

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St James' Church of England Junior Academy

Barbridge Road, Bulkington, Bedworth, Warwickshire, CV12 9PF

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

Good

The impact of collective worship

Good

School's vision

Here at St James', we believe that everyone is loved, this will allow all to flourish and unlock their potential whilst promoting joy in lifelong learning. We will use our faith, God's words and the light he gives to support this.

Key findings

- An inclusive Christian vision unlocks potential for every pupil and adult, as everyone is loved at St James'. In challenging times strong relationships are cherished by all. As a result, pupils embrace a joy of lifelong learning which enables them to flourish.
- With passion and dedication, the headteacher embodies St James' vision and inspires adults to nurture every pupil. However, governors miss opportunities to measure the impact of the vision.
- Planned and spontaneous opportunities for spiritual development are harnessed, but a secure understanding of spirituality is not shared by all adults and pupils.
- Collective worship is a powerful expression of the Christian vision and is greatly valued by pupils and staff. Not all pupils are actively involved in planning, leading and evaluating collective worship.
- Strong leadership of religious education (RE) ensures that the Christian vision is woven through the curriculum like a golden thread. As a result, RE is a key strength of the academy.

Areas for development

- Develop robust systems to ensure effective Church school governance, including training and monitoring systems for the academy governance committee to evaluate the impact of the academy's Christian vision.
- Establish a secure and consistent understanding of and approach to spirituality, so that the spiritual growth of all pupils and adults is enhanced.
- Create a fully shared approach to the planning, leading and evaluating of collective worship, so that all pupils can be actively involved.

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 inclusive and distinctive Christian vision in which everyone is loved, is the hallmark of this academy. The vision ensures that everyone's potential is unlocked, enabling all to flourish. Everyone at St James' gains the joy of lifelong learning. The vision and associated values are the driving force for the strategic direction senior leaders endorse. The linchpin of this aspiration for all, is the headteacher, who embodies the vision. Her Christian witness effectively unites all members of this academy family in their commitment to the vision and their passion to be a distinctive, nurturing Christian academy. Throughout the pandemic it has been this vision that draws the academy community together in God's love and light. Pupils and adults are enabled to flourish as the vision is woven into every part of the academy's life. The biblical roots of the vision are understood by everyone, as they were selected by pupils and reviewed regularly. Pupils confidently connect their academic and personal achievements to unlocking their potential. Staff explain how they are supported professionally and emotionally. Pupils and adults feel confident to express their views and concerns and say they are listened to. Parents value the honest approach staff take in supporting the needs of pupils. Quietly and determinedly, this is driven by the Christian vision. The academy's ambitious curriculum grows from the vision and is shaped to promote individual needs. The curriculum is fully inclusive and enables all pupils, including those who are vulnerable, to flourish.

A local charity presents Bibles to pupils as most join St James' from a community infant school. As a result, Bibles are utilised in lessons during pupils' time at the academy. Pupils are quickly immersed in a vision deeply rooted in Christian love. Pupils say that they, 'feel the love that surrounds us'. During challenging times staff talk of being, 'wrapped in a duvet and kept safe'. The duvet is the tangible vision that encompasses all areas of the academy, founded on the love of God.

The multi-academy trust (MAT) ensures the Christian vision is maintained through the support that it provides to leaders. For example, the academy leaders can easily adapt MAT model policies to better reflect the vision at St James'. Governors articulate the vision, giving some practical examples. However, governors cannot accurately explain how the academy has developed as a Church school since the previous SIAMS inspection. Monitoring of the academy as a Church school by the academy governance committee is not effective enough. Consequently, governors do not contribute to self-evaluation and lack the training to support their roles. There are missed opportunities for governors to monitor the impact of the vision as a Church academy.

