

Annual Report

2024-25



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Trust Update



We are delighted to introduce this year's SAST Annual Report—a reflection of the progress, resilience, and shared purpose that define our Trust. Over the past year, SAST has moved into a significantly stronger financial position, and this improvement is the direct result of the hard work, commitment, and professionalism of our staff across all our schools. Their dedication has ensured that we remain focused on what matters most: delivering the best possible education and care for every young person in our community.

Our educational outcomes tell a story of steady and meaningful improvement. Secondary results have risen, with two of our schools now performing above the national average, and we are also seeing encouraging progress across several primary settings. These achievements are matched by external validation: every school inspected by Ofsted this year has received a positive report, and we are proud of the strong outcomes in our SIAMS inspections, reflecting the strength of our ethos and the quality of our provision.

Perhaps most importantly, we are beginning to see our mission and values come to life in a tangible way. This report is an important part of that journey—it strengthens our communication across the SAST family, celebrates our collective achievements, and helps us remain transparent and aligned in our ambitions for the future.

Looking ahead, our priority is clear. We will continue to be stronger together by ensuring that we meet the needs of our disadvantaged students and provide opportunities that enable every child to thrive. With a secure financial foundation, improving outcomes, and a committed community of staff, trustees, and families, we are confident in the direction we are heading.

Thank you for your continued support and partnership as we work to build an even stronger SAST for all.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Watson'.

David Watson OBE
CEO

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Middleton'.

David Middleton
Chair of Trustees

School Improvement

At the heart of what we do...



This academic year has demonstrated the impact of our maturing School Improvement approach, reflected not only in the work of the central team but, importantly, in the improved outcomes across our schools. Our recent Ofsted and SIAMS inspections have shown a clear pattern: schools are continuing to move forward, leadership is strengthening, and the collective expertise within SAST is making a tangible difference. These successes have not happened by chance. They are the result of thoughtful support, intelligent collaboration, and school-to-school partnerships that are becoming embedded in many areas across the trust.

The School Improvement Team has continued to offer dedicated support in key areas such as inclusion, safeguarding, church flourishing and data. Leads in these areas have provided bespoke advice and guidance to individual schools while also developing and refining trust-wide systems, processes and auditing mechanisms. This year we have seen particular gains in how schools act on professional advice: headteachers making informed inclusion and exclusion decisions, leaders using data with greater confidence, and staff adapting practice in response to clear, constructive guidance.

A particular strength this year has been the work of our two primary clusters. These clusters have become powerful engines of improvement: driving standards within their own groups, supporting colleagues across schools that were not originally part of their networks, and modelling the kind of relational, intelligent collaboration that leads to meaningful change. Notably, leaders within these clusters have stepped forward to provide emergency leadership capacity where schools have faced significant challenges. Their willingness to stabilise situations quickly and offer practical support exemplifies SAST's ethos of collective responsibility.

Alongside the progress in primaries, the secondary phase remains a key area for further development. This year has seen the implementation of School Improvement Partners (SIPs) across all secondaries, providing increased structure and external challenge; however, the phase does not yet feel as consistently supported as it needs to be, nor is the collaborative culture across the schools as strong as that seen in the primary clusters. It is to be noted how HVS school has supported the successful development of King Arthur's School. It is also to be noted how the Gryphon School has provided support in the inception of subject communities and support for work with its feeder primary schools.

From a central point of view, considerable time and attention have been directed towards Shaftesbury School and Sturminster Newton High School in particular, as both have navigated significant structural and financial pressures. These demands have required sustained involvement from leaders across the trust and have inevitably limited our capacity to develop wider secondary support. A more coherent, joined-up approach — both within the phase and from the central team — is a priority for the coming year to ensure that secondary leaders feel better supported, more connected, and collectively responsible for strengthening provision across the phase.

Regular meetings of the School Improvement Team ensure that planning and provision remain coordinated across schools, supporting a purposeful and coherent cycle of activity throughout the year. The school flourishing reviews continue to form an important element of our improvement approach; however, responsibility for managing these has now been passed back to the primary clusters, enabling leaders closest to the work to shape and drive the process. These reviews remain a valuable opportunity for colleagues to identify strengths and areas for development in a constructive, supportive way, and they continue to result in practical, achievable actions for schools. Alongside these, SEND and safeguarding support remain central to ensuring that provision across the trust is safe, ambitious and responsive to pupils' needs.

It is also important to acknowledge the challenges we face. National financial pressures have required us to reduce the size of the SI Team, and we cannot provide the same level of direct central support as in previous years. This reflects the wider educational landscape rather than any lack of ambition or commitment. Yet even within these constraints, the year has shown that the most powerful improvement force remains the collective capacity within our schools. Strengthening local leadership, aligning practice through clear frameworks, and enabling school-to-school support continue to drive our progress.

The development of the SAST Education Strategy (now known as the School Improvement Framework) has been an important and necessarily ongoing piece of work this year. The strategy will continue to evolve in response to the needs in front of us and the changing educational landscape. It articulates how our values shape the SAST view of education and sets out the entitlement of every child in a SAST school. It also outlines the emerging 'SAST Way': shared elements of practice and pedagogy that staff collectively work towards, supporting greater equity, consistency and ambition across the trust.

Alongside this sits the team's strategic priorities for the next two years. These include strengthening capacity for secondary support, enabling more effective use of performance data, and establishing robust quality-assurance mechanisms for the team's work. A further priority is ensuring that our approaches remain aligned with the developing Ofsted framework, so that schools are well prepared and confident in demonstrating their work. While we will operate with a leaner central team, these priorities will guide how we maximise our collective expertise and ensure that support remains sharply focused and impactful.

To summarise, this has been a year of real progress. Improved outcomes in many places, deeper collaboration and the strengthening of our primary clusters all signal a trust working with commitment and clarity. Challenges remain, but our plans—and our shared commitment to the SAST values—give us a clear and confident pathway for the future.

Paul Lavis, Interim Education Director

Strengthening Collaboration Across Our Primary Schools

Our Trust has 13 primary schools, and we are proud to report that collaboration across our primaries is stronger than ever. This year has seen a significant shift in how we work together, share resources, and align our goals to ensure the best possible outcomes for our children.

One of our most impactful developments has been the alignment of key strategic areas across all primary schools. Our curriculum is now more unified, utilising the Cornerstones curriculum as a basis for our individual adapted plans, which allows for consistency in teaching and learning experiences. School development plans are increasingly aligned, reflecting shared priorities and a collective vision for improvement. Examples have been a focus on 'Maths Calculation' and this year 'Writing Development' and also supporting disadvantaged pupils. This coherence enables us to move forward together with clarity and purpose.

Financially, we have taken bold steps to pool our budgets and subscriptions. By centralising these resources, we are now better positioned to ensure value for money from our central services. This approach not only improves efficiency but also allows us to invest more strategically in areas that directly benefit our pupils and staff.

Our culture of sharing has flourished. Schools now regularly exchange ideas, documents, policies, and processes. This openness fosters innovation and reduces duplication of effort, enabling staff to focus more on what matters most—teaching and learning. The trust-wide collaboration has created a supportive environment where best practices are cascaded and adapted to meet local needs.

We are stronger together. Our collective expertise has been wrapped around schools that require additional support, ensuring that no school is left behind. Whether through mentoring, targeted interventions, or leadership development, we are committed to lifting each other up and driving improvement across the board.

To continue to improve outcomes, we are monitoring our children more closely than ever. Data is being used intelligently to identify needs early, target interventions effectively, and track progress with precision. This proactive approach is helping us close gaps and raise attainment, particularly for our most vulnerable learners.

Ultimately, our mission goes beyond academic success. We believe that by working together in all we do, we build stronger communities. Our schools are not just places of learning—they are hubs of support, inclusion, and opportunity. As we continue to collaborate, align, and innovate, we remain united in our commitment to every child, every school, and every community within our trust.

Ian Bartle & Matt Barge (Executive Headteachers - Primary Schools)

Performance

Across the trust, this year's performance story is one of steady improvement, growing consistency, and schools that continue to strengthen even in challenging conditions. Whether looking at outcomes, Ofsted inspections, or SIAMS judgements, the picture shows a family of schools that lift each other, share what works, and keep moving forward. There are clear pockets of excellence that demonstrate what is possible, and the gains seen in developing schools highlight the impact of strong leadership, targeted support, and a collective commitment to doing the very best for our pupils. Taken together, these commentaries reflect a trust that is not standing still, but building momentum year on year.

