



**British School  
Overseas**  
Inspected by Penta International

**Inspection report**

**Sherborne  
Senior School**

**Qatar**

Date  
Inspection number

**10<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> April 2022  
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## 1. Purpose and scope of the inspection

The Department for Education has put in place a voluntary scheme for the inspection of British schools overseas, whereby schools are inspected against a common set of standards that British schools overseas can choose to adopt.

The inspection and this report follow the Department for Education (DFE) schedule for the inspection of British Schools overseas.

The purpose of the inspection is to provide information to parents, teachers, senior managers and the school's management on the overall effectiveness of the school, the standard of education it provides and its compatibility with independent schools in the United Kingdom.

The inspection and report will cover the key areas of quality of the curriculum; quality of teaching and learning; the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils; their welfare, health and safety; the suitability of the proprietor and staff; the school's premises and accommodation (including boarding); and the school's complaints procedures. An essential part of the inspection is considering the extent to which the British character of the school is evident in its ethos, curriculum, teaching, care for pupils and pupils' achievements.

This inspection was completed by Penta International. Penta International is approved by the British Government for the purpose of inspecting schools overseas. As one of the leading inspection providers, Penta International reports to the English Department for Education (DFE) on the extent to which schools meet the standards for British Schools Overseas.

During the inspection visit, over 70 lesson observations took place, as well as a series of learning walks. School documentation and policies were analysed and data reviewed. Pupils' workbooks were scrutinised, and discussions were held with the senior staff, the management team, and a range of teachers, parents and groups of pupils. The inspection team were in school for three days.

The lead inspector was Colin Dyson. The team members were Ciprian Ghisa and Adam Hassoun.

## 2. Compliance with regulatory requirements

Sherborne Senior School (Sherborne Senior) has shown that it meets the standards for British Schools Overseas, except for those that cannot be achieved legally in the host country. These pertain to aspects of the UK Equality Act 2010. The school actively promotes tolerance and a respect for all human differences, within the confines of the law. This is embedded in the culture and ethos of the school. This judgement is endorsed by the British Government and is valid for three years. The inspection process is quality assured by the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED).

### 3. Overall effectiveness of the school

Sherborne Senior School is a good school with significant outstanding features. It provides a high quality of education for all of its pupils and fully meets the standards for British Schools Overseas. It shows excellent capacity for further improvement. Pupils and teachers are enthusiastic and enjoy being at school. Strong supportive relationships based on mutual trust and understanding are evident throughout the school.

#### 3.1 What the school does well

There are many strengths at the school, including the following:

- The positive and friendly atmosphere within the school community.
- There is a high level of respect between teachers and pupils, and between pupils.
- The high quality of the curriculum which is distinctively British, adapted to the local context.
- Effective leadership and management across the school ensures smooth educational operations.
- The school looks to the UK for educational guidance, developments and initiatives.
- The high quality premises and accommodation meet the BSO requirements.
- The welfare, health and safety of the pupils are outstanding.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.
- The leadership and management of the school are effective and secure the smooth operation of the school: the team is committed to further improvements as the school continues to grow.
- The provision of information to parents, carers and others is outstanding.
- The school has been highly effective at coping with the implementation of support during the recent restrictions.
- Leaders have created an appropriate unified structure for management including professional development.

## 3.2 Points for improvement

While not required by regulations, the school might wish to consider the following development points:

- Post pandemic, return to assessments at the end of each academic year that are standardised.
- Improve the quality of teaching further, so that all lessons are as effective as the best ones, for example in terms of techniques used (like facilitation) or stretch and challenge for the most able pupils.
- Use the talents of leaders and managers to take a greater shared responsibility in the continuing development of the school.

