

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St James' Church of England Primary School, Gorton	
Address	Stelling Street, Gorton, Manchester, M18 8LW
School vision	
<p>“Whatever you do work at it with all your heart.” Colossians 3:23</p> <p>‘At St James’ we live and learn through mutual respect, compassion, and honesty; have hopes and aspirations without barriers; challenge injustices; inspire all children to understand through putting their whole hearts into whatever they do and having the courage to believe, there are no boundaries to what they can achieve.’</p>	
School strengths	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaders embody the school’s Christian vision. This strategically drives the school and enables pupils and staff to flourish. • The school’s vision drives a deep understanding of spirituality throughout the curriculum. This has a positive impact on pupils' spiritual development. • Inspiring collective worship is thoughtfully planned and delivered. Worship inspires pupils to reflect deeply on the school’s values and put these into practice. • Staff build supportive relationships, forming a solid foundation of love, care and mutual respect. This ensures that they work together as a strong team to nurture pupils, so that they thrive. • Strong leadership of religious education (RE) ensures the curriculum is taught effectively to the richly diverse community. Therefore, pupils value the subject and achieve well. 	
Areas for development	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build on opportunities for pupils to be agents of change in order to develop an age-appropriate understanding of justice and responsibility. • Embed the shared language of spirituality through collective worship to further enhance its impact on pupils and staff. • Support the spiritual flourishing of all staff by extending opportunities for their engagement with worship. 	
Inspection findings	
<p>St James’ Christian vision of ‘working at everything with all your heart’ is a living reality. The school is a culturally diverse community with a high proportion of pupils for whom English is an additional</p>	

language. Christian values of truthfulness, justice, courage, compassion, respect, and service are weaved into every aspect of school life. The vision drives decision making at all levels and ensures leaders meet the needs of all pupils. Pupils at the school grow and flourish because staff offer the best possible start. Governors, in the form of the Local Advisory Board (LAB), hold leaders to account and strategically guide school development. For example, by supporting the headteacher in making decisions concerning resources and budgetary challenges. The school is a valued member of the Vantage Trust. Active partnerships with the diocese and other trust schools enhance the professional development of staff. Trust leaders actively support the school's principal and senior staff. St James' offers a solid foundation and prepares pupils well for the next stage of their academic journey. Staff go the extra mile to show Christian love and care, for example in preparing bagels for pupils and families in the mornings. Pupils enjoy coming to school and have clear hopes and aspirations.

The vision shapes a curriculum which develops pupils academically, emotionally and spiritually. It has been skilfully adapted to create learning opportunities so that all can flourish. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), the proportion of which is higher than national average, are carefully nurtured and supported. There is an excitement about learning and pupils are aspirational about their future. Small groups and intervention sessions are effectively used to enhance learning. Pupils and families value the school's positive impact beyond the classroom. Extensive enrichment activities successfully compliment class-based learning by inspiring and engaging pupils. Clubs provide opportunities for pupils to live life in its fullness and enable talents to be discovered, encouraged and celebrated. School leaders wisely work with carefully selected community partners to benefit pupils and families. At parent evenings Citizens Advice, a dentist and representatives from the local community hub were involved. Pupils benefit from meaningful spiritual reflection and have a shared understanding of spirituality. Space for discovery, awe and wonder is built into the curriculum. In lessons, pupils connect learning and reflection in worship and RE as they explore deeper questions about values, worldviews and beliefs.

Collective worship celebrates the Christian vision of the school. All are included in worship and everyone is invited to make a response. Pupils are beginning to develop a flourishing spirituality through collective worship. However, the understanding and expression of spirituality across the curriculum is not yet fully reflected in collective worship. Whole-school gatherings and in-class settings enable all to value worship as a part of daily life. Worship material is effectively adapted to provide pupils with opportunity for spiritual reflection. Pupils confidently explain how worship impacts their life in school and beyond. For example, the story of creation linking litter picking as an act of service to the community. Worship is approached in a respectful manner, taking into consideration the diverse nature of the community. However, spaces and opportunities for staff to develop spiritually are limited. Gathered worship is valued in the school community. The school's six Christian values are creatively explored through the year, inspiring pupils to reflect on their attitudes, behaviour and relationships. Local partnerships play a key role in the school's worship calendar. For example, visits to a local care home and the use of St James' Church for special celebrations. Services and faith activities throughout the year, enjoyed by pupils as well as parents and carers, further contribute to pupils' spiritual development.

Pupils and staff are treated well. This is because the vision drives a culture where individuals are considered unique and special to God. A warm and welcoming atmosphere permeates the school. Staff are quick to celebrate pupils displaying school values. Vulnerable pupils and pupils with SEND are carefully supported in the 'Beehive'. This provision ensures all are included in school life and valued as members of the community. Staff work hard to support the more vulnerable, for example through training as mental health first aiders. Pupils experience the school as a loving, safe and happy place. Challenging situations between pupils are dealt with in a caring and dignified way. Staff wellbeing is important to the school. Staff feel appreciated and flourish. Support by school

leaders, and generous provision by the trust, ensure staff feel valued. Their meaningful professional development is a high priority for the school. Leaders ensure that staff benefit from extensive opportunities to improve their skills and interests.

Leaders capably employ the vision to establish a culture of fairness and responsibility. Pupils recognise their role in making the world a better place. They investigate historic and present-day injustices through the curriculum. Global and local examples of inequality and its impact are explored in an age-appropriate manner through the curriculum and in collective worship. The school engages and collaborates with several charities to support families and the community beyond the school. For example, pupils in Year 6 generously raised money, fundraising for a global charity. Opportunities for pupils to be involved in meaningful change however, are less established. Hence, they do not fully develop in their understanding of justice and responsibility.

The RE curriculum is engaging and challenging. This is because it is well-designed and well-planned. RE has a high priority in the school and is appropriately resourced. Leadership of the subject is highly effective and teachers are well supported. Progress is carefully monitored by teachers. They assess pupils' knowledge and guide them into knowing how to improve. Learners from all year groups, including the younger ones, achieve well in RE. Pupils with SEND are supported to fully engage in the deeper thinking and questioning in RE. Teaching is enhanced and enriched because teachers and leaders access training and support from the diocese and other trust schools. These collaborations enrich the quality and teaching of RE. Staff deliver inspiring curriculum content where pupils can explore life's big questions. Younger pupils experience awe and wonder through Bible stories. Older pupils readily relate these to everyday life. The story of the paralysed man being lowered to Jesus through the roof helped younger pupils think about friendship and older pupils about perseverance. RE broadens pupils' horizons and they find the curriculum stimulating and engaging. They value the opportunity to ask deeper questions. A range of religions and worldviews are explored, arousing curiosity about these. Pupils appreciate what other people believe and respect different opinions.

The inspection findings indicate that St James' Church of England Primary School is living up to its foundation as a Church school.

Information			
Inspection date	15 February 2024	URN	141689
VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary controlled	Pupils on roll	456
Diocese	Manchester		
MAT/Federation	Vantage Multi-Academy Trust		
Principal	Michael Connolly		
Chair	Leslee Draper		
Inspector	Stephen Birkinshaw	No.	2213