RE is a strength at St James'. Skilled leaders weave the vision throughout the ambitious RE curriculum like a golden thread. This gives clarity of vision and supports pupils' exploration of theology, philosophy, and human science. As a result, pupils have developed age-appropriate skills of enquiry, critical analysis, and interpretation. The exploration of religions and worldviews demonstrates pupils' joy of learning. Pupils are immersed in religious and cultural experiences to strengthen their learning. Effective partnerships with the Diocesan Board of Education are valued by staff and help to shape RE provision. Diocesan training supports staff in delivering high quality lessons. The Understanding Christianity resource is effectively supporting staff subject knowledge and shapes pupils' understanding of the Bible. Work in pupils' books demonstrates the depth of knowledge acquired. Interactive displays promote critical thinking, celebrate diversity and amplify the vision. RE provision exceeds the RE Statement for Entitlement. Whilst opportunities for spiritual development are rich, there is not a secure and consistent definition of spirituality at St James'. As a result, some opportunities for spiritual growth and understanding are missed.

During the pandemic the academy's vision has evolved and continues to inspire staff and pupils in hard times. Service families explain how the academy ensures pupils, 'unlock potential, by valuing and celebrating their unique situation'. Pupils from service families have time as a group with well-trained adults to support wellbeing and mental health. Pupil behaviour is exemplary. When pupils disagree, they do so in a respectful and listening manner. Parents acknowledge the powerful moral compass that St James' gives to pupils. Year 6 pupils demonstrate this by rewriting the Ten Commandments for today. Vulnerable pupils are exceptionally well-supported. A learning mentor champions vulnerable pupils, ensuring that wellbeing is prioritised. Vision-centered relationships and sex education enables pupils to form healthy relationships.

Pupils are passionate advocates for change. Charitable works linked to the living out of the vision are plentiful. During the pandemic the academy has built partnerships with local volunteers to support their community. With dignity and

respect, staff have ensured that no child or family goes without, thus truly demonstrating that everyone is loved at St James’.

Inclusive and invitational acts of collective worship inspire pupils and adults to explore the academy’s Christian vision. Pupils say, ‘God’s love shines a light at St James’. Pupils know that their achievements unlock their potential. During worship the language of the vision and values is modelled proficiently by adults and is subsequently used by pupils. Certificates are presented in worship for demonstrating the vision. As a result, collective worship is a powerful expression of the vision. Pupils and adults of all faiths and beliefs love worship. They can choose whether to pray or to reflect on the words of prayers. Prayers are expressive and heartfelt. Times of stillness and reflection are woven throughout the day. Worship explores Bible stories and Christian festivals, whilst making links between themes in many religions. Passages from the Bible are interpreted for all to understand. Pupils have a well-versed understanding of Jesus and their knowledge of Bible stories is impressive. Consequently, pupils make links between their vision and the Bible stories they discover. Exploration of the Christian understanding of the trinitarian nature of God is meaningful and ensures that pupils understand its significance. Partnerships with clergy have not waned during the pandemic. Families, pupils, and staff speak of the mutual support between the academy and church communities. Clergy support worship planning with the headteacher and worship council. Not all pupils are actively involved in planning, leading and evaluating worship. This limits the impact of collective worship and pupils’ understanding of different styles of worship.

At St James’, God’s love and light support all members of the academy community to unlock their potential, so that everyone has a joy in lifelong learning and are enabled to flourish. No matter who you are, what your background is, your faith or beliefs, at St James’ you are loved.

Contextual information about the school			
Date of inspection	12 November 2021	URN	140694
Date of previous inspection	10 March 2015		
School status	Junior Academy – formerly voluntary controlled	NOR	226
Name of MAT	The Diocese of Coventry Multi-Academy Trust		
Diocese	Coventry		
Headteacher	Jane Cook		
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	Since the previous inspection there have been significant changes to leadership including governance. The headteacher was appointed in April 2018. Almost all pupils join the school from a community infant school. There are an increasing number of pupils attending from services families.		
Inspector’s name	Toby Long	No.	896