Key Stage 2

	ABB	BDA	BNS	COD	CTN	FON	MOT	SHP	SMV	SPS	STN	TFD	YET	Total
Cohort	50	16	17	21	3	5	28	52	29	51	15	15	17	319
Attendance AY	93.38%	94.08%	95.97%	93.72%	95.48%	90.56%	96.11%	94.37%	94.48%	96.16%	98.33%	96.31%	91.92%	94.78%
RWM EXS+ England	62.10%	62.10%	62.10%	62.10%	62.10%	62.10%	62.10%	62.10%	62.10%	62.10%	62.10%	62.10%	62.10%	62.10%
RWM EXS+ LA														
RWM EXS+	48.00%	43.75%	70.59%	42.86%	0.00%	40.00%	67.86%	44.23%	58.62%	47.06%	66.67%	53.33%	29.41%	50.16%
RWM GDS England	8.40%	8.40%	8.40%	8.40%	8.40%	8.40%	8.40%	8.40%	8.40%	8.40%	8.40%	8.40%	8.40%	8.40%
RWM GDS LA														
RWM GDS	8.00%	0.00%	5.88%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	14.29%	7.69%	13.79%	5.88%	13.33%	6.67%	5.88%	7.52%
Reading EXS+ England	75.00%	75.00%	75.00%	75.00%	75.00%	75.00%	75.00%	75.00%	75.00%	75.00%	75.00%	75.00%	75.00%	75.00%
Reading EXS+ LA														
Reading EXS+	60.00%	62.50%	88.24%	71.43%	33.33%	80.00%	85.71%	53.85%	68.97%	68.63%	73.33%	66.67%	70.59%	67.40%
Reading GDS England	33.30%	33.30%	33.30%	33.30%	33.30%	33.30%	33.30%	33.30%	33.30%	33.30%	33.30%	33.30%	33.30%	33.30%
Reading GDS LA														
Reading GDS	24.00%	18.75%	41.18%	33.33%	0.00%	0.00%	50.00%	26.92%	27.59%	35.29%	60.00%	13.33%	29.41%	31.03%
Writing EXS+ England	72.20%	72.20%	72.20%	72.20%	72.20%	72.20%	72.20%	72.20%	72.20%	72.20%	72.20%	72.20%	72.20%	72.20%
Writing EXS+ LA														
Writing EXS+	66.00%	56.25%	70.59%	47.62%	0.00%	60.00%	75.00%	69.23%	68.97%	70.59%	66.67%	60.00%	35.29%	64.26%
Writing GDS England	12.80%	12.80%	12.80%	12.80%	12.80%	12.80%	12.80%	12.80%	12.80%	12.80%	12.80%	12.80%	12.80%	12.80%
Writing GDS LA														
Writing GDS	16.00%	6.25%	17.65%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%	14.29%	9.62%	17.24%	7.84%	20.00%	20.00%	5.88%	11.60%
Maths EXS+ England	74.00%	74.00%	74.00%	74.00%	74.00%	74.00%	74.00%	74.00%	74.00%	74.00%	74.00%	74.00%	74.00%	74.00%
Maths EXS+ LA														
Maths EXS+	54.00%	68.75%	100.00%	57.14%	33.33%	60.00%	75.00%	51.92%	79.31%	54.90%	73.33%	73.33%	47.06%	62.70%
Maths GDS England	26.30%	26.30%	26.30%	26.30%	26.30%	26.30%	26.30%	26.30%	26.30%	26.30%	26.30%	26.30%	26.30%	26.30%
Maths GDS LA														
Maths GDS	12.00%	6.25%	23.53%	9.52%	0.00%	0.00%	35.71%	17.31%	34.48%	11.76%	26.67%	13.33%	23.53%	18.18%
GPS EXS+ England	72.60%	72.60%	72.60%	72.60%	72.60%	72.60%	72.60%	72.60%	72.60%	72.60%	72.60%	72.60%	72.60%	72.60%

This snapshot shows we are a trust with clear areas of real momentum, particularly in reading at both EXS and GDS, where several schools consistently exceed national and local benchmarks. That strength suggests strong classroom practice and well-embedded approaches to early literacy. Writing and maths reveal more variability, but even here there are bright spots — schools hitting the highest percentiles demonstrate what's possible, offering models of practice the rest of the trust can draw from. The trust-wide averages also show that, despite differing contexts, many schools are already close to or above national performance in key measures. With continued collaboration and targeted support, the upward trajectory (and target of exceeding the national average) is well within reach.

Key Stage 4

Group	SAST	Gryphon	KA	Shaftesbury	SNHS	Total
Cohort	234	72	138	100	544	
APS	4.71	4.08	3.90	4.57	4.40	
A8 England	46.15	46.15	46.15	46.15	46.15	
A8 LA						
A8	46.64	40.97	39.04	45.98	43.84	
P8 Cohort						
P8 England						
P8 LA						
P8						
P8 English						
P8 Maths						
P8 EBacc						
P8 Open						
5+ Grades 9-7 E&M	8.12%	2.78%	2.17%	10.00%	6.25%	
5+ Grades 9-5 E&M	41.03%	33.33%	21.74%	43.00%	35.48%	
5+ Grades 9-4 E&M	63.25%	56.94%	47.83%	60.00%	57.90%	
9-7 E&M	8.55%	2.78%	3.62%	11.00%	6.99%	
9-5 E&M England	44.50%	44.50%	44.50%	44.50%	44.50%	
9-5 E&M LA						
9-5 E&M	43.59%	34.72%	27.54%	49.00%	39.34%	

This KS4 overview shows a broadly stable picture for the trust, with Attainment 8 sitting just below the national figure and providing a solid platform for further improvement. Gryphon's A8 stands out as a real strength as does the huge improvement at SNHS, illustrating what is possible when curriculum and teaching are closely aligned. The proportion of pupils achieving 5+ in English and maths, particularly at SNHS, is another positive indicator that many students are securing strong passes in core subjects. Although outcomes vary between schools, the data highlights clear exemplars of effective practice that can be shared, giving the trust a strong basis for collaborative improvement and rising A8 performance in the years ahead.

Key Stage 5

Academic Year	2024/2025				
NC Year	Year 13				
Academic Term	Summer				
Assessment	Exam				
Group	SAST				
	Gryphon	Shaftesbury	SNHS	Total	
A-Level Points per Entry England					
A-Level Avg Grade England					
A-Level Points per Entry LA					
A-Level Avg Grade LA					
A-Level Points per Entry	34.92	25.81	28.51	32.13	
A-Level Avg Grade	C+	C-	C=	C+	
Academic Avg Grade England					
Academic Avg Grade LA					
Academic Avg Grade	C+	C-	C=	C+	
Applied General Avg Grade England					
Applied General Avg Grade LA					
Applied Gen Avg Grade	M+	M=	M-	M=	
Tech Level Avg Grade England					
Tech Level Avg Grade LA					
Tech Level Avg Grade	M=			M=	
L3 Overall VA	0.11	-0.37	-0.18		
A-Level VA	0.12	-0.40	-0.17		
Academic VA	0.13	-0.42	-0.16		
Applied General VA	-0.22	-0.13	-0.33		
AAB Cohort	132	45	17	194	
AAB inc 2 Facilitating Students % England					
AAB inc 2 Facilitating Students % LA					
AAB inc 2 Facilitating %	12.88%	2.22%	11.76%	10.31%	
Best 3 A-Levels Included %	81.33%	63.89%	54.35%	73.43%	
Best 3 A-Levels Points per Slot England					
Best 3 A-Levels Points per Slot LA					
Best 3 A-Levels Points per Slot	34.69	25.58	30.19	32.18	

This KS5 picture shows real promise across the trust, with overall A-Level Average Grades sitting at a solid C+, broadly in line with national benchmarks and ahead of some comparator groups. The Gryphon's particularly strong performance in both points per entry and average grade demonstrates how high-quality teaching and subject expertise translate into strong student outcomes.

Shaftesbury and SNHS also contribute positively, especially in Applied General and Tech Level pathways, where grades remain stable and competitive. The blend of academic and vocational strengths suggests a well-balanced post-16 offer, giving students multiple routes to success. With continued focus on curriculum strength, subject leadership, and sharing expertise between schools, the trust is well-placed to push KS5 outcomes even higher.

Ofsted Inspections



St Andrew's Primary School praised as 'Aspirational'

In October 2024, St Andrew's was rated 'Good' in all areas following an Ofsted inspection. Inspectors praised the school saying it has "high expectations for all, putting pupils' best interests at the heart of everything they do. The school has high aspirations for what pupils can achieve". It goes on to say that "the school has designed a broad and ambitious curriculum for all subjects" and "there is a strong sense of community".

The school has been on a journey of improvement in recent years after being rated as 'Inadequate' and placed in special measures by Ofsted in 2017. The school joined Sherborne Area Schools' Trust (SAST) in 2020, whose support saw St Andrew's move out of special measures following an inspection in April 2022. This latest inspection sees the school hailed as 'Good' across all the inspection areas, an impressive feat.



Thornford Primary School

Thornford Primary praised for 'kindness and compassion'

Thornford CE Primary School has been praised for its high standards of education and exemplary behaviour following their latest Ofsted inspection. The report highlighted the school's warm and supportive environment, where pupils feel safe, valued, and motivated to succeed. The inspection team noted the school's "exceptional" efforts in teaching character education, fostering resilience, curiosity, and confidence in students.

