

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

### St James' CE VA Primary School

Frederick Crescent, London EN3 7HH

**Current SIAMS inspection grade**

**Good**

**Diocese**

**London**

Previous SIAMS inspection grade

Good

Local authority

Enfield

Date/s of inspection

07 February 2017

Date of last inspection

26 January 2012

Type of school and unique reference number

102033

Headteacher

Joanna Dimmock

Inspector's name and number

Rev'd John Pearson-Hicks 760

#### School context

St James' is a single form entry school which is smaller than average. 75% of pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds with around a quarter speaking English as an additional language. Many families attend local churches. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is broadly average. The current headteacher has been in post since April 2012. Pupils make good progress, often from low starting points, and standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are above the national average in all subjects.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St James' as a Church of England school are good

- Explicit Christian values are now engrained in the work school which is fully supported and highly valued by all stakeholders so that relationships amongst adults and children are a significant strength.
- Worship is central to the life of the school and makes strong connections between Christian values and personal impact.
- Pupils enjoy religious education (RE) and achieve high standards, supported by clear systems of assessment and moderation which has ensured children learn from and about religion in effective ways.
- Children have a well developed religious vocabulary that they understand and can use, which is modelled in effective ways by staff and clergy.

#### Areas to improve

- Provide opportunities for the children to regularly evaluate worship so that they have a greater sense of involvement, enabling them to actively contribute to the planning and delivery of worship.
- Ensure a structured and systematic approach to the monitoring and evaluation of RE which involves all stakeholders, to ensure greater consistency across the whole school.
- To provide a more creative approach in recording the breadth of RE work that takes place during lessons so that there is a consistent record of all the RE that is taught.

### **The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is outstanding at meeting the needs of all learners**

Since the last inspection the school has, in partnership with governors, parish clergy and the pupils, developed a clear set of explicit Christian values. The school focusses on one Christian value each month, which is shared in a variety of ways, during collective worship, the school website, and newsletters and in each classroom. This has led to a cohesive approach that responds to the liturgical year and significant events in the life of the school. These values are effectively shared by leaders and staff so that children and families clearly know and understand them and how they are used both at home and in school. Children articulate clearly the Christian values of their school and give good examples of 'how we apply them every day'. The children give many examples of scripture and explain how they relate to the school's Christian values in different ways. Currently the school is exploring the Christian value reverence, where children clearly make links between their RE work, collective worship and their own ideas. The monthly focus on a specific Christian value has led to all members of the school community being clear that there is a 'genuine sense children are central to all the decisions made by the school' based on Christian values. Pupils are clear that they behave well because adults take 'great care' in 'dealing with our problems even if they are small'. As a result, pupils are enthusiastic about their school and attendance is very good. Relationships between pupils and staff are exemplary because the whole community is working effectively together to ensure 'all members of the learning community; pupils, staff, parents and governors fulfil their potential so that there are the very best outcomes for all'. Consequently there is significant clarity in how the school meets the academic, personal and spiritual needs of all children. Pupils flourish here and make excellent academic progress and achieve high standards because every individual matters and great attention is taken in providing what children need in a timely manner. For example, the school has invested in regular music and play therapy to help support meeting the needs of all. This is a place where a language of faith is deeply embedded and where the children's spirituality is valued. Pupils are very clear that the Christian faith is central in the life of the school and they value this because it is meaningful and relevant. Pupils clearly enjoy religious education. They say that it is interesting and fun and that they learn about their own faith and the faith of others. They enjoy 'finding out about what others believe'. As a result of this the children are aware that Christianity is a world faith and they are able to appreciate and understand those who have different beliefs.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is good.**

Collective worship is a developing strength of the school. The school community values the rhythm of collective worship because it is relevant to their lives and is clearly based on the Christian values of the school. Pupils speak enthusiastically about worship and the ideas they have to make it even better. They especially enjoy the different styles of the clergy and the headteacher and how in Friday worship they have opportunities for drama and role play. Worship is clearly Christian, grounded in the Bible and the in the person Jesus which means the children have a good understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The children's use of language to describe their experiences of worship in school and church is quite profound. Children know, understand and use the various areas in classrooms and around the school to support their prayer lives and see the importance and impact in 'talking to God'. Worship is thoughtfully planned by the headteacher and clergy, based on the school's Christian values and drawing on themes through Christianity and major festivals. Last year the school and church committed to working more closely together on a joint project, 'Learning through Lent, Living through Life' and this has brought the two worshipping communities closer together. Children enjoy going to St James' Church which adds to their understanding of broad Anglican traditions and practice. These strong links are articulated by the children when they say 'we are lucky to have this school and be connected to St James', which is just up the road'. Parents talk of the impact these links have had on them, and that displays in church and school mirror each other, thus making tangible and affirming links between the two places for the children. Although leaders and governors are evaluative and plan strategically, there is scope to be more systematic in developing further the worshipping life of the school and to include the aspirations of the children.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is good**

