

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Augustine's Academy, Dunstable	
Address	Oakwood Avenue, Dunstable, LU5 4AS
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	Excellent

School's vision
Our vision is that all members of our community will shine. This is based on Matthew 5:16, "Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven." With love at our core, and pupils at the heart of all we do, we provide a safe and stimulating environment where everyone flourishes. Through valuing relationships and having high expectations, we strive to achieve our potential, inspiring others to shine too.
Key findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils and adults flourish extremely well because the school community is united by a deeply inclusive Christian vision. Leaders at every level embody and live out the inspirational message of hope that all members of the community will shine. • Robust strategic plans grow from the vision, leading to transformational outcomes for pupils. Leaders craft a highly ambitious curriculum which enables pupils to overcome seemingly insurmountable barriers to learning. Opportunities for spiritual growth are plentiful but the school's definition of spirituality is not universally understood. • St Augustine's is a beacon of hope for pupils and adults. Pupils considered to be vulnerable are exceptionally well nurtured and supported to flourish academically, socially, and spiritually. • Inclusive worship is valued by pupils and adults as it wholeheartedly instils and celebrates the essence of the Christian vision. A strong relationship exists with St Augustine's Church which enhances the worship life of the academy and the local congregation. • Religious education (RE) is a key strength as the bespoke curriculum enables pupils to flourish within lessons. Opportunities for pupils to learn about Christianity as a lived and diverse global religion are being developed.
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empower staff to further develop opportunities for spiritual growth by fully embedding the definition of spirituality. • Develop aspects of the RE curriculum to enable more pupils to fully understand Christianity as a living world faith.

Inspection findings

Leaders are highly ambitious for pupils and adults. They know that every member of the community can shine academically and spiritually. Leaders embody the inclusive Christian vision and associated values. Courageous leadership is inspired by the teachings of Jesus. Senior staff are instrumental in the schools development and are fundamental to enabling pupils and adults to shine. Central to this success is the aspirational vision which results in pupils and adults flourishing exceptionally well. Innovative approaches to embedding the vision are embraced by the community. A 'Vision Box', presented to new pupils and staff, contains objects that help recipients understand the vision. Such innovative practices are the norm at St Augustine's. The academy serves a growingly diverse catchment. Throughout recent changes, strategic planning is strengthened by the vision. This enables everyone to be welcomed with open arms and beaming smiles of love. St Augustine's is at the heart of the local community. Leaders take counsel from the diocese in developing the academy and share best practice with other schools. For example, by welcoming other schools across the country to observe the vision in action. Governors set high expectations and fully monitor the impact of the vision. By utilising a robust self-evaluation system governors know the academy extremely well.

Leaders set high expectations for every pupil. The highly skilled staff employ expertise to create a culture of learning in which pupils thrive. Subsequently, school data shows that pupils make rapid progress academically. Those considered to be vulnerable are exceptionally well nurtured and supported to achieve their potential. Character development is interwoven throughout the curriculum to enhance resilience. This equips pupils to apply perseverance to aspects of their education. A culture of deep reflection is expressed through widespread spiritual opportunities. Leaders invest in a Forest School area to ensure pupils gain first-hand experiences of nature and creation. A definition of spirituality is in place, but not all members of staff share a clear understanding of this. As a result, there are some missed opportunities for spiritual growth across the wider curriculum.

Support for those considered to be vulnerable is grown from the vision. St Augustine's is a haven for the school community. Asylum seeking families and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are exceptionally well nurtured and wrapped in love. Leaders value every relationship and partnership. Pupils and adults feel welcome to be themselves in the knowledge they are respected. Innovative approaches to support the diverse community are shared with a wide audience through academic research and various publications. Pupils love coming to school and accordingly attendance is increasing. Policies and procedures for behaviour are consistently applied across the school in line with the vision. The result is a harmonious and purposeful environment. Incidents of bullying and racism are rare. When they occur, staff swiftly respond with approaches that utilise the language of the vision.

The character development of pupils directly grows from the vision. This gives hope for the community and raising their awareness of issues. It is most evident when circumstances are difficult. Pupils relish planning social action projects for charities. One example is the learning that takes place regarding Christian Aid. Pupils developed a keen awareness of injustice and poverty in specific parts of the world. Leaders are sensitive that pupils considered to be vulnerable may benefit directly from such efforts. This balance is carefully managed to ensure everyone can be included in social action for good causes.

The unique person created by God is valued by community members. Regardless of background or ability, dignity and respect are shown to, and expected from, everyone. Pupils and adults are enabled to flourish within an all-encompassing acceptance of people that



transcends tolerance. The vision expects that everyone shines and lives the fullness of life that God intends. When they leave St Augustine's, pupils are well prepared for the future. Being part of the academy community changes lives for the better and equips pupils for life in modern Britain. For example, by exploring the growing diversity within the local community. Relationships education is honed to reflect the context of pupils. Careful consideration is given to the curriculum ensuring that the inclusive vision has a life-lasting transformational impact. St Augustine's offers pupils a rich balance of extra-curricular opportunities well beyond those normally seen.

Worship is an exceptionally powerful expression of the Christian vision. Excellent collective worship enables people in the academy community to be drawn to reflect on the essential and inherent meaning and mystery of life. This is nurtured for all with God's love at its heart. Invitational prayer and reflection are woven throughout the school day. Pupils are imaginatively empowered to plan, lead, and evaluate worship. Their knowledge of the Bible is impressive. They have a clear insight of God as three in one. Worship is a rich experience for everyone. Music, prayer, and reflection showcase the cultural background of the community. Those present are immersed in a rich variety of worship styles. The deeply theological Christian vision drives practice in worship. As a result, the vision is wholly embedded and empowers pupil and adults to make explicit links. Strong and lasting relationships with the local church congregation enriches St Augustine's. This mutually beneficial relationship supports the overwhelming sense of community. Worship leaders receive training and act swiftly on the pupils' robust monitoring. Spiritual development is enhanced greatly throughout worship. Pupils and adults speak with consideration about their spiritual growth within the love that the academy gives unreservedly.

Leaders utilise a wealth of training to create a bespoke RE curriculum that ensures the progression of knowledge and skills over time. Consequently, pupils flourish in RE because of the high-quality of provision that intrinsically reflects the Christian vision. Lessons are exciting and thought-provoking. The highly skilled RE subject leaders are passionate about pupils' learning. Leaders weave the vision throughout the ambitious curriculum. This gives clarity of vision and supports pupils' exploration of theology, philosophy, and the human social sciences. Theological concepts are effectively unpacked and deeply explored. As a result, pupils' conversations about faith, worldviews, and beliefs, are highly articulate. RE is a safe space in which pupils develop age-appropriate skills of inquiry, critical analysis, and interpretation. Diocesan training is enhanced by conscientious research of the RE leaders. This is regularly cascaded to teachers. Leaders rightly identify the need to enhance pupils' exploration of Christianity as a global faith. A rigorous and effective monitoring system is utilised by teachers to ensure pupils flourish in RE. Statutory obligations are well met.

St Augustine's is a beacon of hope in the community. It is a shining example to other schools of exceptional inclusion and achievement, and the transformational impact of strong relationships.



Information			
School	St Augustine's Academy, Dunstable	Inspection date	16 June 2023
URN	138558	VC/VA/ Academy	Academy
Diocese/District	St Albans	Pupils on roll	178
Headteacher	Amanda Howes		
Chair of Governors	Carole Hegley		
Inspector	Toby Long	No.	896