## 4. The context of the school

Full name of school	Sherborne Senior School, Qatar				
Address	Building Number 19 Street Number 1697, Zone 51 Mall of Qatar, Doha				
Telephone Number/s	+974 4459 6400				
Fax Number	NA				
Website Address	sherborneqatar.org				
Key Email Address/s	secretary@sherborneqatar.org execsec@sherborneqatar.org				
Headteacher/Principal	Principal and CEO: Mr Nick Prowse Headmaster: Mr Stephen Spicer				
Chair of Board of Governors/Proprietor	Sheika Noura Al Thani				
Age Range	12 – 18 years				
Total number of pupils	586	Boys	322	Girls	264
Numbers by age	0-2 years	0	12-16 years	459	
	3-5 years	0	17-18 years	127	
	6-11 years	0	18+ years	0	
Total number of part-time children	0				

Sherborne Qatar is a self-financed family of schools with its own governing body. Sherborne Senior School (with the linked Prep School) is one of this family, currently the only overseas schools operated by Sherborne School, Dorset, UK. Sherborne School has half of the appointed membership of the board of governors (including the principal and CEO of Sherborne Qatar), and the local Qatari owners have the other half. Sherborne Qatar's ethos and brand are monitored from Sherborne UK. The principal of Sherborne Qatar and the headmaster of Sherborne UK are in regular contact.

## 4.1 British nature of the school

Sherborne Senior School fully meets the standard.

- The ethos, nature and appearance of the school is recognisably British, and mirrors what would be found in the independent sector in the UK.
- Sherborne Senior School adopts 'best practice' from the UK.
- Styles of teaching and learning are informed by UK best practice: staff professional development is used to develop consistency of approach in this area. Consequently, pupils can enter schools in the UK without disruption.
- The school is an accredited British Schools Overseas (BSO) school and is a member of the British Schools in The Middle East (BSME).
- All pupils and staff (other than SLT) at Sherborne Senior School belong to a British system of six houses.
- Parents value the high quality of the British curriculum.
- The vast majority of teachers are British and/or British trained and qualified, with experience of teaching in British schools.
- The vast majority of communications from Sherborne Senior School to families and pupils are provided in English.
- The school has a uniform policy, like many English schools.
- The school's house systems, school council and rewards practices reflect those used in English schools.

## 5. Standard 1

### The quality of education provided by the school

The quality of education provided is overall good with excellent features. The school fully meets the standards for BSO.

#### 5.1 Curriculum

The quality of the curriculum is outstanding.

Throughout the senior years, there is a well-planned and flexible curriculum that is designed to meet the varying needs of the pupils. The KS3 curriculum is closely aligned to the National Curriculum of England but has been successfully merged with the Qatar Ministry Curriculum in Arabic and Islamic studies.

The school offers a curriculum that aims to inspire all groups of pupils to develop a lifelong love for learning and to embrace challenges so that they reach their full potential. Sherborne Senior School celebrates diversity and aims to create global citizens who are dynamic, creative, independent learners. The school embraces innovation and technology and this is reflected in all pupils' skills and abilities using ICT. This has enabled the school to successfully teach the full range of curriculum subjects to all pupils when learning has been online.

The curriculum promotes the key attributes of teamwork, participation, resilience, confidence and co-operation alongside support for high levels of attainment and progress. The curriculum is relevant, inclusive, and highly successful in providing effective preparation for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in British society. For example, it encourages pupils to learn about and embrace a range of cultures, explore how different societies work and develop their employability skills. All pupils have many opportunities to learn about the important values of tolerance and respect for different religions, most notably through the moral-education programme. Pupils say the school encourages friendship and acceptance of all.

The curriculum supports rapid English language proficiency with adaptations and age appropriate resources provided to ensure that pupils can be successful in all subjects. The school currently offers a wide range of timetabled subjects in Key Stages 4 & 5, and is planning to offer even more as the school continues expansion. By widening the range of academic options available the school will be able to provide further opportunities for pupils to develop talents, interests and aspirations. From 2022/23 Key Stage 4 pupils will also have the option of studying i/GCSE Design Technology. Core subjects, English, mathematics, science and languages are taught as discrete ability set groups. Alongside these subjects the school encourages pupils to study Humanities and an additional language. For those pupils who it is appropriate the school enables pupils to study three science subjects.



## 5.2 Teaching and assessment

The quality of teaching is good with a significant number of excellent lessons.

Teaching is mostly good with a significant number of outstanding lessons in the senior section. Most teachers have a strong subject knowledge and a secure understanding of how to teach an English curriculum successfully. Lesson planning is consistent and produces many lessons that engage pupils and enable them to gain a greater understanding of the subjects studied. Following a return to normal onsite teaching arrangements, middle leaders have recognised that the pace of learning, having been negatively impacted by the restrictions of the pandemic, is an area for development. Technology is used well for teaching and learning across the curriculum. The schools own monitoring systems also aim to ensure that the quality of teaching is consistently good.