Standards of attainment achieved by the majority of pupils are at least in line with and often above national expectations. The majority of teaching is at least good and the quality of work over time is broadly consistent in all year groups. This is because staff plan in detail and are clear about differentiation and challenge. By the time they leave the school pupils make at least good progress from their various starting points and have developed a good understanding of Christianity and a range of other faiths. The curriculum is well balanced with an emphasis on understanding the Christian faith as being central. Children are reflective and thoughtful during discussions in lessons and make connections between their own faith and that of others. In recent lessons one class had been learning about Hinduism and linking it to 'what makes a good marriage'. In another lesson one pupil spoke of their 'ears tingling in awe' in RE and made direct connections to collective worship that day. Very young children in school are able to express their feelings because staff bring lessons alive through the use of stories, personal photographs and good questioning. As a result the children are very clear that they enjoy RE and that it has an impact on their lives and 'the way we deal with problems'. Children have a secure understanding of the school's Christian values because they say, 'they are our values' and that they use them in a variety of contexts, which helps them in their learning. The children also say that they really like it when 'both clergy visit the classrooms and work with us in RE'. This has significantly added to the children's enjoyment of RE. Parents are clear that RE is regarded highly because, 'the children come home talking about what they have learnt in RE'. Parents comment positively that there is a visual link between church and school evident in the entrance displays in both buildings. This means the children, including the very young, instantly identify the church as being 'their church'. Creating these visual links has led to a more effective partnership between the school and the church. RE has a significant profile within the life of the school and staff and governors see the importance of regular monitoring and self-evaluation. Effective use of assessment and clearer expectations has ensured progress since the last inspection. The RE leader, together with senior staff, provide good levels of support to staff, and clearly lead by example in the planning and teaching. Whilst the quality of work in books is good, there are missed opportunities for assessment because school does not have a robust system for recording the breadth of creative work carried out each term. The school now needs to be more rigorous in its monitoring of RE to ensure that standards are consistently strong in all year groups.

### **The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is good**

Since the last inspection the school has implemented a clear set of explicit Christian values. Leaders, especially the headteacher and governors, confidentially articulate their vision for the school 'to be a school where all members of the learning community; pupils, staff, parents and governors fulfil their potential so that there are the very best outcomes for all'. Standards of achievement by the time the children leave school, including the most vulnerable, are well above the national average and this matches the attainment in RE. The school uses its Christian values to underpin decision making to bring about further developments. The school community is clear about the Christian values and why they are important. The values are shared very effectively through classroom and school displays, the school's pupil leadership team and through collective worship. There is a consistent message throughout the school and this enables children and adults to make good connections between personal experience and the life and witness of the school. It is clear that the wider local community is effectively contributing to the life of the school and this is having a significant and positive impact on the wellbeing of pupils, staff, and parents. Children are very well behaved, are articulate about why they 'love our school' and have a strong sense that they have a key part to play in making the school what it is. The senior staff and governors know their school well and what they need to develop next. Leaders have ensured that RE, collective worship and the school's curriculum is based on the needs of the pupil and meet statutory requirements. For example the use of the delegated school budget to effectively develop the children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development through a variety of 'needs led' interventions. This has impacted on all pupils being active participants during the lessons because they are given time and space to be reflective and to articulate their thoughts. Children throughout the school are polite and well behaved and there is a distinctly calm air about it. Governors are clear about the future leadership needs of the school and consequently provide an effective programme of professional development for staff. The strong relationship between school and parish is clearly evident and is seen by all as a great strength and source of support for both. Although strong, the leadership and management of the school is not yet outstanding because systems to evaluate their effectiveness and distinctiveness as a Church school are not yet sufficiently rigorous.