In particular, the school's commitment to personal development, and promoting excellent behaviour and attitudes were both graded as "outstanding," with pupils demonstrating impeccable behaviour both in the classroom and during social times.



King Arthur's
School

King Arthur's School praised for significant improvement

King Arthur's received a highly positive inspection report, receiving 'Good' judgements in Leadership and Management, Behaviour and Attitudes, and Personal Development. King Arthur's was previously rated as Inadequate by Ofsted in 2017, which saw the school join SAST and begin a journey of improvement.

The report praises the school's leadership, ethos and culture, stating: "King Arthur's instils in pupils a belief that they can and will achieve beyond expectations." Inspectors highlighted the school's happy, safe and supportive environment, strong community ties, and the high expectations for student behaviour. Pupils themselves were reported to feel a renewed confidence in their school and appreciated staff's 'praise hard' approach.

SIAMS Inspections



Thornford Primary School

Thornford CE Primary

Following closely after their Ofsted inspection, Thornford Primary was also praised by SIAMS for the school's strong Christian vision, community spirit, and commitment to enabling both pupils and staff to flourish.

The school's guiding principle, "Treat others as you would like to be treated yourself" (Luke 6:36), is recognised as a driving force behind its success. The report highlights the 'golden thread' that unites the school community, fostering a culture of respect, kindness, and responsibility.



Buckland Newton CE Primary

The SIAMS inspection in May praised the school's Christian vision, inclusive ethos, and inspirational leadership. Inspectors commended the school for living out its Christian foundation in a way that enables pupils and adults alike to truly flourish.

The report highlights that the school's vision, "Let your light shine – on everyone, everywhere, every day" (Matthew 5:16), is not only deeply embedded in all aspects of school life but also a powerful force for aspiration, compassion, and inclusion.



St Mary's CE Primary, Bradford Abbas

St Mary's celebrated glowing feedback following their SIAMS inspection, which praised the school's strong Christian vision, inclusive community, and commitment to pupil flourishing. The inspection report praised the school's distinctive Christian vision — "The roots to grow, the wings to fly" — which is based on the parable of the Sower. Inspectors highlighted how this vision is not just a slogan but a lived reality across the school community, guiding everything from leadership decisions to classroom interactions.



Charlton Horethorne
CE Primary School

Charlton Horethorne CE Primary

Charlton Horethorne Primary received an outstanding SIAMS report following their inspection in July. The report, commended the school for "enabling pupils and adults to flourish and live life to the full," in line with its vision: "Learning together in friendship and faith." The inspection found that the school provides "exceptional care" and places a high priority on the wellbeing of all members of its community.

The inspection noted that the school's Christian values are embedded in daily life and contribute to a "very happy school where pupils learn and play together," with incidents of poor behaviour being rare. Staff were recognised as deeply committed, and the strong sense of inclusion means that all pupils—including those with special educational needs—are able to thrive.

Safeguarding

This year SAST has introduced a statement that captures our safeguarding approach across all areas of the trust and sits alongside individual schools safeguarding statements. At SAST, safeguarding is at the heart of everything we do.

We are fully committed to promoting the safety, wellbeing, and welfare of all children and young people across our schools. We expect all staff, volunteers, academy committee members, trustees, and visitors to share this commitment.

We take our legal responsibilities seriously and work actively to protect children from harm, support their wellbeing, and ensure they grow up in safe, supportive environments. Our goal is for every child in our care to feel secure, valued, and able to thrive.

SAST fosters a culture of openness, trust, and respect. We encourage all children to speak up and share concerns, knowing they will be listened to and supported. Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. Together—as professionals, families, and communities—we guide our young people to make safe, informed choices that help them flourish now and into the future.

Assuring ourselves that our safeguarding systems are effective and meeting the needs of our children and young people can be challenging as we always need to be reflecting upon what we have in place. This year we had a focus on external validation and we commissioned an external safeguarding review in four of our schools that has set a cycle to be repeated in different schools within two years. The review went beyond checking compliance to include safeguarding culture. The schools under this review were judged to have good safeguarding cultures where our children and young people feel safe and are able to speak out when necessary. In addition to this the schools that had Ofsted inspections confirmed safeguarding to be at least good and in many to be outstanding.

A safeguarding trustee was identified and we are working towards developing further the safeguarding reporting to the board.

Kaye Elston, Head of Safeguarding





Flourishing

Our flourishing journey began in 2021–2022, when SAST was invited by the Salisbury Diocesan Board of Education (SDBE) to take part in the pilot stage of the Programme for Church School Flourishing. This partnership marked the beginning of a new way of working—one that brings together the practical expertise of our Trust with the wisdom, networks, and professional development provided by the SDBE. With most of our schools being church schools, the idea of flourishing together has become central to our school improvement work and is now woven through everything we do.

Through the PCSF, leaders across the Trust have benefited from purposeful training, high-quality assurance, and ongoing collaboration. This has strengthened our ability to support the flourishing of children, staff, and communities in every school. As a result, for the past three years we have no longer required a PSA subscription, with SIAMS inspections recognising the impact of this shared approach. Inspectors consistently highlight the strength of our collective vision, the inclusive culture within our schools, and the way Trust support helps schools live out their Christian ethos.

This work is brought to life in many practical ways: annual Church School Flourishing visits, tailored SIAMS support, professional development in areas such as spirituality and vision, RE leadership training and moderation, curriculum alignment, the SAST Youth Advisors programme, the Archbishop of York Young Leaders Award, and development opportunities for leaders and governors. Wherever appropriate, our community schools are also welcomed into aspects of this work—particularly in curriculum design and opportunities that enrich pupils' wider experience.

In the summer term of 2024, we were awarded Accredited Partner Status with Merit by the Salisbury Diocesan Board of Education (SDBE). This recognition is more than a badge of honour—it reflects the deep, values-driven work happening every day across our schools.

What Does This Mean for Our Schools?

Accredited Partner Status is awarded to trusts that demonstrate strategic clarity, consistency, and a deep commitment to values-led education. It recognises that our vision as a trust—where every child and adult feels they belong, have purpose, and can flourish—is not just words on a page. It's lived out every day in our classrooms, our staff teams, and our school communities.

Improved outcomes in SIAMS inspections show that our schools are not just meeting expectations—they're standing out. Inspectors have noted the strength of our schools' individual visions, the inclusive approach to spirituality, and the focus on helping both pupils and staff thrive. These values are also being recognised in Ofsted reports, where school culture is increasingly seen as key to wider educational success.

A Culture of Collaboration and Growth

One of the most exciting results of this work is the culture it's helped to create. Across the trust, teachers and leaders are learning from each other more than ever before—through peer coaching, shared best practices, and mentoring. This collaborative spirit is helping us keep growing together, always aiming for what's best for our children.

Looking Ahead

This milestone is something we're incredibly proud of—but more than that, it gives us a clear path forward. Our commitment to nurturing a culture where every child can flourish—academically, emotionally, and spiritually—remains at the heart of everything we do. We are fortunate to have a highly skilled group of professionals in our trust who, as a team, deliver the PCSF:

- Religious Education and Collective Worship Faculty Leads (RECWFL):
 - Stephanie Rann (The Gryphon), Sarah Ware (Shaftesbury Primary), Emily Nash (Motcombe Primary), Amy Champkin (St Andrew's, Yetminster) and Sarah Willoughby.
- Leaders of Church School Flourishing (LCSF):
 - Sarah Hunter (Shaftesbury School), Matt Barge (Executive Head), and Sarah Willoughby
- Champion Church School Governance (CCSG):
 - Brida Skipworth
- Champion of Church School Recruitment (CCSR):
 - Sarah Willoughby

Special thanks go to this team, who give time and dedication to support all our schools. Equally, to their school leaders who find creative ways to allow the time for this work to happen. The work of the team has laid the foundation for continued growth and excellence across all SAST schools.



Governance

2024 -2025 has been one of positive development and renewed focus on effective governance across the trust.

We welcomed two new Trustees, Amanda Parry and Michael Lesser to the Board during the year. They bring with them a broad range of skills and experience strengthening the Board's capacity to provide robust challenge and strategic oversight in support of our schools.

The Trust has reintroduced four core committees, ensuring more focused scrutiny of key areas of Trust activity. These committees are:

- Finance and Resources Committee
- Standards and School Improvement Committee
- Audit and Risk Committee
- People and Pay Committee

Together, these committees have enhanced the Board's ability to monitor performance, manage risk and support continuous improvement.

To further strengthen governance and ensure alignment between strategic oversight and operational leadership, regular meetings of committee chairs are held with the CEO and the Chair of Trustees. These meetings provide an opportunity for shared understanding of the Trust's strategic objectives.

Training has been delivered during the year on safeguarding and exclusions, led by the Head of Safeguarding and Director of Inclusion, ensuring that those with governance responsibilities are well equipped to fulfil their statutory duties and the ability to support schools.

We are also pleased to report the appointment of many new Local Governors (ACR's) across all schools in the Trust. Their commitment to serving their school communities is invaluable, and their local knowledge plays a vital role in strengthening the link between individual schools and the Trust Board.