In the very best lessons teachers used questioning to check understanding and to encourage pupils to develop and justify their views. However, in many lessons the level of challenge did not always stretch the pupils appropriately leading to lower levels of progress. In the less good lessons, the use of data from prior learning was not always evident, resulting in the individual needs of pupils not always being met. Differentiation was identified by senior and middle leaders as an area for development already resulting in a review and professional development opportunities.

Pupil behaviour is excellent and teachers managed the occasional lapse effectively resulting in lessons being rarely disrupted. When lessons lacked challenge pupils demonstrated high levels of self-control, highlighting their understanding of expectations for behaviour.

Throughout KS4, in the best lessons, there is enthusiasm and energy in teaching and therefore in learning. Teachers typically demonstrate a good subject knowledge, which engages pupils and encourages them to work well independently. The best lessons are planned with well-timed, engaging activities. For example, in a maths lesson pupils watched a practical video before working collaboratively to define the strategy for finding the formula for the volume of a cone. In a history lesson, pupils were fully engaged discussing the historic impact on the unification of Germany.

Across KS5, the majority of the lessons are good. Expectations are generally high with regards to pupils' behaviour and attitude towards learning. The teachers have a solid subject knowledge and they use a large range of very good quality resources. The use of technology is excellent, by both pupils and teachers. The lessons follow a standardized structure which allows the teachers to meet the learning objectives and supports pupils' learning behaviour. Relevant activities were in place to prepare the pupils for their IGCSE, AS and A-Level exams. In the best of the lessons, the pupils are challenged, very good questioning is evidenced, and differentiation is visible through

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relevant extension activities. Feedback is developmental and self-assessment is consistent.

In some lessons, teaching is teacher led with missed opportunities for the active participation of the pupils, collaborative work between pupils and peer-assessment. The pace of the lessons is sometimes slow affecting the level of engagement of the pupils.

When the opportunity arises, pupils are eager to learn independently and they enjoy sharing their knowledge and skills. The majority show resilience in sticking with a task until they see it through. Generally, pupils collaborate successfully, sharing ideas and communicating effectively.

## 5.3 Standards achieved by pupils

Standards achieved by the pupils across the school are consistently good with elements that are outstanding, for example external examination results and value added, demonstrating excellent progress in KSs 4 and 5.

It is not possible to be definitive about attainment without external verification through public examination results. The school has confidence in the rigour, accuracy, and consistency of its internal processes. Pupils across all year groups make good progress, which is illustrated by the results of the school regular system of internal assessments and by the results of the IGCSE and AS and A-Level exams. Their very good behaviour and attitude towards learning allow them to develop a wide range of skills across all subjects. Pupils throughout the school display a very good level of English, being confident in their communication abilities. Pupil progress is monitored across all the academic departments and in all key-stages. Sherborne School implements baseline and regular internal assessments and mock test sessions tracking pupils' progress and effectively support the preparation for examinations in KS 4 and 5. A very broad range of data is collected and translated into individual development and intervention plans allowing the pupils to make progress or to close the gaps in their learning. Consistent and effective learning support is offered to pupils, aiming to ensure the rapid inclusion of all pupils in the mainstream learning level.

The pupils are working to reach high aspirational target grades set at the beginning of each academic year. CAT4 assessments are also used to help teachers set the right level of challenge for each individual pupil. Consistent self-assessment is evidenced in most of the lessons across the school. Formative feed-back is given to pupils in most of the lessons and in most of their individual work.

In KS3, the internal assessments indicate that 75% of pupils who have been in school for the whole middle school learning experience meet the expected levels for English, Maths and Science.

In KS4, pupils achieved very good results in their 2021 IGCSE examinations: 49% of all IGCSE grades were the top 9 to 7 grades, compared with 29% in the UK; and 91% of all grades were a grade 4 or higher, compared to 77% in the UK; 93% of pupils achieved 5 or more pass grades at grade 4 or higher (up from 91% in 2020); and 85% of pupils achieved 5 or more pass grades including English and Mathematics at grade 4 or higher. Very good results are registered at Key Stage 5 level: 80% of all grades at AS level were in the A\*-C range – up from 74% in 2020; and 86% of all grades at A2 level were in the A\*-C range – up from 83% in 2020.

