

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Queen Elizabeth's School

Blandford Road, Wimborne Minster, BH21 4DT

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	Salisbury
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Academy conversion date	1 November 2014
Name of multi-academy trust / federation	N/A
Dates of inspection	13 and 14 June 2018
Date of last inspection	27 April 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Academy – Converter Mainstream 141526
Executive Principal / Head of School	Martin McLeman / Katie Boyes
Inspector's name and number	Elisabeth Stevenson
Quality assurance	Lyn Field 151

School context

Queen Elizabeth's School is a Church of England comprehensive academy serving Wimborne Minster and surrounding rural area. It is a larger than averaged sized upper school with 1590 pupils aged 13-19 on roll. Most students are from White British backgrounds. Proportions of pupils in receipt of free school meals and those with special educational needs are lower than national averages. The academy was graded as 'good' by Ofsted in September 2017. Members of the leadership team have been in post for several years and have taken on the leadership of another school in the diocese since January 2018.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Queen Elizabeth's School as a Church of England school are outstanding.

- The inspirational leadership of the headteacher and the senior leadership team have set a clear Christian vision based on 'hope' which has a significant impact on the engagement and progress of all members of the school.
- There are excellent relationships between different groups within the school, informed by the collective understanding that every person should be treated as a uniquely valuable individual. This strengthens the community and supports the personal and academic development of pupils. Staff, pupils, parents, governors and chaplaincy team all talk about the strong sense of QE School being a 'family'.
- The house system, with the introduction of vertical tutoring, and the work of the chaplaincy team shape an atmosphere which is inclusive and caring, and in which pupils feel valued and safe.
- The senior leadership team and governors understand the strengths of the school and have taken significant steps to address areas of underperformance.
- The senior leadership team prioritise staff well-being and staff professional development, which means that staff feel empowered and engaged. They enjoy working at QE School and are committed to its success.
- The environment reflects the Christian ethos and character of the school, and helps to create a calm, friendly and purposeful atmosphere.

Areas to improve

- To develop collective worship in school, using pilot projects run 2017-18, to establish a meaningful programme of daily Christian worship with supports and enriches pupils' spiritual development.
- To develop links with the wider community and with pupils' families by establishing strong connections with a broad range of local churches representing the breadth of the community served by the school.

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

The leadership team have established a holistic approach to the education and development of pupils which is rooted in the Christian ethos of the school and in a commitment to valuing and developing each individual. The focus on hope is grounded in an understanding of God's love and faithfulness and underpins work done with pupils throughout the school to support both their academic progress and their personal development. This is evident in lessons, in conversations with pupils and in meetings with staff. Parents and staff comment on the positive impact of the visible Christian ethos. The Christian ethos of the school informs decision-making about the curriculum: leaders are committed to maintaining breadth and depth of opportunity to meet the needs of all learners. Transition points are managed effectively both as pupils move into Year 9 and when they move to sixth form and strong links have been established with local middle schools. Leaders are never complacent: robust systems for assessing pupil progress have become quickly embedded this year and are clearly understood by pupils, parents and staff. Members of staff are able to identify which groups of pupils need further support. Lessons observed and internal monitoring processes reflect the success of the targeted programme of intervention to support these pupils. The establishment of the 'QE classroom' has helped to establish consistency of practice across the school.

The Christian ethos of the school means that everyone feels valued and behaviour through the school is excellent, reflecting the impact of the behaviour policy introduced this academic year. This policy is based in an understanding of mutual respect. Individuals are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions and to consider the impact on others. All members of the school community comment on the impact of the house system and vertical tutoring. This contributes to the sense of 'family' and to pupils feeling known and valued. The house system is rooted in the Christian character of the school and the drive to create an environment in which every pupil flourishes. The work of the chaplaincy team is widely acknowledged to have had a positive impact on the school. The chaplains work closely with the heads of houses, with the senior team and with pupils. Relationships between staff and students reflect a common purpose and clear collective understanding of the school vision. Everyone feels part of the school. Pupils feel supported by their teachers, and are able to communicate with them easily.

The teaching of RE is valued by pupils; they enjoy the debate in lessons, the chance to explore matters of religious faith, and understand that these debates give them the opportunity to learn how to explore different views within a context of respect. The Year 12 philosophy and ethics lesson observed showed excellent use of questioning to develop discussion and debate and students listened to and reflected on the views of others in the group. Students were confident in discussion, and are used to this style of learning. Lesson observations show in practice the changes that have been introduced. In the lessons observed, behaviour was excellent: pupils listened to each other, cooperated effectively and were focused on their work. Staff used targeted questioning very effectively indeed. Pupils are given clear feedback and know what they need to do to improve further. This is also reflected in feedback from pupils, who say that their teachers 'set work that is challenging'. Students in graphic design are engaged in monitoring their own progress with a system of 'pegs' which move depending on the outcomes of pupils' progress reports. A year 10 English lesson observed showed key groups of previously under-performing pupils effectively engaged and focused in class. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) provision is excellent and threads through pupils' daily experience at QE School.

The environment reflects and supports the Christian character of the school. Everyone is proud of the sculpture, 'Sign' at the school entrance. Pupils talk about the importance of the banners in the school hall, the Bible verses in place above the water fountains and the introduction of the new prayer room all being valued 'signposts' to the Christian ethos of QE School. This is a happy, safe school in which each pupil is helped to flourish. Staff and pupils are proud of their school and committed to its future.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good.

