



Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

The Gryphon Church of England Secondary School, Sherborne

Address Bristol Road, Sherborne Dorset, DT9 4EQ

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

Overall grade

Excellent

The impact of collective worship

Good

School's vision

'I have come that they might have life, and have it to the full.' Jesus in John 10:10

We support and encourage every student to strive for the highest possible levels of academic achievement alongside developing the personal attributes and qualities to thrive, and make a positive contribution throughout life.

Key findings

- A deeply embedded and transformative Christian vision holistically infuses the life of the school. Pupils readily speak of themselves as a 10:10 community referring to the basis of the vision.
- There is exceptionally strong provision to ensure the needs of all learners are met in line with the vision. This is especially seen in the work with pupils who have special needs and disabilities (SEND) and innovative nurture groups.
- Collective worship is well planned and resourced and inspires pupils to action. However, prayer and pupil involvement in planning is limited.
- Religious education (RE) is outstanding at all levels and is inspirational and challenging. Pupils confidently articulate their understanding of religions and worldviews. However, there is less understanding of the variety of Christian worship traditions in other countries.
- A broad, inspiring and strongly creative curriculum allows all learners to explore their personal spirituality. This further strengthens their understanding of the vision and its relevance.

Areas for development

- Develop the prayer life of the school further and the involvement of pupils in the planning and delivery of collective worship. This will further strengthen the living out of the vision.
- Further improve knowledge and understanding of the diversity of Christian worship around the world. This will help pupils to appreciate the rich variety of approaches to worship.

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 school describes itself as a 10:10 community referring to the deeply held Christian vision of 'Life in all its fullness'. This is lived in an exemplary manner by the whole school community. Leaders at all levels are deeply committed to implementing and promoting the vision. The caring ethos has outstanding impact on the flourishing of pupils and adults. This extends to other schools in the Sherborne Area Schools Trust and into exceptional support of Salisbury Diocese education team. Pupils who have left the school return to it as a place of refuge and support. An outstanding sense of shared purpose unites school, church, and community. The clergy, imam, and headteacher give the deeply held vision the highest priority. The senior leadership team provide inspirational and caring leadership exemplifying the vision. This is particularly noted in provision for pupils who have SEND. Innovative nurture groups in every year ensure rapid progress, with some pupils advancing very quickly with reading. Governors integrate the Christian vision into excellent management of all aspects of the school. They visit and monitor the school regularly and informal reporting feeds future strategic planning. Future church school leaders are developed and all adults encouraged to flourish. Teachers at all stages of their career feel well supported. Reflecting the impact of the vision, strong emphasis is placed on the mental health and wellbeing of the whole community. Staff and pupils speak highly of transformational care and support. Evidence of excellent practice is seen in how beliefs, hopes and aspirations are discussed and shared by pupils and adults alike.

The Christian vision is explicitly realised in educating all pupils. Parents strongly appreciate the approachability of staff and feel every pupil is highly valued. They speak glowingly about the impact the vision has on their families and the character development of pupils. The alternative provision groups ensure maximum progress for those who find school life difficult. The broad curriculum has exceptional opportunities for creativity. As a result, there are many possible approaches to spirituality, which are used extensively. This is clearly evident in pupils' work, and staff have reflected exceptionally well on spiritual opportunities in their subjects. Pupils are encouraged to explore their potential in innovative and creative ways. They readily relate this to their understanding of themselves as a 10:10 community. As an example, this means they reflect extremely well on their hopes and aspirations. This is evident in a large group of potential Oxbridge pupils and others who have a strongly developed sense of direction. They understand the Christian vision helps them achieve their potential. Thus, the vision is transformational showing them it applies to all areas of life.

Pupils enthusiastically embrace the importance of the Christian concern for justice. This is demonstrated through an exceptional range of charities supported. A recent innovative idea to support Ukraine is seen in the activity of the pupils to collectively walk the distance to that country. Whole school participation in this event shows their commitment. Motivated by the vision other examples driving them to be agents of change are readily found. A group of pupils are engaged with Dorset Council in discussion about waste management. This clearly shows understanding of the Christian idea of stewardship. To further enhance opportunities for meaningful reflective moments, pupils are involved in planning a spiritual garden. Through a deep desire to develop spirituality further, a labyrinth is under discussion. The vision is evident in the ways that different views are explored and resolved in the school council. Inspired by the vision, pupils demonstrate a deep concern for good mental health which enhances the wellbeing of all. Perseverance with the Christian ideal of love and forgiveness in difficult times is deeply understood. Dignity and respect for all is strongly motivated by the 10:10 vision. Pupils have a real passion and desire to do more as advocates of change. They are driven that all should experience the same life changing opportunities which they enjoy.

This excellent school is heavily oversubscribed so leaders have to make creative use of space. An example of this is that worship takes place in tutor groups. This allows meaningful opportunities for worship and reflection for all pupils throughout the week. There is an extensive library of worship resources for tutors. Pupils respond well to invitational worship which is accessible to those of all faiths or none. They appreciate moments of stillness and reflection as well

as some lively discussion. Use of prayer is occasional. The collective worship leader's good planning ensures worship and reflection supports and expresses the vision. Planning and leading worship by pupils is limited, but an embryonic group exists to develop this. Some pupils are involved with the local minister in Sherborne Abbey and this relationship furthers their understanding of worship. Pupils readily share the impact of spiritual thoughts on their lives and how worship has inspired action. As an example, reflection and worship around Christian Aid week leads pupils to understand that caring for the poor and disadvantaged is everyone's responsibility. Pupils have a knowledge of Anglican and other traditions. Good systems monitor and evaluate the impact of worship and drive future planning. Pupils remark that 'John 10:10 is the best bit of the Bible.' Visiting clergy, the imam and other ministers share the view 'You know the truth is present here.'

RE is a separate subject and is exceptionally well planned and taught by specialist staff. Impressively the school has over forty pupils studying A level RE which is just one indicator of the subject's impact. This group of pupils handle complex theological and philosophical ideas extremely competently. RE is taught to all pupils at all levels through examined and non-examined courses. Examination results are particularly impressive, with some sixth formers motivated to progress to further studies in the subject at university. The RE leader promotes staff development through innovative subject training. This is not only in school but across the Trust and Diocese. Impact on pupils is reflected in the highest quality oral and written work demonstrating a thoughtful appreciation of the influence of Christianity and other religions on society. However, there is less understanding of the rich variety of Christian worship traditions around the world. Pupils explain the importance of RE and its impact on their personal spirituality. The curriculum has excellent balance between religious and other worldviews. As an example, pupils readily explain and assess the impact of religious beliefs on ethical issues. The quality and range of their theological thinking is impressive. They have excellent knowledge of world religions and recognise the importance of this in promoting global understanding. A clear and very thorough system of assessment informs and guides their progress.

Contextual information about the school

Date of inspection	23 May 2022	URN	138471
Date of previous inspection	2 December 2015		
School status	Voluntary controlled secondary school	NOR	1576
Name of MAT/Federation	Sherborne Area Schools' Trust		
Diocese	Salisbury		
Headteacher	Nicki Edwards		
Pupil profile	The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is above national averages.		
	The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with national averages.		
Additional significant information (if needed)			
Inspector's name	Jeremy Hellier	No.	899