Over the coming year, focus will continue strengthening the links between the Board and its committees, ensuring clarity of roles, effective communication and strong strategic alignment. There will also be an ongoing commitment to training and development for Trustees and Local Governors, supporting continuous improvement and ensuring governance remains effective, informed and responsive to the needs of our schools.

The Trust would like to extend its sincere thanks to all Trustees, Local Governors (ACR's) and clerks for their dedication, time and expertise. Their collective contribution continues to be instrumental in supporting our schools and ensuring that every child within the Trust has the opportunity to thrive.

Financial Review 2024-25

Across the sector the financial challenge continues, with funding decreasing in real terms. Whilst cash funding awarded from government has increased this is not sufficient to cover the inflationary increases the sector faces for pay progression, cost of living salary increases, increased employers NI costs, utilities price rises and general inflationary increases on other goods and services.

During this and the previous academic year SAST has focused on efficiency and cost savings to ensure that it is financially viable and able to support the delivery of education to our pupils. Difficult decisions have been made around staffing, to ensure that our resources are focused on the delivery of quality education to those in our charge. With leaner support services and a keen focus on delivering Value for Money in all that we do, the focus is not just on the cost but also the effectiveness and efficiency of its delivery of education and the supporting services.

DfE Scrutiny and Review

During 2024/25 the new leadership team have been working with the DfE to agree a recovery plan and support for SAST. The annual accounts closed 2023/24 with a £1.9m deficit which has been reduced to an £797k deficit at the end of 2024/25.

Whilst SAST has an obligation to continue to recover from this deficit position, it is determined that the approach taken will prioritise investment in quality education, this is a fundamental aspect of the financial recovery strategy.

The DfE have instigated 3 reviews across SAST over the last 2 years with a focus on the overall management and leadership of the Trust, central service teams and our secondary schools. These reviews have been performed by external experts who review and compare their findings against sector benchmarks (ICFP metrics) to assess and highlight areas where costs should be reviewed and efficiencies sought.

Rurality and Declining Pupil Numbers

National decreasing birthrates is having an impact across the sector but is particularly challenging in our rural schools and communities.

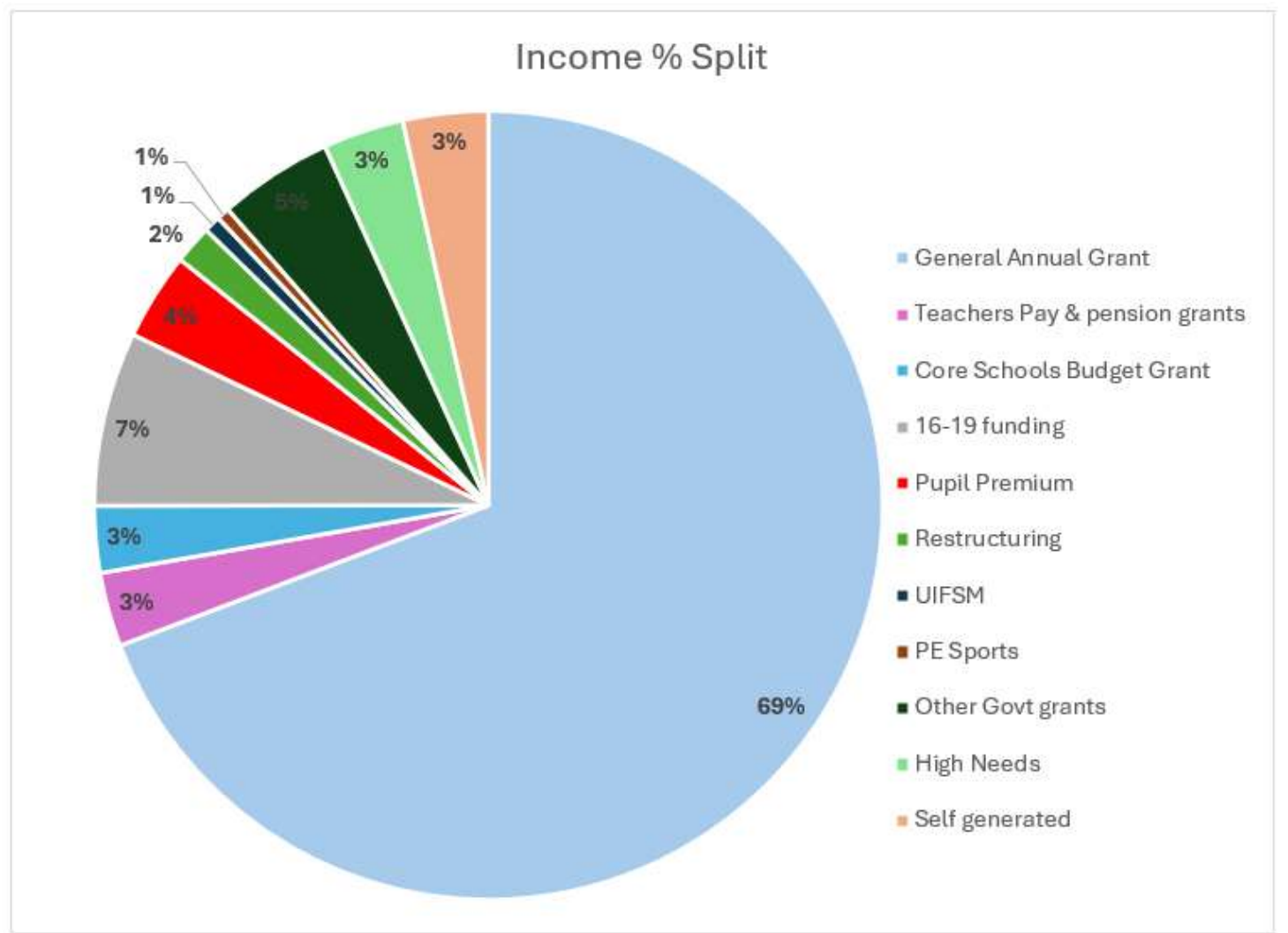
Several of our schools continue to decline in numbers of pupils on role, which brings significant budget challenges; national government funding does not take this into consideration, leaving SAST and other Trusts in the challenging position of needing to find innovative ways to enable our schools and sixth from provision to operate and offer a breadth of curriculum, in a challenging financial climate.

Income and Expenditure

The primary source of income for the trust is from the DfE in the form of recurrent grants that are awarded annually and have specific conditions which restrict their use. Total revenue income for the year is £43,494,503, with 97% of this income relating to government grants.

The General Annual Grant is the schools main funding stream which is 69% of total funding; in 2024/25 the Department for Education (DfE) topped this up with additional teachers’ pay and pensions grant and the core schools budget grant, to part fund increases in teachers’ pay and increased inflationary increases.

The chart below demonstrates the various grants and other income as a proportion of the total revenue income received by SAST across all our schools.



To achieve its strategic objectives, the Trust allocated these funds against the following areas:

Percentage of expenditure

Staff	79.8%
Cleaning	3.0%
Maintenance of premises	2.4%
Educational supplies	2.3%
Energy costs	2.0%
Catering	1.7%
Administrative Overheads	1.6%
Technology	1.6%
Examination Fees	1.0%
Rent & Rates	0.8%
Other Costs	0.8%
Security & Transport	0.7%
Supply Staff	0.7%
Legal & Professional Services	0.5%
Insurance	0.4%
Educational Services	0.3%
Recruitment	0.1%
Governance	0.1%
Staff Development and CPD	0.1%
Bank interest and charges	0.1%



Our Schools





Buckland Newton CE Primary School

As we reflect on this academic year, Buckland Newton Primary has so much to celebrate. Our school community has worked tirelessly to ensure every child thrives, and the results speak for themselves.

We were thrilled to announce an incredible SIAMS inspection outcome, a reflection of the dedication of our staff, pupils, and families in creating a nurturing, values-driven environment. This achievement is something we can all feel very proud of. Alongside this, our end-of-year academic data has given us even more reason to celebrate, with our first ever year of 100% success in Maths SATs—an exceptional accomplishment that highlights the hard work and commitment of both pupils and staff.

The positive feedback from the recent parent questionnaire was equally encouraging, offering praise and recognition for the strong partnerships we continue to build with our families. We are also delighted with the progress made in supporting our SEN pupils. This has been a key priority, and it is wonderful to see the real impact of these efforts, reinforcing our belief that every child truly matters.

Creativity and culture have flourished throughout the year, from the magical Nativity and engaging class assemblies to the vibrant School of Pop production, where pupils shone on stage with confidence and joy. Our learning environments have also seen significant improvements, and although this remains an ongoing journey, we are committed to ensuring our school provides the best possible spaces for learning.

Sporting success has continued to thrive, with pupils demonstrating teamwork, resilience, and impressive skill across a range of activities. Finally, our exciting trips and visits have enriched learning and created lasting memories, offering valuable experiences that broaden horizons and inspire curiosity.