On completing their studies, the majority of pupils go on to university to continue their education. The pupils benefit from consistent university admission guidance allowing them to attend prestigious universities in a variety of countries including the UK, Qatar, Canada, Turkey, Israel, Egypt, The Netherlands, and Australia.

The school successfully enables pupils to develop their personal skills and qualities. They meet high expectations of behaviour, and positive attitudes towards learning as well as towards each other. As a result, by the time they leave the school, they will have the necessary skills to move successfully to the next stages of their lives, to face the challenges of the contemporary world.

Attendance figures on the days of the inspection was 92%. This indicates an improvement from the period before the pandemic. The school is making consistent effort to constantly raise parents and pupils' awareness on the importance of very high attendance on their progress and set high expectations on punctuality.

## 6. *Standard 2* Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is excellent. It is a key strength of the school.

The school fosters and enhances a feeling of togetherness and friendship. Pupils develop their self-knowledge and self-confidence, preparing to face the challenges of the contemporary world. The pupils show respect for one another, for their teachers and for their environment, clearly meeting the schools' high expectations on behaviour. Their friendly disposition and tolerance and respectful attitudes allow them to develop to their full potential. The ethos of the school ensures the development of a very multicultural environment which values diversity and promotes the respect for the traditions of the local pupils as well as of the international ones. The school actively promotes tolerance and a respect for human differences. This is embedded in the culture of the school. Pupils from 63 nationalities are encouraged to share their stories in class discussions, in assemblies or during the International Day.

Structures such as the houses, pupil buddies, student council, health champions and pupil mentors ensure that there is a strong pupil voice in the decision-making process of the school. Pupils are regularly consulted and they are very confident in expressing their views which are valued by the leadership of the school.

The house system is integral to the school and the spirit of friendly competition is visible around the campus, reinforcing the values and the vision and mission of the school. The pupils play a decisive role in the leadership of their house, most of the activities and programmes being led by them. The house involvement highly contributes to the development of the pupils as well-rounded persons, with a special focus on their social as well as emotional wellbeing. The houses also have a great contribution to the rapid integration of the new pupils in the school community. The pupils are well supported by a very effective learning support team. Together with the house leaders, teachers and pupils, they also work to ensure a good transition of the pupils from the Prep School to the senior.

The pupils have many opportunities to develop their leadership, communication, and interpersonal skills as well as to broaden their understanding of the world. They value the projects, the extracurricular clubs, the pupil led activities, the work experience programme for Year 10. MUN, debate, sports, fitness and the medical club. All have a great impact on their development and on their preparation for the life beyond the school. The school has worked effectively in maintaining as many of these activities as possible during the COVID 19 pandemic period in an online environment and is making clear steps for reintroducing them once the legal restrictions are lifted. Charity projects and activities are organized by the school developing pupils' involvement in the community.

Nearly all teachers create a positive and friendly learning environment, in which all pupils are able to clearly articulate their thoughts and feelings. They feel confident and comfortable

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about asking for help. A lot of trust is put in their tutors and heads of year. The tutors played an effective role in supporting the pupils during the challenging period of the pandemic. Active tutor time, a strong PSHE curriculum, regular assemblies and celebration of success contribute to a strong social development.

## 7. *Standard 3* The welfare, health and safety of the pupils

The provision for the welfare, health and safety of the pupils at Sherborne Senior School is excellent.

Safeguarding arrangements, including training for staff and pupils, are rigorous and well monitored and exceed UK requirements. The school designates a Child protection coordinator and two child protection officers that receive Level 3 training. All staff are trained in-house and are aware of the procedures involved. Both around the school and in assemblies and lessons, advice for pupils is clear about how they should react if they are concerned about abuse or threats. Level 2 safeguarding training for teachers and other staff takes place at the beginning of each year and is repeated periodically. Scrutiny of surveys and discussions with parents indicate that they feel that their children are both safe and happy.

