

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St James' Church of England Primary School			
Address	Earl Street, Blackburn, Lancashire BB1 8EG		
Date of inspection	26 September 2019	Status of school	VA primary
Diocese	Blackburn	URN	119502

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	Excellent
Additional Judgements	The impact of collective worship	Grade	Excellent
	The effectiveness of religious education (RE)	Grade	Excellent

School context

St James' is a primary school with 406 pupils on roll. The vast majority of pupils are of Asian heritage. Most pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is below national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above national averages. The school is situated across three closely located sites allowing for pre-school, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 pupils to be accommodated separately.

The school's Christian vision

Guided by our Christian values, we endeavour to inspire, cherish and serve our school community. We strive to be exceptional in all we do. We will nurture a love of all God's children. We seek to build respect of all faiths and beliefs.

'Serve one another in love' Galatians 5:13

Key findings

- The school's Christian vision is carefully and biblically rooted in the Christian message. It is understood, valued and demonstrated by all members of this welcoming and harmonious community.
- Leadership at all levels is exceptional. It focuses on identifying each individual's unique potential as a child of God. As a consequence, all are nurtured for emotional resilience, academic success and professional fulfilment. The inspiring headteacher receives excellent support from dedicated governors and talented colleagues.
- Relationships based on the Christian vision and the core Christian values of love, respect and courage are a tangible strength of the school and recognisable in all interactions.
- Inclusion is excellent. Adults are creative and caring in the way that they support individuals so that they flourish in a manner that is life changing for some and life enhancing for all.
- Collective worship is the heartbeat of the school. It sustains the community throughout the day. It is invitational and enables all to participate with integrity.
- Religious education (RE) is inspiring. Pupils' achievements are very good because they receive excellent teaching that challenges them to think deeply and to enjoy their learning.

Areas for development

- Extend global links and partnerships so that the school community achieves a deeper understanding of the different culture and life experiences of others

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

The biblically rooted Christian vision is deeply embedded and contributes to the manner in which strategic decisions are made and the reasons for them. It enables all adults to serve the school community and both pupils and adults to flourish. Developed collaboratively with all key partners, the vision builds upon the school's immensely successful tradition of living by Christian values. It retains the school's key values of love, respect and courage. Governors and leaders are thoroughly committed to providing pupils with exceptional learning and guidance. They ensure this by continually, robustly and collaboratively evaluating the success of the community. Adults at all levels are developed so that they are better able to nurture the pupils. This includes preparing them for leadership of church schools and extends to providing learning opportunities for parents. By absorbing former community pre-school provision into the St James' family, leaders ensure that pupils flourish before entering formal Early Years' education. Parents are effusive in their praise for the care that the school community lavishes upon their children. They appreciate that this extends to the wellbeing of the entire family. Pupils understand the Christian values of love, courage and respect change the way that they live their lives in school and beyond.

Pupil achievement is consistently very good by the end of Key Stage 2. Many pupils make well above average progress. This exemplifies how pupils flourish given that an above average number of pupils have special educational needs or disabilities. All thrive because all staff relentlessly nurture all pupils so that they have every opportunity to be exceptional. Standards are monitored rigorously therefore pupils receive additional support and challenge as soon as it is required. There is a creative energy throughout the school community. This encourages adults to do things differently so that pupils are able to enjoy rich cultural, social and emotional experiences. Themed spirituality days are a regular feature of the curriculum. They enable pupils to reflect on a range of issues. They are highly regarded for the additional excitement and diversity that they bring to learning. Visits, and in school experiences, are used to broaden horizons and prepare pupils to be aspirational in their life beyond St James'.

