

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

### All Saints Academy Dunstable

#### Vision

Our ethos is rooted in the Christian faith, acknowledging the value and uniqueness of every human being as individuals, and as part of the wider community, with different learning needs. It enables them to fulfil their potential. The Academy instils **dignity** needed to enable students to move into the wider world of work and life, supports students and staff on their journey of **faith** by raising awareness of religious beliefs and world views, and offers a deep-rooted **hope** that inspires aspirations that know no limits.

Our Vision is to ensure social justice prevails, and enables social mobility, through an explicit delivery of Character Education.

All Saints Academy is living up to its foundation as a Church school and is enabling pupils and adults to flourish. It has the following notable strengths.

#### Strengths

- The school community greatly value the school's vision, with its focus on dignity and aspiration. It is an appropriate Christian response to the complex context of the school.
- Leaders work tirelessly to ensure that the school vision is made real through their strategic and day-to-day decisions. As a result, both adults and students flourish.
- The meticulous mapping of collective worship alongside the curriculum ensures that students' spiritual and character development are given priority. This enables them to develop as reflective and well-considered young people.
- All Saints Academy is a community where adults and students treat each other with dignity and kindness. This means that students, particularly those who are vulnerable, have a fulfilling time at the school.
- Students know that their voices are heard by adults at the school. As a result, they grow into a quiet assurance, which enables them to discuss issues with dignity and good humour.

#### Development Points

- Reflect further on the way in which the vision is expressed. This is to ensure that it crisply encapsulates the Christian passion for dignity and aspiration that drives the work of the school.
- Monitor the impact of the chaplaincy. This is to enable it to further enhance the school's Christian distinctiveness in a way that is appropriate to its context.
- Review the place of religious education (RE) in the curriculum. This is to enable students to benefit further from the strong teaching that they receive in the subject.



## Inspection Findings

The vision, crafted by school leaders and governors, emphasises the centrality of dignity and aspiration in the life of the school. Underlying this is a passion, shared by leaders and governors, for the school to transform the life chances of its students. This is an entirely appropriate Christian response to the school's complex context and history. Leaders' commitment to fostering dignity ensures that students are supported in developing a strong sense of self-worth. This is particularly important for, and valued by, those who are deemed vulnerable. The focus on aspiration results in a curriculum and extra-curricular activities that encourage students to aim high and seize opportunities. Leaders rightly point to the rapidly improving progress of students as evidence of the impact of the vision. In addition, adults and students acknowledge its effect in creating a community that promotes their flourishing. The vision's current wording does not fully reflect the Christian passion for social justice that leaders bring to their work.

The curriculum is ambitious and exciting, raising the aspirations of students. For example, the vast majority follow modern languages to GCSE. Leaders insist on this to broaden students' horizons and give them a skill that will enrich their current and future lives. There is a strong commitment to extra-curricular activities and visits that enrich students' experience of school. In addition to sports clubs, the school offers activities as varied as jewellery making, board games and baking. Key Stage 3 students are required to enrol on a number of these elective activities. They greatly value the way their experience is broadened through their participation. Integral to the curriculum is the explicit teaching of skills and character virtues. These are taught separately and reinforced consistently in lessons. As a result, students thrive by acquiring attitudes and behaviours that support their learning and prepare them for the future. The curriculum for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is carefully mapped with real priority given to students' development as people. Opportunities for spiritual development are also identified across the curriculum, so that students and adults see it as an integral part of learning. Overall, the design and delivery of the curriculum make a significant contribution to students' flourishing and spiritual development.

The teaching of character virtues plays an important role in daily acts of collective worship. They are showcased and reinforced alongside the Christian theme of the week. As a result, students and adults experience a strong, comprehensive exposure to character virtues in a Christian context. Collective worship is inclusive and invitational and, at its best, inspirational. Students of different faiths and worldviews value the contribution that this makes to their personal and spiritual development. The monthly focus on a virtue sits alongside the celebration of Christian festivals, so that collective worship makes a profound impact on the life of the school. The work of the chaplaincy makes an important contribution to worship and to the Christian atmosphere in the school. However, opportunities to maximise its impact, for instance by having a dedicated base, have not been taken.

Leaders make determined efforts to ensure that their commitment to the dignity of adults and students is reflected in the school's culture. The free provision of tablets and school uniforms for all are visible signs that the dignity of every student is prioritised. Similarly, the rich offer of school trips is open to all, regardless of ability to pay. This opens access and affords dignity, particularly to those who are disadvantaged. Leaders and governors invest heavily in pastoral and mental health support for both adults and students. In particular, the dedicated associate staff ensure that students experiencing difficult times are given prompt and sensitive support. In this nurturing environment, students are willing to come forward and ask for help when they need it. This results in a community where people thrive because they are accepted for who they are. Adults at the school flourish as a result of



leaders' commitment to create a genuine sense of community and to offer practical support when people go through difficult times.

The determined focus on character virtues that permeates the life of the school is an important expression of its vision. It has a powerful impact on students. It causes them to reflect carefully on their relationships with others and on what it means to be a good person. The school's behaviour code rewards good behaviour and promotes restorative conversations if students make unwise choices. This further helps adults and students to develop positive relationships and mend faltering ones. The student parliament actively reviews the effectiveness of the behaviour policy and makes suggestions for its refinement. Several of these have been adopted. Members of the student parliament feel empowered to represent their peers and take the lead on wider initiatives such as the cultural day that they instigated. Sixth formers enjoy the considerable responsibilities they are given for supporting younger students. In particular, they work with those whose native language is not English and lead the school's support for its chosen charities. The school has partnerships with local churches which enrich the worship life of the school. It also works with a range of providers of alternative education to provide effective support for the most vulnerable students. The priority the school gives to character education contributes valuably to creating a culture where students grow as responsible, socially aware citizens.

The RE curriculum is effective at all key stages, including the Sixth Form. The Key Stage 3 curriculum offers a broad understanding of major religions and worldviews with an appropriate emphasis on Christianity. Students are effectively prepared for GCSE at the end of Key Stage 4. Teachers are given clear guidance and support and a rich portfolio of resources with which to work. The teaching about virtues in the weekly character education lessons gives students opportunities to develop and apply ideas covered in RE. The quality of teaching and learning seen in lessons is not fully reflected in examination performance. This is because the time allocated to RE in Years 9, 10 and 11, though adequate, is not sufficiently generous to permit the deepest learning.

RE lessons are carefully structured and engaging for students, with a good range of activities and opportunities for discussion. As a result, students speak confidently about what they have learned and engage in respectful debate with each other. A Year 10 lesson on euthanasia built carefully on students' prior knowledge and made good use of discussion and relevant case studies. Assessment across the school is highly effective and RE is no exception. Students are clear about their current level and know how to improve their work. Occasionally the rigid lesson structure adopted across the school causes opportunities for the best learning in RE to be missed.

## Information

Address	Houghton Road, Dunstable LU5 5AB		
Date	2 -3 December 2024	URN	135946
Type of school	Academy inspected as Voluntary Aided	No. of pupils	560
Diocese/District	St Albans		
Headteacher	Liz Furber		
Chair of Governors	David Fraser		
Inspector	Andrew Wilcock		