The school takes pupil well-being and mental health seriously and is an area of strength for the school. This is addressed through a number of successful strategies including rigorous analysis of pupil trends, a well-being curriculum and staff workshops on well-being and mindfulness. The school counsellor can be accessed via a referral system offering on-going support and assurances to pupils. This is an invaluable resource and has been identified by the school as an area that may need to be expanded as the school grows. During the measures taken as a result of COVID-19, pupils' well-being was monitored by the school. Now that all pupils are back in school, well-being is monitored by all adults in the school. Pupils know what to do if they have a concern about themselves or others. On these rare occasions, a confidential conversation takes place which involves all relevant people. Pupils in the school councils said that they felt very safe and looked after both in and around the school. The school has very effective anti-bullying procedures ensuring that pupils understand how to keep themselves safe, including online. Bullying incidents are rare and are dealt with effectively. There are designated trained first aiders and their certificates are up to date. A detailed written behaviour policy is backed by an excellent and well-understood rewards and sanctions policy. Staff systematically record any incidents which enables tracking of behaviour over time. Behaviour of pupils in class and around the school is excellent.

Security is appropriate, with security guards at all gates and the reception area. They are courteous and friendly but strictly ensure that only those authorised are admitted to the school. Arrival and departure routines are exceptionally well organised and security guards and senior staff monitor the flow. The school has two nurses, in excess of the local minimum requirement, that provide timely and effective first aid in a purpose-built clinic. The clinic staff maintain accurate records of treatment, store and administer medication securely and provide guidance on healthy living.

School leaders robustly ensure that the school complies with all health and safety requirements. A rigorous risk assessment procedure is in place covering all activities.

## 8. *Standard 4* The suitability of the proprietor and staff

The suitability of the proprietor and staff at Sherborne Senior School fully meets the requirements of the BSO Standard.

The school has a comprehensive single central record of all staff, including supply staff, governors, and support staff. This document records that all the required checks are in place and confirm that employed staff are suitable to work with children, are not on the prohibition from teaching list, and have the right to work in Qatar. All appropriate checks are in place prior to confirming any appointments. The Human Resource department accurately maintain all records and ensure all updates are made and information is stored safely.

Those involved in the recruitment of staff have undertaken appropriate training. Recruitment procedures are of the highest standard with rigorous selection and checking of references prior to interview. This means the school is able to recruit high calibre teaching staff, most of whom are British trained, with considerable experience of the UK curriculum.

The safeguarding and child protection procedures are very thorough and mirror the expectations of both UK legislation and of the host country. The school's board members and leaders understand how important it is for these checks to be made and are vigilant in ensuring these are carried out especially for staff transferring from other overseas positions, which may not be their home country. The school puts a high regard on the additional international police clearance certificates, and DBS checks to ensure all staff are suitable. The safeguarding and child protection procedures are very thorough and mirror the expectations of both UK legislation and of the host country.



## 9. *Standard 5* The premises and accommodation

The premises and accommodation at the school are outstanding.

Pupils enjoy an outstanding learning environment. There are 74 classrooms; 12 science labs; ICT and robotics suites; specialist drama, art and music facilities; a 250-seat theatre; a large cafeteria; and, multiple sporting areas, including a 100m running track, two sports halls, a large multi-purpose pitch and a 25m swimming pool. The school also has multiple, and very attractive, shaded outside recreational areas for pupils to enjoy at break times, along with separate safe areas for physical activities. Future plans include the opening of a number of design and technology centres. Pupils enjoy the use of several large auditoriums and halls which provide excellent venues for drama and musical performances.

Classrooms are a good size and are resourced well; this enables teachers to meet pupils' learning needs in a variety of ways. For example, ease of movement allows the size and make up of teaching groups to change quickly, depending on the nature of the learning task. Pupils make regular use of laptops and tablets to support their learning and enjoy learning with the aid of available technology such as the interactive boards and visualisers. The highly efficient operations team and relevant authorities carry out regular checks of the premises and accommodation; the school has all of the certificates required to operate safely. The cleaning and maintenance team ensure that the buildings, toilets, grounds and classrooms are cleaned and maintained to a high standard. Pupils take a great pride in the school environment and treat their surroundings with respect. Safety and security within the school community are paramount. There are highly effective systems in place to ensure the security of the grounds and premises. The school buildings allow safe access for all pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

## 10. Standard 6

### The provision of information for parents, carers and others

The school meets the requirements of this standard. The provision of information to parents, carers and others is outstanding.

