led by local clergy. The parish church is some distance away and therefore students are unable to access it during the academy day to experience worship in a church environment. However, the chapel, a former classroom, has been redesigned and furnished to create a spiritual space in the academy. It is not yet used to its full potential. Staff recognise the value of prayer and reflection in the life of the academy. Each day, they start morning briefing by taking it in turns to lead their colleagues in a prayer or reflection. There are excellent support

materials available for staff advisers to use with their groups on the days when they do not meet as a year group but practice is inconsistent. The academy does not yet have in place an approach to monitoring and evaluating the impact of worship on the community but has the capacity and positive commitment to address this situation.

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

Religious education is well regarded by the students. One student described the subject as 'opening my mind and making me think', another as 'helping me understand other people's points of view'. Overall, students make good progress as they move through the key stages. All students are well supported with appropriate resources, effective use of the interactive white board and additional classroom support. Standards in the subject are above average by the end of Year 9. Standards in Years 10 and 11, where all students are entered for the full course GCSE, are currently more in line with national averages but there is clear evidence of improvement. The progress and achievement of the highest attaining students in these years is outstanding. They have the opportunity to study at Advanced Level and are coping well with the challenge. The quality of teaching is at least good and often outstanding. One of the most significant reasons for this is the challenge in lessons. Teachers have high expectations and good questioning skills. They know their subject and its standards well and help the students evaluate their own and other students' work. They support GCSE students very well because of their clear understanding of examination requirements. Students across the key stages are very confident in oral work and feel comfortable when expressing their own beliefs. Their written work is less secure and teachers address this in their marking. The curriculum for years 7-11 is well balanced and takes full account of the school's church status and the expectations of the local Agreed Syllabus. Students have a good knowledge of the beliefs and practices of Christianity and other major faiths. There is a very strong culture of respect for the beliefs of others. Attitudes and behaviour in lessons is generally excellent. Overall, the subject makes an outstanding contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students. The leadership and management of the department are outstanding. During the eighteen months the head of department has been in post, new schemes of work have been developed identifying standards in the subject. The head of department is an extremely skilled practitioner. There is a strong sense of teamwork in the department and new teachers are well supported and enthusiastic about their work. Lessons are monitored carefully. Currently there are insufficient opportunities for students to have first hand experience of Christian and other places of worship or to encounter members of faith communities, including the clergy.

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

The academy has come a long way in a year. There have been major changes in leadership and staffing. The recent improvements in learning, behaviour and ethos are testimony to the hard work that has been undertaken at all levels. 'Transformation' was the description used frequently during the inspection. The headteacher, senior management team and staff are strongly committed to maintaining and building upon the Christian ethos of the school. Under the outstanding leadership of the new headteacher and her team, the ethos was described by a governor as one of 'humanity and compassion where everyone is nourished'. There are clear references to the Christian status of the academy in public documentation, displays in the foyer and around the building and in some, but not all, policies. The current academy vision statement, 'Achieving through belief' is prominent. Students therefore are clear about the distinctiveness of the status of the academy. They recognise it in their houses, named after the epistles in the New Testament. Many, including those from other faiths, give it as a reason for their choice of secondary education and feel that it is making a positive difference to their experience. Staff set good examples and relationships at all levels are very good. There are some good links with the local community including a developing partnership with a nearby special school which brings students and staff into contact with each other. The academy is working hard to build up links with parents and these are now having a positive impact as evidenced by the very high turn out at a recent parents' consultation evening. Links with the diocese are very good. The role of local faith groups, including Christian leaders, is not yet established for most students in areas of academy life such as collective worship and religious education. Teachers are very supportive of the Christian foundation of the academy. However, there is some insecurity in the application of the theme of the week for all students in daily advisory time and teachers have not yet been able to benefit from some development support in promoting the spiritual dimension of academy life. The Academy Development Plan is explicit and strategic in its focus, with appropriate priorities for raising standards and achievement. These

are improving the educational opportunities and personal development of students. The plan lacks any reference to the development of the Christian ethos. The academy recognises that, whilst the Christian foundation of the academy is valued and upheld, currently there is no clear process involving all stakeholders, including the governing body, by which its effectiveness as a church can be interpreted and evaluated. 'We need to have that conversation' was their expressed judgement. Inspection confirms the academy's self-evaluation of leadership and management overall as good.

SIAS report March 2009 Burlington Danes Academy, Wood Lane, London. W12 0HR