

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

St James Church of England Junior School, Forest Gate	
Address	Tower Hamlets Road, Forest Gate, E7 9DA
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
<p>'A place where we aspire to excel in knowledge, faith and love'</p> <p>St. James' CE Junior School is a diverse multi-cultural school serving the local community. Who we are and what we do is built on Christian values and ethos. Our vision is best demonstrated through our core values: Care, Courtesy, Consideration and Cooperation, which are rooted in the Christian faith.</p>
Key findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The vision, enhanced by its associated values known as the 4Cs, drives provision and strategic evaluation. It is understood by all and is the foundation of school improvement.</li> <li>• All pupils, including those considered to be vulnerable, are embraced through loving and inclusive practice. Pastoral care meets the needs of the whole child, enhancing opportunities to thrive.</li> <li>• Partnership between the school and community is strong. Pupils and staff partake in all aspects of school life with integrity. Aspirational provision fuels hope.</li> <li>• Collective worship offers some valued moments for pupils to learn and reflect. Limited pupil leadership opportunities means the impact of worship on them in areas such as spirituality and social action is less developed.</li> <li>• The religious education (RE) curriculum is rich, engaging and wholly relevant to the school's context. Religious literacy is, however, inconsistent across year groups.</li> </ul>
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance opportunities for pupils to be involved in social action projects, to increase their positive impact on the local community.</li> <li>• Extend opportunities for pupils to lead and evaluate collective worship, to increase their ownership and participation within worship.</li> <li>• Increase explicit links between religious texts and stories to enhance pupils' religious literacy.</li> </ul>

## Inspection findings

The school has developed, and implemented, a vision which is distinctly Christian and an ethos which is welcoming and inclusive. The vision and associated Christian values (the 4Cs: Care, Courtesy, Cooperation and Consideration) are underpinned by a clear biblical narrative. Leaders' thoughtful review of the core values means they now better reflect the context of the school and its community. The vision is central to school policies and procedures, and is evident through the routines and life of the school. School development and subject action plans are guided and shaped by the vision. Governors are involved in the self-review process and routinely evaluate the effectiveness of the school as a Church school. The school has some positive partnerships with external groups, which align well with the school's vision. There is a beneficial working relationship with the local church, although pupils' understanding of the breadth of Anglican traditions is inconsistent. Guided by the vision, leaders invest in the training and support for staff. This impacts positively on teachers and support staff and ensures future Church school leaders are given opportunities to develop.

The curriculum has been adapted to meet the learning needs of all pupils. This is driven by the vision's aim for all pupils to excel. It is lived out in the additional support for pupils deemed to be more vulnerable. Pupils with additional learning needs are included within mainstream classroom provision, with suitable interventions planned throughout the day. Leaders understand their school context well and make bold decisions about the curriculum inspired by the vision. Collective worship and RE are planned within the weekly timetable for pupils. Time given to RE, however, is inconsistent across different year groups. The way pupils and adults are able to articulate an understanding of spiritual development varies. This impacts on the quality of provision that the school makes for spiritual flourishing within the curriculum and worship. RE planning shows good provision for questioning and discussion of spiritual and ethical issues. However, evidence of pupils' responses to this varies across year groups. The provision of social, moral and cultural development within the curriculum is strong. Pupils are able to discuss ethical issues well. A culture of nurturing supports the way that staff seek to ensure the inclusion of all pupils in learning. Pupils make kind and positive behaviour choices. Behaviour throughout the school is good, with pupils attributing this to their understanding of the associated values. Pupils talk about how the 4Cs help them to make positive choices about how they live together. They are also able to identify these qualities in others. As such, pupils and staff welcome one another into the full life and rhythm of the school.

The school promotes an aspirational culture, supported by the vision. Older pupils remember supporting the work of local charities and share a sense of compassion for others. They are keen to further enhance this. Leaders have not, however, provided consistent planned moments to develop pupils' understanding of disadvantage, deprivation and social injustice. Consequently, there are limited opportunities for pupils to engage in social action projects. The school has a good connection with the local community, where pupils, families and staff live and work well together. Relationships between families and the school are positive and pupils show consideration and care for one another. Pupils speak positively about forgiveness and how the 4Cs support them in making positive behaviour choices. The curriculum enables pupils to learn about the wider global community.

The RE curriculum offers substantial opportunities for pupils to consider different points of view, and provides a space for pupils to disagree well. Pupils feel confident expressing their views and

concerns, feel listened to and are given opportunities to participate in school decisions. The school's culture is welcoming, and all members of the school community are treated with dignity and respect. Diversity and difference are celebrated throughout the school, both through displays and the curriculum content. There are effective strategies and procedures in place to protect pupils from bullying or harassment. Pupils speak of feeling 'incredibly safe' to be who they are. The school's Christian values effectively guide and shape the ethos of the school. Pupils understanding of community and living well together is strong.

Invitational collective worship offers all opportunities for reflection as the school gathers together. The inclusive nature of worship ensures that adults and pupils have the opportunity, without compulsion, to take part. Reflection and consideration is a strength of collective worship. Pupils engage well with the daily opportunities to reflect, with pupils identifying how St Francis demonstrated the 4Cs. Acts of worship are creative and engaging, helping pupils to reflect on their behaviour, values and attitudes. Pupils are engaged with aspects of collective worship, through leading the reflections for all pupils. They are keen to be more actively involved in the planning and evaluation of worship. Acts of worship contribute to pupils' understanding of faith but lack regular opportunities to experience a full appreciation of the different ways people worship. Some reference to Anglican liturgy and Church tradition is made during worship and leaders have identified opportunities to enhance this. Pupils do not always confidently express whether the stories and figures they learn about are biblical or not. However, pupils articulate well the values they identify in these stories and how they might themselves embody these. The local vicar supports collective worship within the school. Leaders' provision of prayer is inconsistent and also not clearly distinctive from wishes or hopes.

The RE curriculum is well planned and follows the locally agreed syllabus. Provision for RE is broadly in line with the 'Church of England's Statement of Entitlement'. Whilst some pupils have the full weekly time allocation for their RE learning, this is inconsistent across all year groups. There is some confusion amongst staff between religious education and collective worship. This means that the boundary between academic study and personal faith is not kept clear. Acts of worship are informative and teach pupils about others, for example, the life and mission of Francis of Assisi. However, they lack the understanding of faith behind their actions. Understanding of religious concepts is good, with pupils able to demonstrate understanding of differing religious views. Pupils' understanding of religious texts, however, is less secure. Leaders have begun to introduce opportunities for pupils to read original texts to support religious literacy. RE offers pupils the opportunity to reflect on the multicultural heritage of Britain. Pupils are able to develop a good knowledge and understanding of major world religions and worldviews, and the impact these have on society and culture.



Information			
School	St James Church of England Junior School, Forest Gate	Inspection date	24 March 2023
URN	102764	VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary controlled
Diocese/District	Chelmsford	Pupils on roll	218
Headteacher	Rose Boland-Bourne		
Chair of Governors	Ellen Kemp		
Inspector	Matthew Harris	No.	2102