

# Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

## St James' Church of England Junior School

**Address** Upton Street, Gloucester, Gloucestershire,, United Kingdom, GL1 4JU

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

Developing a love of life and learning in a caring Christian community. 'Do unto others as you would have them do to you' (Luke 6:13) Informed by our Christian values the school is committed to providing a safe, stimulating environment where everyone is valued equally and encouraged to develop their full potential.

### Key findings

- The distinctive Christian vision is at the heart of this community, nurturing a real sense of being a family. All live out the vision daily showing a high degree of dignity and respect for others. Systematic plans to evaluate the impact of the vision on the life of the school are not sufficiently robust or cover all aspects of the work of a Church school.
- The welcome and care shown to pupils is impressive. This is particularly evident for those who have a limited knowledge of English, enabling them to thrive. Pastoral support makes a significant difference for families so they feel valued. At present, opportunities to enable pupils to flourish spiritually are not identified in planning.
- The religious education (RE) and collective worship leader brings a wealth of experience and enthusiasm. She has introduced significant improvements, such as the pupils' worship team. However, pupils find it difficult to make connections with previous RE learning or to articulate their thinking clearly.
- Leadership is strong and is perceived as serving the community. Staff are knowledgeable and experienced in nurturing pupils' mental health and well-being. This effectively enhances pupils' social and emotional development.

### Areas for development

- Ensure that the school is consistently identifying key areas for improvement by creating a systematic and robust approach to monitoring, which includes pupils, through evaluating the impact which the Christian vision has on all aspects of a Church school.

- Agree a whole school definition of spirituality and ensure opportunities are identified in planning which enable pupils to flourish spiritually and express their deepening ideas in a variety of creative ways.
- Enable pupils in RE to become more confident and articulate learners by making connections with previous learning when forming their ideas.

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

Staff and pupils have created a distinctive Christian vision which effectively addresses the needs of the community. Pupils from a large number of countries are made to feel welcome and valued in this caring family school. The school is central to the community, providing a hub of support for families, enhancing their well-being. Leaders talk thoughtfully about the theological principles underpinning the vision. They point to Jesus' example of how we should treat one another. Each person is seen as being special to God and valued. Leaders perceive their role as serving the community and helping pupils to have 'life in all its fullness,' through the additional curriculum opportunities. The vision informs the school's improvements. A new English as an additional language (EAL) coordinator is enriching the provision for pupils, extending their understanding. A wide range of additional opportunities are offered so pupils have experiences which grow their vocabulary. Leaders provide clear direction and focus to improvements. They have created a cohesive team who share the vision. Staff live out the vision on a daily basis making influential relationships with pupils who seek to emulate them. Leaders make ongoing evaluations as they introduce new initiatives, such as creating a new curriculum. Governors are dedicated and enthusiastic. However, there is no systematic plan which evaluates the impact which the vision has on all aspects of a Church school. Opportunities for governors to talk to pupils about their thoughts are limited. The vision of being together as part of a family has a fundamental impact on pupils' attitudes and relationships. The language of being a family is consistently used. Pupils understand what the vision means by exploring Christian values. They talk about the significance of these and how they shape their behaviour. Everyone shows a high degree of respect and dignity to all. They feel the school is a safe place to explain their beliefs and how this influences their actions. Pupils have a well-developed understanding of difference and diversity. This high-quality practice is shared with other schools. Relationships across the community are strong and influential. The caring welcome for the increasing number of pupils who join mid-year, or need a new start, is impressive. Forgiveness and its importance to daily life is well understood. There are growing opportunities for pupils to develop leadership skills, such as through the newly created school council. Leaders use the vision to create a curriculum which effectively addresses pupils' needs. There is a growing culture of aspiring to be the best that you can be. The attitude of pupils to learning is good. Visitors from different careers encourage pupils to become lifelong learners. Pupils draw on Christian values, such as perseverance, when the work is challenging. They use strategies to overcome barriers and support one another, growing self-esteem and confidence. Pupils have a sound awareness of stereotypes and how to challenge these. They understand the contribution people of different cultures make to society. Increasingly, they are aware of the exploitation of the natural world, which has led to the creation of a pupils' eco group. This leads pupils to raise issues they feel strongly about and become independent advocates for change. The profile of spirituality has been raised. However, teachers' understanding of spirituality is varied. Opportunities to enable pupils to flourish spiritually are not recorded in planning, nor can pupils express their ideas in creative ways. Mental health for all is a priority, leading to the school being awarded mental health trailblazer status. They use strategies which effectively help them to keep calm, supported by well-qualified staff. The vision nurtures partnerships which enrich the school's provision, whilst enabling them to share their good practice. This is evident in the strong links with a local infant school. St James' developed ideas from the infant school to shape its approach to reading. The Gloucester schools' cluster provides professional development opportunities, supporting the growth of subject leaders. Visits from the diocese contribute to monitoring, offering focused training. The introduction of 'Understanding Christianity' a resource for RE is a good example of this. This extends staff and pupils' knowledge of Christianity. Church governors make a significant contribution to school life, such as leading worship. Their practical care is seen in the much valued uniform exchange they operate. Pupils' awareness of different localities is extended by visiting a rural school. RE plays a major role in deepening pupils' understanding of the vision. The RE lead brings expertise to the area, ensuring the subject has a high profile. New initiatives, such as developing a well-planned curriculum, readily engages pupils. A new assessment

