

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St James' Church of England Primary School

Address	Cromwell Range, Birch in Rusholme, Manchester, M14 6HW		
Date of inspection	14 March 2019	Status of school	VA primary
Diocese	Manchester	URN	I05508

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

School context

St James' Primary School is a primary school with 236 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are of non-white British heritage. Just over half of pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is above national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with national averages. More than half of pupils are from Muslim families. In the most recent Ofsted inspection in October 2017, the school was judged to be good.

The school's Christian vision

'Love your neighbour as you yourself.' Matthew 22:39.
Striving for excellence together. How can we do things better?

Key findings

- The shared passion and powerful commitment of the headteacher, staff and governors to the school's Christian vision and mission infuses all areas of this school creating a place where all can flourish and achieve well.
- The school works tirelessly to identify and support vulnerable pupils and families ensuring that all are known, nurtured and inspired and can make good progress from their starting points.
- The full and extensive range of diversity and difference is actively celebrated so that every member of the school family is respected and given dignity.
- Leaders and governors effectively monitor and evaluate the school's work and Christian distinctiveness to ensure that it is constantly developing and meeting the needs of its community.
- Collective worship is inclusive and carefully planned to meet the needs of this diverse community and provides opportunities for celebration, reflection and inspiration in a clearly Christian context.
- The strengths of a very effectively led, carefully planned and engaging RE curriculum creates an environment in which pupils are challenged and inspired in their learning and where they make good progress.

Areas for development

- Provide opportunities for pupils to engage in further global links and partnerships in order to enhance their knowledge of and effective responses to injustice and disadvantage.
- Enhance the role of pupils in the planning, leading and evaluation of worship in order to develop their understanding of the key elements involved and to further their spiritual development.
- Extend pupils' knowledge of alternative styles of Christian worship and practice so that they can understand the varying ways in which Christians live out their faith.

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

The headteacher, well supported by all staff and governors, has a strong Christian vision and passion to advocate respect and value for all. This is shared throughout the school, creating a warm, nurturing community in which all can flourish. 'Love your neighbour as you love yourself' is truly lived out in a thriving environment. Relationships throughout this very diverse school family are mutually supportive enabling a harmonious atmosphere of purpose and a determination to strive for excellence. One parent said, 'This school works together with us all in a beautiful way. There is something very special here.' Hallmarks of the school are the strong, supportive partnerships with the community, church and members of all faith groups represented. Extending these into the diocese and beyond would enable others to gain an understanding of effective partnerships in a school in this setting. Governors work closely with leaders to maintain a robust system to monitor and evaluate the school's work, policies and Christian distinctiveness. Thus, effective strategic decisions are made about future development. The headteacher ensures that opportunities are given to staff to equip them to become future Church school leaders. Areas to improve in the last inspection have been addressed.

The school provides an engaging, inclusive, high-quality education for all pupils which has its roots firmly in the Christian vision. This enables pupils to make very strong progress in comparison to other schools both locally and nationally. Vulnerable members of the school community are given a high priority at St. James' with pupils having access to provision tailored to their individual needs. This helps all to develop and thrive. Several pupils, including refugees and some of those with English as an additional language, receive targeted interventions that enable them to flourish. An effective Early Help pastoral team works tirelessly to remove barriers which might prevent pupils from attending school or making progress. This demonstrates that the school values all God's children. One parent in a family supported by the team said, 'I believe you are angels sent from God to help me.'

Vibrant and interesting displays of pupil work in all areas of the school help to celebrate pupils' learning and achievement. They include material created on RE theme days which reinforces what was done and provides a focus for pupils to share with visitors. A display about the story of Noah inspired challenge in issues around God's promises, the place of creation and stewardship. Photographs of the school's contribution to the community event marking 100 years since World War One prompted pupils to speak meaningfully of the greatest love of those who sacrificed their lives.

Pupils' lives are enriched by spiritual, moral and character education being given prominence throughout the curriculum and in collective worship. This gives pupils tools for their learning and opportunities to develop their attributes, responses and skills. It helps them to be the best they can and enhances their future lives. It enables them to engage in new ideas and promote tolerance and empathy. Through the work of Pupil Parliament, Friends of St James', staff and parents, several opportunities are used to build relationships with the wider community and undertake fundraising activities. However, pupils do not have the opportunity to engage with social action projects, global links and environmental concerns. This would give pupils a greater appetite to challenge injustice and become strong advocates for change. There are several extracurricular opportunities at the school which enrich pupils' lives. The Forest School development is in its early stages at St James' and is already helping pupils to experience their learning in a different way. Sharing this facility with other schools demonstrates the Christian welcome and concern in which the school is rooted. Behaviour of pupils in the school is exemplary and relationships are strong. This underpins the positive, calm and purposeful atmosphere and enables the community to live well together. A number of people said, 'We all know each other and look out for one another.' Staff, pupils and parents often use the words 'love' and 'family' when referring to the school community and this demonstrates the positive impact and outworking of the school's Christian vision. The warm, supportive atmosphere means that every member of this community is effectively living out 'Love your neighbour as you love yourself'.

The headteacher and staff are determined that prejudicial actions and language should have no place in this diverse, multi-faith, multi-cultural school. Problems are de-escalated quickly, sometimes involving the pupil Restoration Gang. Forgiveness and reconciliation are strong throughout the school underscoring the expectations of the school's Christian vision. The mental health and wellbeing of pupils and staff are given a high priority and so everyone feels supported in their life journey.

Collective worship is rooted in The Bible and carefully planned to reflect the Christian calendar and the school's vision. Staff, pupils and visitors, whatever their faith or beliefs, are invited to engage with worship and respond making it inclusive and accessible. Pupils and parents who are Christian, of other faiths or none spoke of being comfortable to join in and speak of how it helps them to feel closer to God. There is some involvement of pupils in the planning of themes for collective worship. Members of the local church congregation and clergy are sometimes involved with worship, support the school with music and explain aspects of faith in classes. Pupils, staff

and parents speak very positively of the termly Eucharist at the church. They describe the benefit of the link and how the rector and church members make everyone feel welcome and included.

RE is given a high profile in the school with the coordinator's role being strengthened through membership of the senior leadership team. The subject is effectively led and monitored with the carefully planned curriculum enabling pupils to relate learning to the school's Christian vision and values. Pupils from all faiths and none welcome opportunities to explore big questions and experience varied and sometimes innovative learning styles. One pupil said, 'I feel excited and curious when RE is my next lesson because I know that it will be interesting.' In a thoughtfully planned lesson, a teacher skilfully enabled pupils to empathise with biblical characters' response to Jesus' resurrection. In another class, pupils' learning and understanding was greatly enriched through the teacher's well-planned integration of Philosophy for Children as they explored the theme of betrayal.



The effectiveness of RE is Good.

Strong leadership of RE means that there are clear expectations, and this supports good standards in the subject. Teachers are well supported and kept up to date through the work of the coordinator. This enables them to be confident about the subject's specific pedagogy. Blackburn Diocese's syllabus, supported by Understanding Christianity, is used effectively enabling pupils to gain a good understanding of the belief and theology of Christianity as well as of other faiths. Learning and teaching are carefully monitored through a thorough, planned programme of work scrutiny. Pupil engagement in the subject is strong because teaching is always at least good. Assessment of pupils' work is effective, and pupils make very good progress. A wide variety of classroom practice is used, enabling pupils to enjoy engaging lessons and deepen their learning.

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