Recent surveys of parents give very positive views of the school and this was confirmed at a meeting with parents and a member of the inspection team. They spoke of how easy it is to contact leaders regarding concerns to give compliments or make complaints. The school provides a steady stream of useful and clear communication for parents through a range of platforms including a parent portal, the school website, a range of parent meeting events and workshops. Parents reported that any concerns they have are answered quickly and they have the information and ability to contact the relevant member of staff for assistance. Parents are welcomed into school and comply with rigorous security checks whenever they enter the school site. All policies and parent information guides are clear, rigorous and easily accessible via the school website and parent portal. They are regularly reviewed and exceed the minimum requirements to meet BSO standards.

The school provides comprehensive termly reports for learners at the end of each of the three terms. The school also has scheduled parental meetings to discuss learner progress, as well as parent support events, parents have found them to be helpful and informative. Pupil reports give factual information about the pupil's behaviour, academic progress attainment and targets for learning. During the inspection, parents' spoke about the clarity and usefulness of these reports and how they form the basis of meaningful discussions at conferences with teachers. The school publishes a regular newsletter to celebrate events and achievements. Leaders in the school actively canvas parental opinion through proactive communications with stakeholders primarily through surveys.

Parents feel that the school staff know their children well and use words such as 'welcoming', 'positive' and 'safe' to describe the way the school cares. Parents stated that they felt like the school was a family and that it has allowed their children to flourish. Parent feedback suggest that they are very appreciative of the opportunities and support available.

## 11. Standard 7

### The school's procedure for handling complaints

Sherborne Senior School's procedure for handling complaints fully meets the BSO standard.

The school implements effectively a clear policy for handling complaints which meets host country requirements and reflects good practices from the UK. It is made available for the parents and sets out clear time scales for the management of a complaint following informal and formal stages. The board of governors monitors the effectiveness of the complaints procedure in ensuring the complaints are handled properly.

The school encourages parents to communicate any concerns. Parents reported valuing the very good communications with the school ensuring that all issues and concerns are dealt with in a timely and efficient manner. Parents interviewed appreciate this process.

## 12. Standard 8

### Leadership and management of the school

The leadership and management of the school are good. The school meets all the requirements of the standard.

The leadership fulfils its responsibilities in ensuring that the BSO standards are consistently met. The principal provides effective leadership and in partnership with governors and staff has created a school culture that enables pupils and staff to thrive in a highly effective learning environment. The headmaster has implemented effectively strategies for more distributed leadership throughout the school. Leaders and managers should now be supported to take on a greater shared responsibility and accountability in driving forward school improvement. Changes in the location of the school have been handled extremely well, in a short time frame a positive learning community has been established. Daily routines are effectively implemented and all staff work co-operatively to ensure the wellbeing of all pupils. The headteacher is approachable and supportive to pupils, staff members and parents and has positive relationships with all stakeholders.

The school's vision and mission statements are clearly displayed around the school and on the website. Pupils take a pride in their school and could clearly explain why the school's vision was important to them. Sherborne provides a safe, secure and caring environment, in which pupils can thrive educationally, socially and emotionally.

The board of governors sets the strategic vision for the whole school in line with its aims, providing strategic guidance. The headteacher, principal and chairperson have an effective working relationship. The separate responsibilities of the governors and the school's professional leadership are understood and respected. Governors are focused on continuous improvement and guarding against complacency. Relationships in the school are excellent. All staff have high expectations of behaviour so that respect, courtesy, and good manners are the norm.

Safeguarding is effective. Leaders and other staff take appropriate actions to identify pupils who may require extra support enabling them to thrive in a caring, learning environment. School development plans and actions are targeted to have an influence on identified areas of priority. Raising the priority of teaching and learning would enable the school to ensure this was a key area of action in further developing the learning outcomes for all pupils. The school strives to ensure all teaching is good or better Leaders and managers need to ensure that a shared and clear vision of outstanding teaching and learning is articulated and implemented by all staff.

Teamwork is strong and staff, pupils and parents unite around the focus of the *Sherborne Vision*.