

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Shaftesbury School			
Address	Salisbury Road, Shaftesbury, Dorset, SP7 8ER		
Date of inspection	14 November 2019	Status of school	Academy inspected as VC, member of Southern Academy Trust
Diocese	Salisbury	URN	140898

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

School context

Shaftesbury School is a secondary academy with 1100 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is in line with national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below national average. The school is part of a multi-academy trust (MAT), The Southern Academy Trust, and has a boarding facility on site catering for 100 pupils. The school has been through a period of change, led by the current headteacher, who was appointed in 2017.

The school's Christian vision

The school's vision for education reflects that of the Church of England and is one that asks 'for everyone to be the best they can be'. This is rooted in the three basic elements of the school motto: 'Aspiration, Action and Achievement' and in the 'Fruit of the Spirit' in Galatians 5:22-23.

Key findings

- The school's leadership has been transformational for the school community over the last three years. Staff, parents and pupils value the impact of the renewed focus on the Christian ethos of the school.
- The staff team works together exceptionally well, with respect, collaboration and commitment to the pupils. They view pupils holistically and give compassionate and effective support to all. This means that pupils and staff feel valued, and attribute this to the Christian ethos of the school.
- The Christian vision is clear and is theologically based. Staff and pupils talk with confidence about the Fruit of the Spirit and how these shape their daily life together at Shaftesbury School. Collective worship is thoughtful and engaging and sets the tone for the community each day.
- Recent work to define the school's Christian ethos and to improve pupil progress needs to embed fully to ensure that all staff and pupils continue to thrive and grow.
- Shaftesbury School is a community built on love, compassion and hope, firmly rooted in Christian teaching. The school is continually growing on these firm foundations as it develops practice, ensuring that all initiatives further enhance this ethos.

Areas for development

- Develop work on monitoring and assessment to ensure continued upward trend in progress data for all pupils, with a focus on support for disadvantaged pupils so that all can thrive academically.
- Develop and embed provision for religious education (RE) at Key Stage 4 to ensure enriching curriculum opportunities which stretch all pupils, including those not studying GCSE RE.
- Embed and evaluate strategies recently put in place which nurture the spiritual development of staff and pupils, so that all can consciously develop their spirituality at Shaftesbury School.

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

Shaftesbury School is a community committed to helping everyone to live 'life in all its fullness'. Recent changes in leadership have reinvigorated the school. The leadership team has worked with staff, pupils and parents to establish a vision for the school which is rooted in Christian teaching and helps everyone in the school to flourish. The headteacher leads with great integrity and has built a strong and committed team. His drive to grow Shaftesbury School's Christian vision is valued by staff, pupils and parents. Staff and pupils have been involved in meaningful discussions about the school's Christian vision and what it means in practice. Consequently the commitment to the Christian ethos is strong and deeply understood.

The Christian vision is clearly rooted in Christian theology. This is evident throughout the school building, with examples of the 'Fruit of the Spirit' displayed on the walls. Pupils explain confidently how this helps them to reflect on collective worship and reminds them through the day of the school's ethos. This means that the school's Christian ethos permeates the school day, from collective worship and 'Theme for the Week', to dismissal at the end of the day. The school leadership team make decisions rooted in the school's Christian vision and their commitment that everyone should be the best that they can be. This includes both decisions about the curriculum, ensuring every pupil has a rich and challenging education, and decisions about complex pastoral issues, which are treated with thought and care. Senior leaders have been bold in making decisions about the future of Shaftesbury School; they are able to do this because of increasing confidence in the school's Christian vision.

The school has strong links to local churches, with a team of clergy who support staff and pupils spiritually and who lead worship. These links mean that the school is firmly rooted in its wider Christian context. Staff and pupils are proud of the school's history. There are effective links based on trust and respect with both the multi-academy trust and particularly with the diocese. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development and have been fully involved in recent work on developing the Christian vision. Staff and pupils appreciate the generosity and expertise of senior leaders and understand that their approach is relentlessly focused on developing all pupils to be the best that they can be. Pupils are happy and feel safe in school.

The curriculum at Shaftesbury School ensures that there are high expectations of every pupil and that there is a thorough focus on improving academic outcomes for all pupils including those in disadvantaged groups. The establishment of a 'transition group' for Year 7 pupils finding the transfer to secondary school very challenging has been successful and has now been extended. The motivation to develop this provision is firmly rooted in the Christian ethos of the school. Staff talk about this programme supporting vulnerable pupils as an example of the holistic approach central to the school's vision. Pupils are courageous advocates for their peers and their wider community. They appreciate the diversity brought to their school by the boarding house, they enjoy opportunities to raise money for local charities and they see this as directly linked to the school's Christian ethos. This reflects an outward-looking approach and a commitment to working together. There are very strong relationships between staff and pupils. Staff lead by example, working to ensure that colleagues feel valued. Pupils are able to talk to staff with ease and are supported with advice and space to reflect. They talk confidently about the Fruit of the Spirit and how these guide their lives at school. Pupils feel happy and safe in school and value the friendships they have with their peers. There was significant pupil input into the new behaviour policy which emphasises the importance of forgiveness and reconciliation. Pupils, parents and staff are proud of this and the positive impact it has had on the school. This is undoubtedly a community living well together.

Religious education is taught by subject specialists who are committed to their subject and their pupils and have high expectations in all lessons. Questioning is used very effectively to challenge pupils to think about big questions. The 'drop days' at Key Stage 4 are being developed to ensure all pupils have an engaging and challenging experience of RE even if they do not study it for GCSE. There are robust indications of sustained improvements in RE examination results. The introduction of Philosophy and Ethics at A level reflects a whole school commitment to RE and ensures that pupils have access to a rich and challenging curriculum at every Key Stage.

The school provides a range of extra-curricular activities and opportunities to become involved in the wider community. Careers guidance is strong, reflecting the school's understanding of the importance of giving pupils hope for the future as well as precise guidance about next steps in education and training.

Collective worship is valued by pupils and staff. Pupils are able to reflect on how collective worship helps them and why it matters to them. They appreciate the space given to 'Theme for the Week' and the opportunities allowed for silent reflection. Year 7 visit the local parish church for a welcome service at the start of the year; their prayers from this service are displayed in the entrance hall, a visible reminder to all of their hopes as they begin their journey at Shaftesbury School. There is very good support from local clergy, ensuring that pupils develop an understanding of a range of Christian traditions. The Christian vision of the school means that pupils are able to talk about matters of faith in an open way with their peers and with staff. Parents comment that the Christian ethos helps their children to be grounded. Collective worship is evaluated regularly and planned collectively.

The Christian vision at Shaftesbury School is clear and heartfelt. It is understood and valued by pupils, staff and parents. It is driving the leadership of the school and setting a clear direction. This vision gives all members of the community a sense of belonging and confidence for the future.

Headteacher	Tim Farrer
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