



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church**

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

### St James' Church of England Voluntary Controlled Junior School

Tower Hamlets Road, Forest Gate, London E7 9DA

**Previous SIAMS grade: satisfactory**

**Current inspection grade: good**

**Diocese: Chelmsford**

Local authority: Newham

Date of inspection: 26 June 2015

Date of last inspection: 8 October 2010

School's unique reference number: 102764

Headteacher: Shirleyann Jones

Inspector's name and number: Virginia Corbyn 86

#### School context

St James' is a larger than average-sized school. Almost 98% of pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds, which is significantly above the national average. Of these, 46% are Muslim, 40% are Christian, with a small number from other faith groups. Approximately 80% of pupils speak English as an additional language, which is significantly above the national average. There is higher level of pupil mobility than usually found in schools. The level of deprivation in the area that the school serves is considerably higher than found nationally. This means that the proportion of pupils supported by pupil premium funding is much higher than is usual. The school meets the current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for the attainment and progress of pupils.

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

- Explicit core values are clearly linked to Biblical teaching to ensure that this is an inclusive yet distinctive school community
- Collective worship develops and deepens the knowledge and understanding of Christianity for the whole community
- Leadership is underpinned by a clear Christian vision and set of values that senior leaders readily articulate and which are continuing to be developed in partnership with the incumbent

#### Areas to improve

- Provide more opportunities for pupils to offer their prayers and hopes to God so that this aspect of spiritual development is dynamic and interactive throughout the school year
- Develop the role of pupils as leaders of collective worship so that they have ownership of this aspect of school life
- Work closely with school governors to articulate the distinctive Christian character of the school in ways which are accessible to all stakeholders including on the website and in school policies

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

St James' is a fully inclusive and distinctive Church school. Pupils make good progress which is underpinned by care, consideration, co-operation and courtesy (the 4Cs). Pupils can explain how they display these qualities in their behaviour and through their learning. The 4Cs also feed into pupils' personal development, in particular through the very positive relationships throughout the school. The wellbeing of each individual is important. Staff support for those with specific needs is apparent in the daily life of the school as they show them Christian care through personalised learning. This means that vulnerable groups achieve well. The 4Cs are underpinned by and understood through the lens of explicit Christian values which are understood by the pupils. This outworking of a distinctive set of values has been carefully developed to serve the community which comprises a number of different faith backgrounds. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of pupils is good. They are invited to share their prayers and hopes at the beginning of the school year. However, opportunities for interactive prayer and reflection throughout the rest of the year are limited. Pupils apply the 4Cs to their attitudes and behaviour to help them to make the right choices. Parents are supportive and appreciative of the ways in which the school celebrates the faiths and cultures of their children. Relationships at all levels are characterised by mutual trust and respect as seen, for example, in religious education (RE) lessons and also in the responsibilities taken by pupils for one another. Pupils are very articulate about the importance of RE in building understanding of and respect for diverse communities. Teachers and support staff encourage pupils to think deeply in RE by focussing on skills and concepts. Pupils talk about their enjoyment of comparing what people of different faiths believe whilst also having a good understanding of Christianity. The lessons observed demonstrated that the pupils' ability to consider and appreciate their own views as well as the views of others is good.

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

Pupils' engagement with collective worship is demonstrated primarily through reverence and reflection. They are encouraged to 'think about' what is said and celebrated. They are invited to capture this thoughtfulness in a special reflection book. These reflections are then offered as a part of the worship. An evaluation of worship was undertaken as a result of a recommendation of the previous inspection. This has resulted in worship planned effectively and creatively around explicit Christian values. A combination of an exploration of these distinctive values and individual reflection enables pupils of all faiths to grow spiritually through worship. They can apply the messages to their own lives, no matter what their personal beliefs may be. In this way, the school makes sure that different faiths are recognised and respected within the context of collective worship. The Christian understanding of the Trinity has been shared by the incumbent in worship and has captured the interest of pupils. One pupil encouraged others to think about the fact that 'God is one and three, three and one and still one' through the worship book for reflections. Pupils have started to plan, lead and evaluate some aspects of worship. They lead the final reflections for whole school worship and they have started to help in the planning of class worship. However, these opportunities are limited at present. Festivals are held in the local church and are supported by the children and families of all faiths. The incumbent has worked closely with the school to plan appropriately for these occasions.

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

School leaders, including foundation governors, have set a clear and explicit Christian vision to support the achievement of all pupils and the wellbeing of the community as a whole. The embedding of this vision is part of an on-going journey. The direction of travel is clear and is underpinned by honest and accurate self-evaluation. There is an appropriate sensitivity as to how that vision is expressed in terms of explicit Christian values within a multi-faith context. The school articulates its shared values well in its day to day life. This feeds appropriately into Church school distinctiveness in this very particular context. This articulation now needs to feature on the school's website and in its policies. The leadership of RE has changed over the course of the current year

and is currently held by the deputy headteacher. She has set clear expectations in line with the locally agreed syllabus. RE is given a high profile within the school. There is a good relationship with the diocesan adviser who has been very supportive in developing the school as a Church school. Changes to parish boundaries have resulted in a new relationship with St Saviour's rather than with St James' church. This has been beneficial in terms of exploring theology and Christian teaching. The incumbent has been able to speak meaningfully about faith and belief to pupils of all faiths. School leaders, together with their staff team, work effectively alongside families within their local community. They have developed some informal means of gaining relevant feedback from parents and carers. There is a strong and effective senior leadership in place which is continuing to build its knowledge and understanding of the school as a Church school. Statutory requirements for RE and collective worship are met.

SIAMS report June 2015 St James' Junior School Forest Gate, London E7 9DA