

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St James' Church of England Primary School	Thursley Road, Elstead, Surrey GU8 6DH
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese/Methodist District	Guildford
Previous SIAMS inspection grade:	Good
Local authority	Surrey
Date/s of inspection	10 March, 2017
Date of last inspection	12 January, 2012
School's unique reference number	125176
Headteacher	Valerie Elliott
Inspector	Dr Peter Simpson NSIN 192

School context

St James' is a one form entry primary school which predominantly serves the village of Elstead. The school is smaller than average with 197 pupils on roll and with a much lower percentage of learners eligible for Pupil Premium than nationally. The percentage of learners subject to a statement of Special Educational Needs or Education Health Care Plan is well above the national average. A new headteacher took up post in September, 2016.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St James' as a Church of England school are good

- St James' is at the centre of its village community and is a fully inclusive school welcoming learners of all abilities and of all faiths or none.
- Most learners achieve at or above the national average by the time they leave the school ensuring that they are well-prepared for the next stage in their education.
- The school's performance information shows that the attainment and progress of groups of learners such as those with Special Educational Needs or eligible for Pupil Premium are improving to be more in line with their peers.
- Learners are confident and happy and are free to take appropriate risks in their learning within a safe environment.
- Learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength and permeates the curriculum .
- The leadership of the headteacher, senior staff and governors provides a strong basis for future improvement.

Areas to improve

- The school's current chosen values, whilst providing a broad basis for developing learners' attitudes and understanding of Christian values need further refinement and simplification so that they can be easily remembered and applied.
- The relatively recent increased rigour in Religious Education and learners' recording of their work needs continued development so that it is firmly embedded into the RE curriculum.
- Develop class worship to provide greater opportunities for learners' spiritual development.

The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is good at meeting the needs of all learners

St James' is a very inclusive school which welcomes learners of all abilities and of every or no faith. It is at the centre of the village where it reaches out to the community whilst welcoming the community into the school and providing a facility and venue for a range of parish and wider village events.

The school has a set of values which are implicitly Christian and influence the life of every learner. This ensures that each child is valued as demonstrated through the very supportive ethos and the care with which the school presents itself. The school's values would benefit from some simplification so that learners have a smaller number of explicitly Christian values. This would enable learners to better identify how these values impact on their lives and achievements.

Relationships between learners and learners and adults are very good. Adults provide very good role models in their interactions with learners and with the other adults who work in or visit the school. Learners are confident and happy in school, and speak very highly of the opportunities it gives them. Learners feel able to take appropriate risks in their learning in the safe environment St James' provides. They know that it is all right to 'get things wrong' and feel well supported by their teachers and other adults. Children behave well and support each other in their learning and in activities around the school.

National data confirms that generally learners have achieved at or just above national expectations. The school's own performance information for 2016-17 indicates improved attainment and pupil progress for learners across the school with a diminishing difference between overall achievement and the achievements of those learners eligible for Pupil Premium or with statements of Special Educational Needs/Education Health Care Plans.

Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good and is supported by the religious education curriculum and through the range of worship experiences. Learners have many opportunities to work with their peers to respectfully challenge each other's views and beliefs thereby developing their social skills and their understanding of different cultures. Learners have a strong sense of justice and a clear understanding of right and wrong which is supported by the school's values and through curriculum planning. Spiritual development is supported particularly by reflection in worship but needs further opportunities for this to be developed through class worship when learners can explore their own thoughts in a smaller setting.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Planning for worship, which involves the headteacher, the rector of St James' and two ministers from the United Reform Church is comprehensive and well-structured. This ensures that learners enjoy a range of experiences which are designed to provide a comprehensive and coherent programme of worship through the year. Acts of worship are led by school staff, members of the clergy from both the parish church of St James' and the United Reform Church in Elstead, the 'Open the Book' team from the parish and by the learners themselves. Learners regularly attend the parish church where worship is designed to give them experience of the Anglican tradition. The three clergy make a considerable contribution to the quality of worship in the school and are well-respected by the learners. Recently a learners' Worship Team has been set up which is beginning to help to bring further refinement to the programme. The evaluation of the impact of worship on learners needs further development so that school leaders can refine the programme to reflect not only what learners enjoy but also what would make a greater impact on their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Learners are respectful and reflective and can clearly explain what they like about worship and how it brings some of the Bible stories to life. Acts of worship held in class groups allow learners to participate more directly and to have greater opportunity for reflection. Class worship is still in a developmental stage and is inconsistent across the school, which is recognised by the leadership team. Plans to further improve the opportunities for learners' spiritual development need to be established.

The school meets the statutory requirement for collective worship.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Planning for religious education is rigorous and comprehensive. It is carefully adapted from the Guildford Diocese RE Guidelines and shows appropriate differentiation so that learners of all abilities are both supported and challenged.

Religious Education is treated as an academic subject where learners find out about several religions and compare the similarities and differences between them in an atmosphere of respect and tolerance. They have a secure knowledge of many of the key aspects of Christianity and the main practices and beliefs of other faiths and cultures which prepares them well for life in a multicultural society. There is an appropriate emphasis on Christianity which reflects the diocesan guidance. Learners have a good understanding of Bible stories and can relate these stories to modern day real life situations. Religious Education makes a good contribution to the school's values and to the moral, social and cultural development of learners.

A range of teaching styles including drama, group discussion and information technology are effective in supporting learners' understanding of religious concepts and knowledge. Appropriate assessment enables teachers to have a view of learners' attainment and progress which is largely in line with that of other subjects.

The teaching of religious education is largely good or better which is confirmed by observations by the RE leader and members of the leadership team. These judgements were validated during the inspection. The relatively recent increased rigour in formal recording of learning in books or folders is yet to be fully embedded. Where recording and marking is most effective, learners are responding to their teachers' comments in corrected work which furthers their learning and understanding.

The effectiveness of religious education has improved since the last inspection and the school has used support from the Diocese effectively.

The school meets the statutory requirements for religious education.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is good

The headteacher and senior leaders have a clear vision for St James' which is supported, monitored and challenged by a well-informed governing body. The senior team led by the headteacher demonstrates a strong commitment to St James' as the village school which effectively serves the community and provides clear, sensitive leadership. This ensures the well-being of the whole school community and secures the school's place at the centre of Elstead. Leaders clearly articulate development plans designed to improve the educational experiences for all learners in this inclusive school and have appropriately addressed the areas for development from the last inspection report. The school's distinctively Christian character is at the centre of their considerations and planning as they lead St James' in the next stage in its development. The refinement of the school's chosen Christian values is part of this planned process.

Staff new to the school undergo effective induction and support so that they can rapidly take an effective role in improving the educational provision for all learners whilst promoting the school's values. All staff are appropriately supported through continuing professional development so that they are equipped to meet the challenges and opportunities as the school continues to evolve.

The leadership team and the governing body are ambitious to make St James' the best it can be in supporting the school's over-arching vision of 'Bringing Out The Best in our children'.