system tracks pupils' progress in RE accurately, identifying where further support is required. Knowledge organisers for each RE unit help pupils to gain a deeper understanding of key religious vocabulary. Exploring questions of meaning and purpose involves pupils in challenging discussions, which widens their understanding. Pupils learn from one another, as well as how to disagree well. At present, pupils' understanding of key religious concepts is mixed. They find it difficult to draw on previous work or make connections which inform their thinking. As a result, pupils can be reluctant to articulate their ideas. Knowledge of world faiths and views is particularly strong and pupils enjoy sharing their experiences. Most pupils enjoy RE and take a real pride in their work. Collective worship is invitational and inclusive, enabling all the school family to come together, which they value. Pupils understand what the vision looks like in daily life by exploring Christian values. The most significant improvement is the creation of a pupils' worship team. Large numbers of pupils are involved in planning and leading worship. They have a growing confidence and talk sensitively about their role. The group contribute to evaluations which leads to leaders posing more questions for reflection. Pupils requested guidance on stilling and how this could help them, which is an ongoing project. These opportunities are generally valued. Planning is being developed, so that it deepens pupils' thinking as they move through the school. Pupils have a growing understanding of Christian festivals and their meaning through church led workshops. Many pupils are confident to share prayers based on the worship theme. They talk thoughtfully about the importance of sharing ideas with God. The collective worship leader supports staff in building their skills in leading worship.

### Contextual information about the school

Date of inspection	29 September 2022	URN	115606
Date of previous inspection	03 July 2015		
School status	VC	NOR	165
Name of Multi Academy Trust or Federation			
Diocese or Methodist Circuit	Gloucester		
Headteacher	Simon Millington		
Proportion of pupils deemed to be disadvantaged	Above National Average		
Proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities	Above National Average		
Additional significant information (if needed)	St James' Church of England Junior school is growing, with a number of pupils who join outside of the normal admission times. There is a high level of pupil mobility. A very high percentage of pupils at the school have English as an additional language, coming from a wide range of countries. Pupils arrive at the school with limited or no understanding of English. The number of pupils who are disadvantaged is above national averages. In addition, the number of pupils who have special educational needs and/ or disabilities is also above national averages. St James' has an executive headteacher who also leads a local Infant school. Both schools are working towards federation.		
	David Hatrey	No.	0844

Inspector's  
name