Charlton Horethorne CE Primary School

The academic year 2024/25 has been another busy, productive, and successful one at Charlton Horethorne Primary School. Throughout the year, we have continued to strengthen our provision, celebrate the achievements of our pupils, and deepen our connection with our wider community.

This year we focused significantly on improving the physical spaces our children use every day. We continued to upgrade our outdoor areas, including the EYFS outdoor learning environment, the main playground, and our much-loved Forest School area. These improvements have enriched play and learning opportunities for all age groups, supporting wellbeing, exploration, and creativity. We were delighted to launch Little Leaf, our Forest School experience for pre-school children. This initiative has been a great success, welcoming our youngest learners and providing a nurturing and exploratory early learning experience.

This year we undertook a comprehensive sensory audit of our school spaces. The audit helped us identify ways to ensure all children can access learning comfortably and confidently. As a result, we continue to develop a more inclusive, supportive environment that recognises and responds to a wide range of needs. Our curriculum continues to evolve to meet the needs of every child. We aim to inspire curiosity, deepen understanding, and make learning memorable. To support this, we have provided a wide range of educational trips and welcomed visitors and specialists into school to enhance classroom learning. Sport has once again been a lively part of school life. Although we are a small school, our teams are consistently enthusiastic, determined, and proud representatives of Charlton Horethorne. Pupils took part in as many sporting events as possible, ranging from Tag Rugby to Multi Skills and Athletics, and their commitment and team spirit have been a credit to the school.

A highlight of the year was our SIAMS inspection, of which we are extremely proud. The report affirmed that Charlton Horethorne is a nurturing, caring, and supportive family community where all children are valued and able to thrive. It recognised the strong relationships we maintain with the Diocese and the local Church, and the important role we play within our rural village community.



Motcombe CE Primary School



There have been many memorable moments at Motcombe CE Primary School over the last year. Our school vision of 'Faith and Friendship, Learning and Laughter' was certainly lived to the full each and every day. Notable moments include a visit to school from television's gladiator, Steel! He taught the children about the importance of hydration and healthy lifestyles, which can impact our resilience and focus. We increased our parental engagement through the launch of 'family challenge afternoons'. These consist of adult family members joining the students in the school hall for an hour to work on a mystery challenge together. Challenges included building the strongest bridge, designing and making an extraordinary hat to inspire the children's creative writing back in class the next day, creating a vessel to transport the most water across the school field – plus many more!

We were extremely proud of our end of Key Stage 2 outcomes, with our Year 6 students working hard to achieve above national outcomes in their combined Reading, Writing and Maths attainment, both at the expected standard and above the expected standard.

Our Year 4 pupils threw themselves into the life of a 'Times Tables Rock Star' last year, even dressing up as their rock star avatar to learn their multiplication tables. As a result of their hard work and enthusiastic attitude towards mathematics, they too achieved attainment above national statistics in the statutory multiplications check.

Life at Motcombe was enriched through wonderful events last year such as the school music concert, showcasing our students' musical talents across a range of instruments – both beginners and experienced musicians performed in front a proud audience, our upper key-stage 2 play performance conveyed the life of Shakespeare as a musical comedy, plus there were opportunities for children of all sporting abilities to take part in varied events such as a golf workshop, a dance festival and many competitive rugby, football and swimming events. Our dedicated, vibrant team are hard at work making this academic year another memorable experience for our wonderful students.



Shaftesbury CE Primary School

The 2024–2025 year at Shaftesbury CE Primary School has been shaped by care, connection, and steady progress. At the centre of our work is a commitment to ensuring every child feels safe, valued, and ready to learn—something that has shone through in all areas of school life. With many pupils requiring SEMH support, we have strengthened our pastoral provision so every child receives the nurturing environment they need to thrive. Our dedicated nurture group and close partnership with the Mental Health Support Team have provided tailored support for pupils, valuable training for staff, and helpful guidance for families. We continue to offer enhanced provision for pupils with the highest level of SEND need, ensuring they feel included and supported within our mainstream setting.

A key achievement this year has been earning the OPAL Gold Award, recognising our thoughtful, strategic approach to play and outdoor learning. Improvements to our forest school area and playground provision have contributed to higher wellbeing, improved behaviour, and greater engagement across the school.

Children's learning has been enriched by a wide range of experiences beyond the classroom. Younger pupils enjoyed visits to Moors Valley, a working farm, and Longleat, while older children took part in residential to Springhead and London. A highlight for many was the chance for a small group of pupils to attend the Wimbledon Tennis Championships—an unforgettable opportunity.

Teaching and learning have continued to strengthen through our focus on high-quality professional development, supported by the Walkthrus approach. Raising Year 6 attainment remains a key priority, and progress data shows the positive impact of our targeted strategies.

Our new RotaKids group has given pupils the chance to contribute to the local community through charity work, intergenerational visits, and fundraising events. Meanwhile, our twice-weekly Community Breakfast—supported by BV Dairy—and our close links with St Peter's Church have continued to bring our school community together.

Kelly Fletcher, Head of School



Sherborne Abbey CE Primary School

We've had a busy year at Sherborne Abbey, and understandably it has flown by!

Our year started with a new extended provision classroom being added to our cohort – Butterfly Class. Butterfly Class, staffed by experienced SEND teachers and TAs has enabled our local children with speech and language needs to be in a school environment that allows them to succeed and make good progress.

In the Autumn Term we were busy looking for the right person to lead our lovely school in its next phase of development, and our new Head of School, Mrs Thompson, started with us in January 2025.

Throughout the year the children have enjoyed an enriched curriculum allowing learning to come to life, and this has included Santa arriving by helicopter, school trips that encompass everything from making pizza to caving in Wales!

Sherborne Abbey had lots to celebrate in 2025 and were very proud to be a part of the Sherborne Pageant celebrations bringing local schools together, as well as celebrating our own 25th anniversary of our new school site and digging up a time capsule from that time.

Our school continues to enjoy sporting success and are proud of our many sporting opportunities for individuals and teams. We are equally proud of our behaviour for learning and the progress we are making. As a school we know that our summative data doesn't give a true reflection of our school, and we are determined that the changes we are implementing will bear fruit soon.

Lisa Thompson, Head of School



Sherborne Primary School

As the academic year draws to a close, it is a pleasure to reflect on what has been another dynamic and memorable year at Sherborne Primary.

This year has seen outstanding sporting success across a variety of disciplines. Our Year 5 and 6 netball team were not only crowned Area Champions but went on to achieve the title of North Dorset Champions, finishing an impressive eighth out of twenty-eight teams at the County Finals—a testament to their teamwork and determination. In cross-country, our boys' team took the top position as Area Champions, with excellent performances from both boys and girls across the events. At the Area Swimming Gala, pupils in Years 4 to 6 achieved exceptional results, including three first-place finishes across all major stroke categories. Our relay team also secured first place, finishing a remarkable five seconds ahead of their nearest competitors. Meanwhile, our tag rugby teams performed brilliantly, with one team remaining unbeaten throughout the tournament, and our football and netball players continued to demonstrate skill, commitment, and sportsmanship in a series of friendly fixtures.

Our Year 3 and 4 pupils played a memorable role in Sherborne's 120th Pageant Anniversary, donning full Victorian costume and performing on the Pageant Gardens stage—a wonderful celebration of creativity, history, and community spirit.

Our annual Christmas Giving Campaign was once again a powerful example of compassion and generosity. Through donations and school-led fundraising, over £7,500 was raised to support disadvantaged families with food and shop vouchers, with the campaign's launch joined by Lord Julian Fellowes.

Enterprise and leadership were also on display through the continued success of the Sherbean Café, run by our Year 5 and 6 pupils. This initiative has provided valuable real-world experience in teamwork, service, and business management. Alongside this, our pupils have enjoyed newly revamped playground zones, supported by more than £2,500 in fundraising, ensuring inclusive and active playtimes for everyone—with expert input from a Yeovil Town Football coach to enhance the experience even further.



SHILLINGSTONE CE PRIMARY SCHOOL
GROWING TOGETHER · TOGETHER WE LEARN

Shillingstone CE Primary School

We experienced many significant changes during 2024–2025, with Mrs Whitehouse-Sharpe leaving at Christmas after an amazing 20 years at the school, and Mr Wright joining us as Head of School in January 2025. As we adapted to this transition, it has been wonderful to see that our strong sense of togetherness and teamwork has remained unchanged.

We were incredibly proud of our Year 6 results this year. Our superb cohort of 15 children achieved outstanding attainment and progress across the school. Reading was our biggest success with 60% achieving Greater Depth. Well done to each of them, and to all staff who contributed to these excellent outcomes.

This year has also brought a number of exciting sporting events, including North Dorset football tournaments and the Davison Cup competitions. These opportunities allow children to enjoy sport in a competitive and supportive environment. We were especially delighted to win the Child Okeford Girls' Football Festival.

