

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St James Church of England Primary School

Address	Grotto Road, Weybridge, Surrey KT13 8PL		
Date of inspection	11 July 2019	Status of school	Voluntary Controlled Primary
Diocese	Guildford	URN	125163

Overall Judgement	How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?	Grade	Good
Additional Judgements	The impact of collective worship	Grade	Good

School context

St James is a Church of England primary school with 449 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. While few speak English as an additional language, a wide range of ethnic groups is represented. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is well below national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below national averages. During the period of the inspection, the headteacher was absent and the school was led by the acting headteacher.

The school's Christian vision

Rooted in our Christian values of Love, Respect and Unity, we will provide an inclusive, first class education for all. We will nurture, grow and empower pupils to be confident, independent thinkers and learners, eager to embrace every opportunity and equipped with skills and knowledge that will enable them **to be the best that they can be** emotionally, socially and academically.

Key findings

- Religious education (RE) is a considerable strength of the school, making a very positive contribution to the school's Christian character and ethos.
- The Christian vision has a positive influence on how pupils go about their life and work in the school. However, the breadth of the vision should embrace more emphasis on encouraging pupils' moral, social and spiritual depth.
- Driven by the Christian vision, relationships across the school are very positive and pupils and adults can flourish. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary.
- Pupils are taught and supported in developing a prayerful attitude and practice. However, planning for spiritual development across the curriculum, and planning for collective worship, needs more clarity.
- There is a strong partnership with the parish church and its Rector. This helps to enhance St James's identity as a church school.

Areas for development

- Broaden the breadth and scope of the vision so that it can focus the school's drive for excellence.
- Reach a shared and broadening definition of spirituality that can be agreed across the school community and act as a basis for progression.
- Improve the breadth and detail of planning for collective worship and harness the potential of the pupils to ensure that they can take their full part.

How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?

Inspection findings

St James is a welcoming, caring and inclusive primary school. The school's recently modified Christian vision is encapsulated in the motto, 'Be the best that you can be'. The vision is linked to a biblical underpinning through John 10:10 and it has a positive influence on how pupils go about their life and work in the school. However, the breadth and scope of the vision, as currently written, lacks sufficient emphasis on encouraging pupils' moral, social and spiritual depth. There has been a recent and successful review of the shared values. These have now been reduced to three (love, respect and unity) with each being grounded in a biblical and theological narrative. Pupils can equally draw on their values, as well as their vision, to support and shape the way they behave and learn. One child said that to respect is to understand, another that unity brings me closer to other people, another that others help me to love more broadly. Leaders and governors work productively and effectively in order to drive the specific features that makes this a successful church school serving its community. Governors know their school well and effectively check and consider aspects of Christian distinctiveness, although strategic planning does not adequately embrace these elements. The requirements of the previous denominational inspection concerning pupils' application of their values and the governors' monitoring and evaluation have been met. St James's identity as a church school is enhanced by its strong and fruitful partnership with the parish church and its Rector.

Driven by the Christian vision to enable pupils 'to nurture, grow and empower', along with the associated values, relationships across the school are very positive. Pupils behave in an exemplary fashion. They are polite and courteous to those they meet and very supportive of each other. The behaviour policy outlines a compassionate process that is enriched by 'restorative practice'. This approach is instrumental in helping pupils to consider the impact of their behaviour on others and to bring about reconciliation where there is hurt or disagreement. Each class has their own age-appropriate interpretation of the rules so that they can fully understand their meaning. Pupils' social and cultural development is guided by the school's vision and associated values. A positive Christian ethos underpins a productive emphasis on the wellbeing and mental health of the school community. Pupils are cherished and adults valued. Classrooms each have a 'worry box' where pupils can leave a note of their concerns. The staffroom has a wall-mounted display for adults to show mutual appreciation, one of another. These measures are effective. The school's support worker successfully helps pupils in need and their families. Attendance is above the national average and there have been no recent exclusions.

RE is a considerable strength of the school. The subject makes a very positive contribution to the school's Christian character. It is well planned around the locally agreed syllabus. Lessons offer an imaginative range of activities that embrace an empathetic and appropriate understanding of different world religions as well as Christianity. The subject is exceptionally well led. This helps to inspire and empower other teachers to help pupils understand difficult concepts, such as the Trinity, to reach high standards and to flourish. An effective assessment system enables regular reporting of learning outcomes in RE to the governing body. The subject fully meets the Church of England statement of entitlement. Attainment in the core subjects of reading, writing and mathematics is above average. Progress is broadly average overall with pupils making particularly strong progress in reading, although less so in writing. Progress in mathematics is average to above. There is a comprehensive and well-considered provision to meet the needs of disadvantaged pupils. The school is actively focused on working to close the gap between their outcomes and those of other pupils.

Supported by the Christian vision and values, the curriculum promotes a wide range of learning that encourages pupils to respect and learn about others in differing needs and circumstances. Units of work pose 'big questions' to challenge and inspire. Older pupils have recently considered how Christians are still being persecuted globally. As a response they produced 'inspirational postcards' containing pictures with accompanying verses and encouragements. These were distributed to current prisoners of conscience through a Christian Trust. This experience raised their awareness and gave them greater appreciation of the worldwide church. Pupils have a good understanding of difference and diversity. One child referenced her understanding of the parable of the good Samaritan, perceptively talking about the importance of 'going beyond the stereotypes'. Older pupils worked successfully with local church members to organise a sensory walk around the church for adults with dementia. Pupils consider and explore global ecological issues. They have learnt about the production of palm oil and its global environmental impact. Meetings of the school and eco councils demonstrate care for, and anger at, planetary exploitations. The councils effectively provide a

way in which pupils can pitch their ideas to adults, for instance on the use of plastics in school. Planning for spiritual development across the curriculum currently lacks sufficient clarity.

Underpinned by the Christian vision and values, collective worship has a central place in the daily life of the school and fully meets statutory requirements. It makes an important contribution to the spiritual development of all those attending, pupils and adults. Pupils say that they value the stillness and space in the day; a time that allows them to think and reflect. On the day of the inspection there was a whole-school thanksgiving service for Year 6 leavers, taking place in the parish church. Parents also attended the occasion. During the service, pupils expressed their appreciation of their school and remembered their time there. The occasion demonstrated the inclusivity and God-facing direction of the school. However, planning for worship is limited in scope and offers insufficient guidance for the varying forms and organisations of worship across the week. Pupils do not take enough responsibility in planning, leading and evaluating their worship. They are taught and supported in developing their own personal prayer and reflections, evident in their thoughts, attitudes and practice. There is a prayer tree in the school entrance hall where pupils can write and hang their own prayers, as well as prayer boxes in the classrooms. Pupils can talk with great insight about their own experiences of prayer. One Year 2 pupil said she had, that lunchtime, prayed her own prayers for the year 6 leavers and hung it on the prayer tree. A year 6 girl said, 'everywhere is a prayer space if you choose to make it one'.

Headteacher	Linda Rainbow
Inspector's name and number	Dr Trevor Walker 908