Throughout the school there is a culture of aspiration. The headteacher and governors see potential in all members of the community. They seek ways to celebrate each other's gifts and talents. Leaders act with integrity and make brave choices and decisions so that the community flourishes. This includes the spending choices that they make. They are courageous in their advocacy for each pupil and family. Pupils speak with pride of their school experience and the encouragement and support that they receive. A Key Stage 2 pupil likened this to the school being her second family. Pupils are confident and generous. They are aware of the needs of others and support a number of charities locally, nationally and internationally. Particularly exciting is a new partnership that is quickly developing with a South African school. This is already enriching both communities. Staff appreciate the development experiences that they receive. Their enhanced professional knowledge and skills enable them to successfully meet the needs of this deserving school community.

Relationships are an immense strength of the whole community. Built upon the school's previously chosen Christian values, they are nurtured by the vision. Consequently, dignified and respectful relationships ensure exemplary behaviour by all. Pupils understand how and why they are expected to behave both in class and during social times. They use the example of Jesus with ease and demonstrate a deep understanding of forgiveness and reconciliation. This is because they witness and experience both in action. Pupils are resolutely confident that any friendship issues or other hurts will be carefully considered and lastingly resolved. They and their parents implicitly trust the school. Adults and pupils from the youngest to the most senior know that their opinions are valued and frequently sought. This contributes to the sense of wellbeing that permeates the community and enables adults, pupils and families to flourish mentally, spiritually, emotionally and socially.

St James' is a community that embraces diversity. Leaders ensure that possible barriers to inclusion are addressed. The school's Christian vision is equally tangible on each of the three school sites. It unapologetically permeates every aspect of school life. Non-Christian parents chose the school because its Christian values of love and respect encourage their children to appreciate all peoples. The school uses both the formal curriculum and specially designed activities to help pupils develop their moral maturity. As a result, pupils have an enviable understanding of right and wrong. Incidents of prejudice and bullying are very rare because pupils understand that everyone is loved as a unique child of God.

Exemplary collective worship, carefully and collaboratively planned and robustly monitored and evaluated by pupils and adults, unites this diverse community. It offers all the opportunity to reflect upon God's world and his gift to humankind. Classroom worship tables are treasured and relevant. Simple additions, such as pebbles, encourage pupils to be reflective in prayer. Links with the local parish are excellent and pupils, the majority of whom are not Christian enjoy attending church for worship. A Key Stage 2 pupil explained her enjoyment of visiting church because 'you can pray in a sacred place'. The multi-faith leavers' service, held in church and attended by religious leaders of six different faiths is cherished by governors, staff and parents. It sends pupils out with prayers from all religions. Worship enables pupils to experience the breadth and diversity of the Anglican traditions. Pupils are impressively aware of the importance of the Christian belief in God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. A Key Stage 2 pupil explained how the three candles used in worship give one light 'just as there is one God'.

RE is excellent because it enables pupils to grow in their knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other faiths. Highly creative teaching ensures that learners are challenged and inspired. RE successfully encourages pupils to explore religious, spiritual and philosophical convictions. Learners are encouraged to be inquisitive and reflective. They respond to, and ask, big questions. Pupils use religious vocabulary with confidence and accuracy. RE lessons provide a safe space for all pupils to share their religious beliefs. As a result, pupils demonstrate a deep appreciation of what unites and divides different religions. The school's diversity that includes Christians from other parts of the world helps pupils' understanding of Christianity as a living world faith. RE leaders share their excellent practice widely. This contributes to the school's loving service of others and is another example of how all are encouraged and enabled to flourish.



The effectiveness of RE is Excellent

The quality of learning in RE is exceptional because teaching is always very good and frequently outstanding. As a result, pupils flourish. The experienced, talented and enthusiastic RE leaders monitor standards accurately and robustly. Assessment successfully promotes pupils' achievement. Progress in RE is excellent and at least in line with the very high standards achieved in other core subjects. The most able, those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils all make very good progress. Pupils know the progress that they make and how to further improve because their teachers share this information with them. They achieve very well and thoroughly enjoy their learning. Teachers skilfully elicit pupils' comprehension and therefore, all pupils, however young, can express their understanding. They are not limited in their expression by age related literacy skills.

Headteacher	Philip Morgan
Inspector's name and number	Fiona Ashton 860