Last year and this year, we have continued our focus on wellbeing and inclusion throughout the school. Mr Wright leads Outdoor Learning sessions with each class on a regular basis which they all thoroughly enjoy. The children look forward to coming to school, completing fun morning work activities in classes (riddle challenges, optical illusions and brain teasers) and especially on Fridays to see Janet and Riley (our new therapy dog). Children enjoy completing mindfulness activities in their classes to help them feel settled and at ease. Lunchtimes are fun with our reading shed, bikes and trikes, dressing-up box and music activities. Some children lead activities at lunchtimes for others to attend, such as drama, art and chess. There are many after school clubs on offer too, including sports and Art clubs. This variety of opportunities ensures that every child has the chance to participate fully in extra-curricular activities.

Staff well being is important too! As part of our INSETs, we have been canoeing together and also took part in team challenges.

Andy Wright & Sarah Vail (Heads of School)



St Andrew's CE Primary School, Fontmell Magna

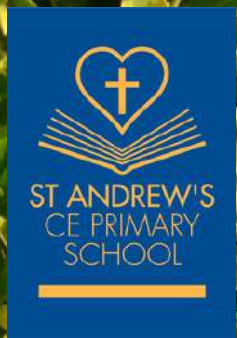
At the start of the academic year in September 2024, our school proudly achieved Good in all areas following our Ofsted inspection — the first time since 2016 and after a period of leadership instability, with over sixteen leaders since that time. This milestone reflects the strength, stability, and shared vision now embedded across our community.

Since September 2024, the school has grown from 77 to 101 pupils — an impressive 25% increase, particularly significant given the continuing decline in local birth rates. This demonstrates renewed confidence from families and the wider community.

Throughout the year, we have deepened our community links, enriching pupils' learning and wellbeing. Our resident author, Gillian Cross (Carnegie Award winner), has inspired creativity and a love of writing; local artist Des Alner has supported children in using drawing to promote positive mental health; and our involvement with the Rural Dorset Music Hub has given pupils hands-on experience with a wide range of instruments.

Together, these achievements reflect a thriving, outward-looking school community where children are inspired to Believe, Learn, Thrive, and Shine.

Dan King, Head of School



St Andrew's CE Primary School, Yetminster

The 2024–2025 year at St Andrew's Primary School has been one of growth, positivity, and wonderful achievements across our community. From our youngest learners to our Year 6 pupils preparing for the next stage of their journey, the school has seen children flourish academically, socially, and personally.

One of the year's most exciting developments has been the transformation of the Early Years Foundation Stage. The redesigned indoor and outdoor spaces—rich in sensory experiences, imaginative play opportunities, and areas to explore—have created a truly inspiring start for our youngest pupils. Strengthened links with Lower Covey Nursery have further supported a smooth transition into Reception, helping children arrive confident, curious, and ready to learn.

A renewed focus on reading has been felt across the school, thanks to the creation of a bright and inviting library and a refreshed collection of diverse, high-quality books. This love of reading has translated into strong outcomes: 83% of Year 1 pupils passed the Phonics Screening Check following the successful adoption of the Unlocking Letters and Sounds programme, while 71% of Year 6 pupils achieved the expected standard in their Reading SATs. The introduction of Accelerated Reader has played an important role in fostering independence and helping children choose books that challenge and excite them.

Mathematical confidence has also gone from strength to strength, with Year 4 pupils performing exceptionally well in the Multiplication Tables Check—42% achieving a perfect score. This reflects the enthusiasm pupils bring to their learning, alongside the supportive teaching and regular practice embedded throughout the school.

It has also been heartening to see a rise in the number of Reception pupils achieving a Good Level of Development. This improvement speaks to the strength of the early years curriculum, the care shown by staff, and the nurturing environment created for every child.

Overall, this has been a year full of progress, energy, and pride. St Andrew's continues to grow as a place where children feel valued, inspired, and supported to achieve their best. As we look forward to the year ahead, we do so with immense gratitude for our pupils, families, and staff who make our school community so special.



St Mary's CE Primary School

St Mary's Primary School in Bradford Abbas has enjoyed an exceptional year filled with achievement and community spirit. A highlight was receiving a highly positive SIAMS report, which praised the school's strong Christian ethos and inclusive environment. This recognition reflects the dedication of staff and pupils to creating a nurturing space where children have the roots to grow and the wings to fly!

Academic success was another standout, with Year 6 pupils achieving impressive SATs results that demonstrate both hard work and resilience. Beyond the classroom, sporting achievements brought pride to the school, particularly in cross-country events where pupils showed determination and teamwork.

The school also embraced history through vibrant VE Day celebrations, engaging children in meaningful activities that honored this important moment in British heritage.

Positive staffing changes added fresh energy to the school, strengthening the team and enriching the learning experience. The year concluded with a joyful leavers' celebration, filled with laughter and memories as pupils prepared for the next stage of their journey. These milestones reflect a year of growth, achievement, and community spirit that St Mary's will proudly carry forward.

Phil Sales and Sara Watkins, Headteachers



St Mary the Virgin CE Primary School

At St Marys we had a fantastic year with many memorable activities across all classes. We had another fabulous sporting year. One of the highlights being the Girls' Football Team winning the Davison Trophy. The year was finished off by retaining our Gold School Games Award.

Nursery enjoyed a visit from the local fire station and police officers. The children enjoyed playing with the new mud kitchen and making our new bug hotel. Parents really enjoyed the 'stay and play' sessions where they decorated biscuits, planted sunflowers and played with the water! In Pluto Class Children enjoyed imaginative play as astronauts and took part in exciting trips to Rivers Meet Gymnastics and Gillingham Park. Jupiter Class visited Longleat for the "Animals" science topic and met exotic creatures like a python and a tarantula.

Neptune Class explored Gillingham Library and signed up for a Class Library Card. They were inspired to read more and participate in the Summer Reading Challenge. 52 children took part in the challenge! Mars Class took part in fundraising events like '80s Day' and "Break the Rules" Day. They enjoyed outdoor learning and a Roman-themed trip to Hooke Court. Saturn Class had a brilliant Anglo-Saxon experience at Hooke Court. They also loved their samba lessons (performing to parents at the Summer Fair), their outdoor learning, science experiments, and healthy cooking.

The children participated in VE Day celebrations and shared books with Nursery buddies. Mercury class loved their space project and enjoyed a trip to the Winchester Science Museum. They also hosted Cranborne Chase Astronomy Club to learn all about the night sky and to participate in some star gazing. Venus Class organised and ran stalls at the Summer Fair, raising money for various charities. They enjoyed a 3-day residential in Devon with outdoor activities. At the end of a very busy year, they performed their leavers' play "The School O'Vision Song Contest" with gusto. There was much singing, laughter and a few tears as they said goodbye to all of us at St Marys.

Jen Williamson, Head of School



St Nicholas CE Primary School

As we reflect on the 2024–2025 school year, I am delighted to share the many achievements and memorable moments that have shaped life at St Nicholas Primary School. Our core values—respect, curiosity, community, and friendship—alongside our guiding vision, “Love one another as I have loved you”, continue to inspire everything we do. These principles ignite a spark of inquisitiveness in our children and underpin the vibrant learning environment we strive to create.

This year, our pupils proudly participated in the Creative Arts Project at The Larmer Tree, joining 14 other local schools to produce a spectacular pageant combining poetry, music, and art. It was a wonderful opportunity for our children to showcase their creativity and collaborate beyond the classroom. We also launched our very first “St Nicholas Has Talent” event—a celebration of the diverse talents within our school community.

Beyond these highlights, the year was rich with experiences: visits to Compton Acres and the Tank Museum, a lively Pirates Day, and a deeply meaningful Holy Week immersive drama. Children created prayer pebbles to explore the significance of Easter and competed in our much-loved Easter Cake Making Competition.

Collaboration remained central to our ethos. Working closely with our pyramid schools, we offered numerous sporting opportunities and joined together to Celebrate the Spirit of Christmas, with music and song bringing festive cheer to all. Our partnership with the church community was equally strong. Rev Andrew’s Advent Journey invited families to host knitted figures of Mary and Joseph, leaving behind a sheep that later rejoined its flock at the crib service—a beautiful symbol of unity. For Mother’s Day, our pupils crafted vibrant butterflies for the Carnival of Colour display at St Nicholas Church, reinforcing the bond between school and parish.

These moments reflect the heart of St Nicholas: a place where learning, creativity, and community flourish. I am immensely proud of our children, staff, and families for their dedication and spirit throughout the year. Together, we continue to make St Nicholas a school where every child feels valued and inspired.

Jill Watson, Headteacher



Thornford CE Primary School

Sport has played a huge part over the term from Area Athletics to a Swimming Gala and Tournaments. We have been represented brilliantly at each one with a number of successes. We came 2nd in the Cricket Tournament on June 10th and came 1st in the Rounders Tournament on June 24th! Sports Day was also a day of celebration, with the final relay being won by Gryphons House!