Collective Worship is an important part of the daily life of QE School. It is structured around the house System, and is supported by the chaplaincy team, heads of houses and the collective worship coordinator. Collective worship is led by a range of staff and pupils, and members of the student leadership team express a strong sense of ownership of 'their' assembly in their house. The programme of collective worship reflects the patterns of the liturgical year. One pupil said that collective worship 'puts you in the right mind-set to live and act in the right way' at the start of the day. The language used during worship models and strengthens pupils' understanding of the role and purpose of the Trinity within Christianity. Pupils enjoy the interactive and thought-provoking nature of the collective worship they experience, and they value the focus on 'hope' in a Christian context in motivating and helping them to develop their aspirations. It includes reference to other faiths but this is always done in relation to Christianity.

The school has strong links with Wimborne Minster. Both pupils and staff talk about the importance of the Year 9 Welcome Service. This link enriches the pupils' understanding of the range of Anglican tradition. There has been an increase in attendance to the carol service in recent years, indicating increasing commitment to the ethos of the

school. Each week there is 'Thought for the Week' which is explored in tutor groups. Evidence from pupil surveys and feedback from pupils in years 9, 10 and 12 all show how this is valued. Pupils are invited to pray in response to 'Thought for the Week' and in collective worship. There has been a useful pilot project this year focusing on collective worship in small groups, which will be developed further in 2018-19. This provides a greater range of opportunities for collective worship across the school. The opening of the new prayer room is an important step in developing space dedicated to pupils' spiritual experience. Now that the chaplaincy team is well-established in school, there is an opportunity to develop further links with local churches in the community. The chaplains are from a range of different Christian denominations, reflecting the breadth of Christian tradition in the area and their work is valued by everybody. Pupils appreciate that their chaplain is someone they can talk to. The chaplains' work is integral to the school; they work closely with senior staff and with those responsible for collective worship and pastoral care. They have been particularly important in supporting newly appointed heads of houses and they contribute significantly to QE pupils feeling known and valued.

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

The leadership of the school as a Christian community, committed to the education and well-being of staff and pupils is one of its main strengths. The headteacher is proud of the work of his senior team, and rightly so: his leadership and development of senior leaders has a significant impact on progress and therefore the life chances of each pupil. Senior leaders confidently articulate how their work relates to the school's Christian vision of giving pupils hope. There are high levels of trust and confidence within the staff, with everyone feeling part of the journey. The development of middle leaders is also a strength of the school, many of whom have taken on more responsibility this academic year. The governing body is experienced; governors know and understand the school well. The decision taken by the school in January 2018 to lead and support a neighbouring school in the diocese showed both great courage and great trust: courage in taking on the day to day management of another school, and trust in the team at QE to take this on and make it work. This decision was rooted in a strong Christian vision: staff at QE school are committed to the education of young people in the wider community, not only in the school, and have a strong sense that they will help, because they can. The school has strong links to the diocese; the headteacher is a member of the Diocesan Board of Education and was involved locally in the appointment of the new vicar at Wimborne Minster. The school meets the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship. The school's mission statement emphasises the importance of valuing each individual and building a community based on mutual service. This is evident in the care taken to support pupils and staff in school. Safeguarding procedures are robust and well-understood. The leadership of the school places a high priority on supporting the well-being of staff and pupils. There is a staff well-being group, and well-being weeks are valued by staff. Pupils say that bullying is rare, but that they have people they can go to when this happens: their tutor, their head of house, one of the chaplaincy team. Several younger pupils talked from personal experience about how bullying had been dealt with quickly and effectively at the start of this academic year.

Across the school attainment and progress are high. The work of senior leaders ensures a clear understanding of where improvement is needed. Action has been taken to improve the progress of disadvantaged groups at GCSE. Progress coordinators have been appointed for Years 9 and 10 and the impact of the new behaviour policy on learning and progress is marked. There has been effective induction for staff new to the profession: a Schools Direct trainee will join the staff this September and newly qualified teachers speak highly of the support and encouragement they have been given as well as opportunities for professional development and career progression. The effective mentoring and induction for new staff means that they talk confidently about the Christian ethos of the school. New assessment and marking systems are robust and well-understood by staff and pupils. The gap in achievement between advantaged and disadvantaged pupils at GCSE was halved from 2016 to 2017 and there are clear indications that this gap will diminish further in 2018. Another crucial part of giving students hope has been in strengthening relationship with parents. The leadership team has moved to a system of two parents' evenings in the academic year to build into the school calendar more opportunities for parents and teaching staff to meet. Action has also been taken to address issues of attendance. Work on attendance, behaviour and pupil progress are all seen as crucial elements in supporting pupils' education. Staff, students and parents talk about QE School being an inclusive, happy and safe school where everyone is friendly and accepting of difference. Pupils place high value on the friendships they have formed at QE School. The student leadership team appreciate the opportunities they have and they, themselves, reflect back the values of the staff leadership team. One student said that it was a pleasure to represent her school. The clear vision based on hope drives the school community. One member of staff said that this 'starts at the top'. It is also shared across the school. This is a shared enterprise with a clear direction for the future shaped by the Christian vision for QE School.