

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St James' Church of England Primary School

Address Vicarage Road, Hereford, HR1 2QN

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

Overall grade

Excellent

The impact of collective worship

Excellent

The effectiveness of religious education (RE)

Excellent

School's vision

"I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." John 10:10

In order for pupils at St. James' to experience life in all its fullness, we will: teach knowledge, skills and values, nurture a sense of love and hope in ourselves and others, and celebrate achievements, creativity and enquiring minds.

Key findings

- There is a deeply caring partnership between the school and local church. This is having a powerful impact and enabling the flourishing of the whole school community.
- There is a continuous focus on staff professional development across the whole curriculum as well as religious education (RE). Consequently staff feel highly valued and all in the school community are enabled to have 'life in all its fullness'.
- Pupils feel empowered to advocate on behalf of others. Their passion is for all to be able to live out their vision.
- Pupil led collective worship has a profound impact on the spiritual life of the school community.
- The high quality of teaching and learning in RE in St James' is excellent. This is recognised and celebrated nationally and locally within the Diocese.

Areas for development

- Increase the expertise of the current and future worship crews, so that they are empowered to lead more widely in the parish and diocesan community reflecting the practice pre-pandemic.
- Further develop and sustain the school's link with Tanzania to widen pupils' global understanding and share their learning with other schools in the Diocese.

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' has a vision which reflects biblical teaching and is deeply rooted in the school's local context. The vision is driven by the very close partnerships with the Diocese and the local church. The exceptional nature of its partnership and shared vision with the church is at the heart of the school's success as a church school. St James' works closely with other local schools, including both primary and secondary schools who benefit hugely from their initiatives. The school's actions are marked by a generosity of spirit which increases the vision's impact. Professional development for all, including pupil worship leaders, is a high priority and has a powerful transformational effect. It creates a strong cohesive staff team who flourish because leaders care deeply about their wellbeing. The vicar plays a substantial role within the school community. This work has been highly praised by the Archbishop of Canterbury on a recent diocesan visit. Staff, frequently use the Diocese for professional development and also provide training on its behalf in support of other schools. This leads to a high standard of confidence and expertise. Governors have deep insights into the way the vision impacts on all pupils. This is due to the robust and rigorous self-evaluation process which includes annual 'Away Days.'

The St James' curriculum is a highly innovative and holistic expression of its Christian vision. Pupils are enthused by the huge range of opportunities provided to excite their enquiring minds. Regular enrichment activities such as the St James University and 'Hopes and Aspirations' weeks inspire and stretch pupils' imaginations. They encourage all to aspire to be the unique individual God created them to be. Using 'Big Questions' enables pupils to explore and respond to global, spiritual and ethical issues in an exceptionally secure setting. These questions are used to explicitly identify learning. In this way, pupils are made part of their own learning journeys and take great pride in their progress. Extra-curricular and playtime activities are highly engaging and enhance pupils' very positive experiences of school life. These activities promote spiritual development which is integral to the curriculum. Visits, such as to the Welsh coast and to London, very successfully broaden pupils' understanding of life beyond Hereford. Vulnerable pupils and those with additional needs are exceptionally well-supported within this deeply caring community. This was particularly true during lockdown. There is a concerted approach by staff teams to adapt the curriculum to the learning needs of each child. In this way, lives are transformed and all are enabled to flourish. Pupils enjoy using debating skills demonstrating their ability to disagree well. Friendships are strengthened by sharing ideas and problem solving together.

The school's Christian vision creates a culture of high expectations and exemplary levels of pupil leadership and active participation. These leadership roles embody the vision and its central values of love and hope. Pupil leaders are highly respected and admired as inspirational role models. They advocate and lead change from within school outwards into the community and their actions are having a transformational impact. Pupils felt the need to march in support of Conference of the Parties (COP) 26, action which culminated in linked community events. This was followed by the local church establishing its own 'Eco Church'. Anti-bullying ambassadors in the playground promote harmony which creates warm and supportive relationships. Disagreements between pupils are usually resolved in a spirit of friendship and forgiveness. The school's buddy system is deeply embedded. Prayer books presented to pupils in each new intake and the welcome church service have a strong impact on spiritual development. Pupils very much appreciated teachers' live lessons during lockdowns. Although they acknowledged that home schooling was 'much harder' they showed resilience and perseverance. The newly established diocesan link with a school in Tanzania is supporting learning very well. Difference and diversity is greatly welcomed, celebrated and stereotypes challenged by pupils. Healthy relationships are promoted very well by the school's relationships and sex education that reflects the Christian vision.

Collective worship is of central importance in daily life at St James'. A deep sense of spirituality is threaded throughout the day and especially in times of worship. The school's Christian vision is deeply embedded in staff worship, reflection and prayers for governors. Prayer spaces and workshops are led by older pupils and are constantly in use along with class-based reflection corners. Members of local church congregations enjoy joining the school for prayer weeks which highlight the school's Christian foundation as a vibrant living faith. Quiet and stillness in collective worship are contrasted by joyous, interactive singing. Anglican practice is embedded by liturgical responses and the use of three candles lit to represent the Trinity. Events such as Eucharist and Harvest Festival experiences are led by pupils and members of the local church congregation. These have a powerful impact rooting Christian festivals and

practice in a greater understanding of worship. The church youth team has a strong presence in school inspiring pupils to aspire to be part of the 'Worship Crew'. Although collective worship as before, has not been possible during Covid restrictions, the impact of the leadership of past 'worship crews' has been profound. They are trained by the church youth team, plan, lead and deliver their own worship and in turn train the next crew of leaders. These older pupils regularly discuss feedback from pupils with school leaders. In this way, pupils' views have a significant impact on church school development planning.

Religious education is recognised as an exciting core subject and strongly reflects the Christian vision by contributing to 'fullness of life'. The curriculum is appropriately balanced and in line with the Church of England Statement of Entitlement. Religious education was a prominent feature of home school learning. Teaching is highly motivating and challenging and standards of learning are exemplary. Pupils are fully engaged, reflect deeply and critically explore their own beliefs as well as those of others. The inspirational RE leader has developed an innovative approach to RE teaching and learning which is highly interactive. Under her leadership, very effective systems have been embedded for teachers to understand and implement pupils' next steps in learning. Staff training on the 'Understanding Christianity' resource in particular, is having a profound impact on pupils' attainment. The subject leader established the local RE hub with the Diocese, sharing excellent practice widely. She regularly presents her initiatives at meetings for the National Association of Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE) and the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE). In this way, she is sharing her learning and innovative practice beyond church schools in the local area.



The effectiveness of RE is

Excellent

Teaching and learning in RE is at least good and often better due to the school's highly engaging bespoke skills-based curriculum. Strategies for identifying strengths and areas for development are extremely rigorous. As a result, pupils respond enthusiastically making exceptional progress in their learning. This is due to a concerted approach by staff to enabling all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities flourish academically in RE.

Contextual information about the school

Date of inspection	01 December 2021	URN	116885
Date of previous inspection	27 February 2015		
School status	Voluntary Aided	NOR	216
Name of MAT/Federation	N/A		
Diocese	Hereford		
Headteacher	Ben Caldicott		
Pupil profile	The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is in line with national averages.		
	The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with national averages.		
Additional significant information (if needed)			
Inspector's name	Daphne Spitzer	No.	37