To support our learning, we have put on a number of trips and experiences:

Elm Class visited the Roman Townhouse in Dorchester, Beech Class went to Sherborne Castle and gardens, and Acorns visited Warren Hill Farm. Year 5 had a residential to Leeson House and Year 6 had their residential to Brenscombe.

We commemorated VE Day on May 8th in style, dressing in Red, White and Blue and dancing to music of the era. Elm Class got to have a real taste of what it would be like to be a Roman, with food tasting and shield making among some of the many activities.

With the help from Friends of Yeatman Hospital, Josie's Garden (our spiritual garden) was regenerated during half term, and transformed into a beautiful, calm space for us all to enjoy. We have a regular group of retired people from the community who look forward to working alongside the children each month. The interactions between the two generations is so lovely to see and everyone has a great time. During the Summer term, The 'Generation Games' continued with a Lego challenge, pebble painting and arts and crafts.

The children in Year 5 had the opportunity to learn a brass instrument for 6 weeks. They did brilliantly and completed the challenge with a performance to the rest of the school. Finishing the term in style was our amazing production of 'The Lion King'. Produced by our Senior Teacher, Miss Gibbs, everyone involved gave 100% over 3 performances. So much talent on display!



The Gryphon School

At The Gryphon School, our vision is rooted in the words of John 10:10, that our students might “have life, and have it in all its fullness.” This year, our school community has embraced that vision wholeheartedly, delivering a year rich in learning, discovery, courage, and creativity. Through it all, our students have brought to life the values that sit at the heart of our Gryphon Christian LIFE ethos: Leadership, Integrity, Fellowship, and Exploration.

Leadership was shown through student ambassadors at Open Evenings, peer mentoring, and individual initiatives from students to raise funds for charity, whilst our Year 11 and 13 students demonstrated maturity and resilience throughout their public exams.

Integrity was visible in the dedication of students and staff alike, through revision support, extracurricular activities, and events such as Hello Yellow Day, which promoted mental health awareness and authentic community spirit. Academically, we celebrated record A Level progress, placing The Gryphon as the leading school in Dorset for value added progress and in the top 25% nationally.

Fellowship was celebrated in cross-year collaborations, including a vibrant 80s-themed dance showcase, as well as whole-school events like our Remembrance Service and Diversity Day, which fostered unity and mutual respect. A standout sporting highlight was the Year 11 boys football team becoming the first ever Gryphon side to win the Under-16 Dorset Schools Cup, a historic achievement that brought the school community together in celebration.

Exploration took students beyond the classroom, with trips to Rome, Berlin, Lanzarote, and Normandy, whilst our Adventurous Training Team led expeditions locally and afar, including the Ten Tors Challenge. Alongside plentiful classroom experiences, we ran over 100 trips and visits, including The Globe Theatre and the Jurassic Coast.

The Gryphon School's production of *The Addams Family* was a vibrant and polished showcase of student talent, creativity, and dedication. With standout performances, dynamic choreography, and a striking set, the cast and crew delivered a cohesive and engaging performance that celebrated individuality, unity, and artistic exploration, core themes of the show and values upheld by the school. The production not only entertained but embodied the school's ethos of "living life in all its fullness."

We celebrate not just grades and prizes, but the fullness of life that our students live every day. Whether they are on stage performing, on the pitch competing, in the lab discovering, or quietly supporting a friend, every Gryphon student is shaping a life of meaning, purpose, and possibility. As always, I want to thank our dedicated staff, our supportive families, and, most of all, our wonderful students. You are the reason this community is so special. Your efforts, your spirit, and your courage, all adds up to something truly transformational.

Jim Gower, Headteacher





King Arthur's School

September 2024 began with the appointment of Jonty Archibald as Headteacher, bringing a wealth of experience in school improvement, managing change for parents, students and staff, and a fresh perspective from his background as an OFSTED Inspector. The leadership team was expanded to include Amy Whiting as Deputy Headteacher with responsibility for QA, Laura Howell as Teaching and Learning Lead, Claire Pattemore as Behaviour Lead, and Rebecca Smith as DSL. This strengthened focus at the start of the year on improving the quality of education and ensuring consistency of learning for all students at King Arthur's.

Our OFSTED inspection recognised the significant strides the school has made, highlighting the dedication of staff, positive attitudes of students, and the strong sense of community that defines King Arthur's. It also provided a clear focus for the next stage of improvement, particularly around quality of education and reading across the school.

King Arthur's is proud of its strong links with its nine feeder primary schools. More than 12 sports competitions are held annually, including tag rugby, netball, bench ball, athletics and the popular cross-country run. Sports leaders play an integral role in demonstrating and leading activities. This also includes two sports days run for Wincanton Primary School and Our Lady's. French students delivered workshops at Wincanton Primary School, and over 200 Year 5 pupils attended the summer 'Wow Day' linked to Charlie and the Chocolate Factory, promoting team building and collaboration through Dragon's Den-style activities.

Community engagement remains central to KA. Prefects supported the Royal British Legion poppy appeal, and students took part in the town's Remembrance Service, with several reading to a congregation of over 600. The Art 4 KA Aspire club created a Royal Navy-themed sculpture displayed in church. In December, we hosted the Town Council's over-70s Christmas lunch for 100 guests, with students serving and entertaining. Artwork was also displayed at the town's VE Day celebration, and prefects attended the beacon lighting.

The English and Drama departments offered rich opportunities, including a creative writing competition where Holly-Louise P-W's poem was published nationally. World Book Day featured author Safiyyah Kumar, alongside activities such as Lit Spuds and a book fair. The school production of Sparkle Shark, performed by Years 8–10, was a standout success.

Year 7 students took part in a National Space Academy masterclass, creating rocket fuel through chemical reactions, and we hosted the Faraday Challenge in engineering. The Creatives department ran a Bristol trip to Wake the Tiger and ZaZa Bazaar, and welcomed sculptor James Lake for workshops with Years 9 and 10.

Duke of Edinburgh has flourished, with 30 students completing Bronze and 20 Silver awards—the first Silver cohort at KA. Students volunteered locally, developed skills and fitness, and took part in expeditions across Somerset. Eight students also completed Bronze through a Carymoor Education Centre placement, enabling the programme to double in size this year.

Through PSHRSE and Careers education, students accessed theatre productions on mental health, CPR and first aid training, and workshops from Somerset Drug and Alcohol Service. Careers provision included sessions from Yeovil College University Centre, Stand Against Violence, Collaborative Digital, and Avon and Somerset Police. Students produced safety-focused podcasts, placing second in a Southwest competition. Year 9 attended KPMG workshops and office tours, while others engaged in a wide range of college visits, careers fairs and an Oxford University outreach programme.

Funding from the Simon Banks Education Foundation supported Young Enterprise workshops for Years 8–10, while our partnership with Thales continued to grow, highlighted by an ex-student Apprentice of the Year leading a robotics workshop.

Residential and overseas trips remained a strength. Students took part in ski trips to Italy, a Berlin history visit, and trips to London, Normandy and Madrid, alongside future planned travel. These experiences continue to broaden cultural understanding, resilience and independence.





Shaftesbury School

Shaftesbury School

2024-2025 at Shaftesbury School was filled with energy, growth, and community spirit, with students embracing opportunities that reflect our core Christian values of Belonging, Empathy, Service and Thrive.

The winter term was full of energy, opportunity and festive spirit. Students took part in peer mentoring, employer interviews, Inter-House competitions, sporting fixtures, trips and a wide range of STEAM events. The school community also raised funds for Children & War UK and BOOBS (Shaftesbury Breast Cancer Awareness Charity), with RAG Day featuring bake sales, discos and a hot chocolate bar.

Shaftesbury School continued its important work as part of the Dorset Boys' Impact Hub, collaborating with local schools to address the attainment gap for boys. We also strengthened our partnership with MYTIME Young Carers, ensuring staff are aware of the young carers in our community and providing access to mentoring, counselling and "Making Memories" experiences.

The term closed with a period of reflection as we looked ahead to 2025, considering how we can continue to build a supportive, collaborative community for all.

The spring term brought growth, resilience and academic focus, with students thriving both personally and academically. Revision, summative tests, Pre-Public Exams, trips and fixtures made for a busy term filled with progress. Inspired by the concept of Kaizen—continuous improvement—students pushed boundaries and demonstrated determination in their studies.

Year 11 completed two sets of Pre-Public Exams, KS3 continued their Learning Journeys, Year 9 selected their GCSE options, and Sixth Form students explored university pathways. Throughout the term, staff and students showed enthusiasm, creativity and a strong sense of collaboration, living out values of kindness, respect and service in their daily interactions.

Despite the summer term being turbulent, it brought many moments of pride and celebration. Staff, families and students demonstrated outstanding support and unity. A standout achievement was Albie's national victory at Poetry by Heart, where he became the KS3 Champion at The Globe, also appearing on Radio 4 and meeting key figures in education and poetry.

A highlight of the summer term was the Year 11 Prom at Larmer Tree, where students celebrated the end of their secondary school journey in a stunning setting. The evening was filled with joy, style and celebration, giving our Year 11s a memorable send-off before their next steps.

The term included Safer Schools sessions, PSHE/RSE events, a full sports programme and a fantastic Sports Day. Transition days for Years 5 and 6 were a success, offering activities in RE, PE, science and treasure hunts. Mrs Hunter, Assistant Headteacher takes on leading the ever expanding STEAM programme going into the new academic year, aimed at opening new experiences and opportunities for students.

We said fond farewells to several valued staff members across multiple departments and welcomed new colleagues, including new Heads of Maths, MFL, Science and Social Sciences alongside new leaders, mentors and teachers joining our community. Thank you to all students, staff and families for your resilience, enthusiasm and continued support throughout this year.

Stephanie Bowen, Head of School





Sturminster Newton High School

This year at Sturminster Newton High School has been shaped by our core values of Respect, Responsibility, and Resilience. These principles sit at the heart of everything we do, and they've been evident in the achievements, challenges, and memorable moments that have defined the year. Our students and staff have worked with real commitment to build a culture of ambition and belonging, and their efforts have made a genuine difference across the school and with our community.

Academic Success – Showing Respect for Learning

Our focus on academic excellence has led to some outstanding outcomes. Year 11 students achieved results that placed SNHS among the top three performing state schools in Dorset for the key Grade 5+ benchmark in English and Maths — nearly 9% above the Dorset average and 4% above the national average. Performance across the EBacc subjects was similarly strong, placing us again within the top three schools in the county.

These achievements reflect the hard work of our teaching staff and the determination of our students. Beyond the headline figures, we take pride in the progress made by every learner, and we continue to ensure that each student feels supported, challenged, and recognised.

Student Achievements – Building Responsibility

This year, our students stepped up in many ways to show responsibility and leadership. The Youth Speaks debating competition highlighted their confidence and clarity of thought, while the Young Chef competition demonstrated creativity and attention to detail. Our Sixth Form students also took part in the YMCA Sleep Easy event, spending a night outdoors to raise awareness and funds for homeless charities — a powerful experience that encouraged empathy and community-mindedness, along with raising a significant amount of money for worthy causes. These activities do more than develop skills; they help shape young people who are thoughtful, capable, and ready to contribute beyond the school gates.

Community & Events – Strengthening Resilience

Our enrichment programme has once again been a vital part of student development. The Ten Tors training expeditions demanded real endurance and teamwork, giving students a chance to push themselves in challenging conditions. Activities Week brought a burst of energy to the summer term, offering opportunities for adventure, creativity, and collaboration.

A real highlight was our production of Macbeth, which saw students bring Shakespeare to life with impressive talent and commitment. We also deepened our links with the local community through the establishment of a Youth Town Council in partnership with the town council, giving students a meaningful voice in local decision-making.

New Developments – Future-Focused

Looking forward, SNHS continues to evolve. We have strengthened our collaboration with local primary schools, invested in sustainability projects, and enhanced our technology provision to support modern learning. One of the most significant developments has been our new approach to Sixth Form provision, including the introduction of link classroom lessons across SNHS and Shaftesbury School, to broaden the curriculum while maintaining high-quality teaching.

We have also launched our first ever Sixth Form Engagement Month, which is already proving beneficial as we shape the next stage of our offer. These strategic initiatives will help secure long-term excellence in teaching and learning, ensuring SNHS remains a vibrant, outward-thinking school at the heart of its community.

We are incredibly proud of everything our students and staff have achieved this year through Respect, Responsibility, and Resilience. We look forward to building on this momentum in the year ahead.

Mike Motteram, Head of School





Harbour Vale School

When mainstream education is no longer a viable option for some young people, Harbour Vale School offers a fresh start. Many of our pupils face complex challenges while finding their place in the world, and our dedicated staff work tirelessly to provide the support, stability, and inspiration each learner needs to succeed.

Throughout the 2024–2025 academic year, our school community thrived through a wide range of enriching experiences, meaningful projects, and opportunities for personal growth. From academic achievements to creative expression and community engagement, each term reflected our shared commitment to helping every student build confidence, resilience, and a sense of belonging.

Students took part in initiatives that encouraged kindness, inclusion, and wellbeing, such as Anti-Bullying Week, Odd Socks Day, and our “Wear Yellow for Mental Health” campaign. Awareness-raising activities like the Movember Challenge and Remembrance Day reflections helped foster empathy and social responsibility, while educational visits and outdoor learning experiences at Hummer Woods and Yeovil Town Football Club provided valuable lessons in teamwork, perseverance, and environmental awareness.

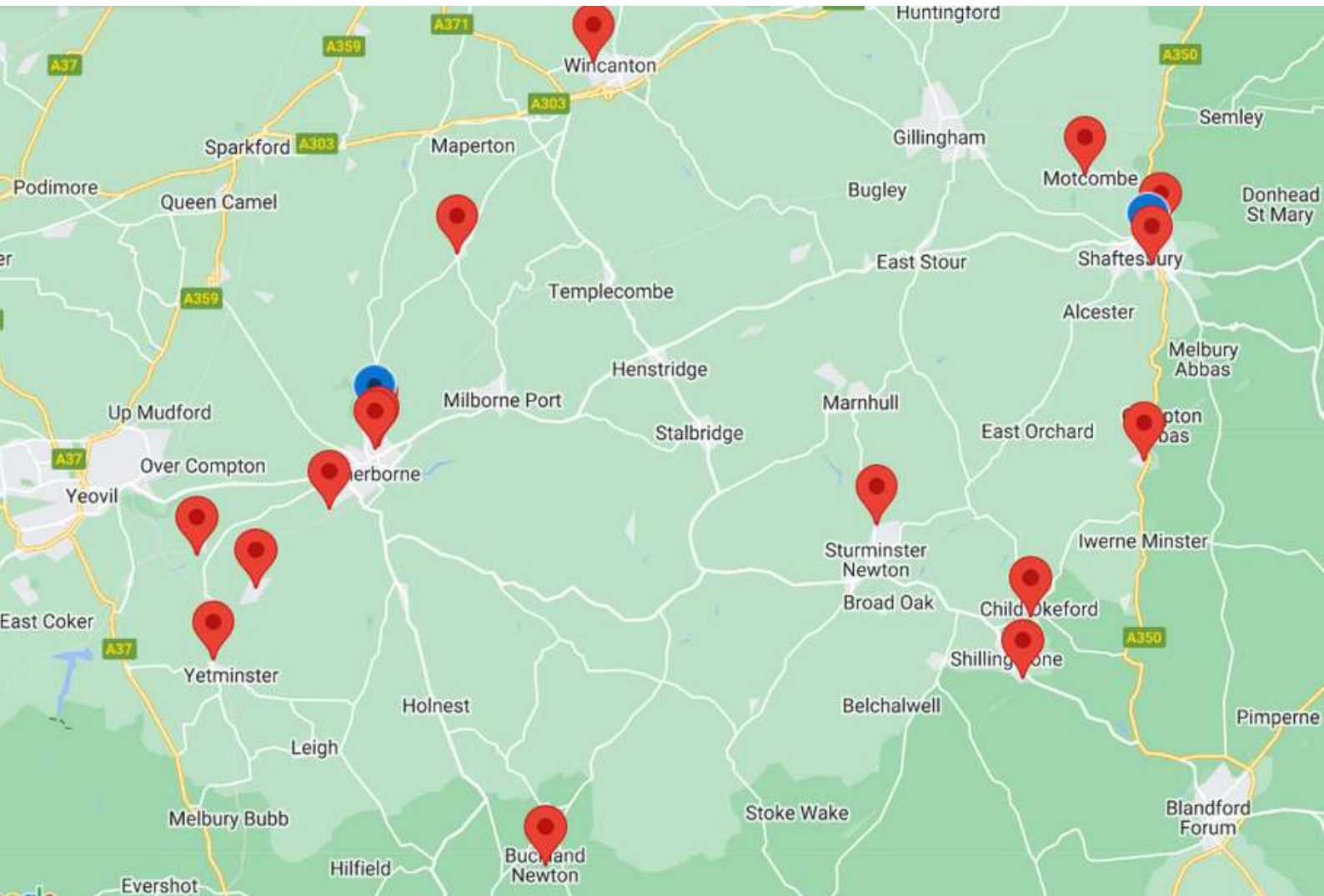
Our Year 11 students worked diligently towards their final exams, demonstrating determination and focus as they prepared for the next stage of their journeys. Creative arts showcases and community projects allowed pupils to express themselves and make meaningful contributions to the wider community, culminating in the joyful Harbour Fest—an event planned and celebrated by students, staff, and stakeholders alike.

As the year came to a close, Harbour Vale School celebrated the progress, achievements, and personal growth of every learner. It was a year defined by connection, creativity, and the collective effort of a community dedicated to helping young people succeed and thrive.

Kelly Knight, Headteacher



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Flourishing schools
Flourishing communities



Sherborne Area Schools' Trust (SAST)

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