



Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St James Church of England Primary School, Northampton	
Address	Harlestone Road, Northampton, NN5 7AG
School vision	
<p>We are a Christian school that embraces all faiths; respects our similarities and differences and actively participates in the wider community. Through our work with God and each other we build bright futures, enabling all children and adults to reach their full potential in mind, body and spirit.</p> <p>Working together, we build bright futures.</p> <p>“In everything, treat others the same way you want them to treat you”. (Matthew 7: 12)</p>	
School strengths	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Christian vision is a powerful, transformative response to the needs of a richly diverse community. It brings people together, encouraging the flourishing of pupils and adults. • Inclusion lies at the heart of the work of St James. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are welcomed, loved and nurtured. This enables them to thrive in mind, body and spirit. • Leaders build strong relationships across the school and in key partnerships. With openness, resilience and commitment, they maintain a culture of equity and justice. • Religious education (RE) is highly valued as an inspiring academic subject. Pupils are able to make good progress due to an effective and creative curriculum. 	
Areas for development	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed a more explicit approach to providing opportunities for spiritual development across the curriculum. This is to encourage a richer culture and expectation of spiritual flourishing. • Ensure a balance between philosophy, theology and the social sciences in teaching RE. This is so that pupils develop a deeper understanding of how thought and belief influence the way people live. 	
Inspection findings	
<p>St James is a beacon of hope and possibility at the heart of a richly diverse community. Leaders understand the needs of pupils and families well. They are motivated by a vision that seeks to empower everyone to aspire to a bright future. By nurturing respect they enable the inclusive community to overcome challenges together. The Christian vision is welcoming to people of all backgrounds, cultures and beliefs. This has a very positive impact on the personal development of pupils. Staff identify and address the broad needs of pupils, in mind, body and spirit. As a result, they flourish in a safe, nurturing environment. Relationships are positive because of clear communication and high levels of trust. This includes strong partnerships with the Peterborough Diocese Educational Trust (PDET) and the diocese. Both share the school's vision of working together for the good of the whole community. Being part of a supportive family of schools contributes significantly to a common sense of purpose and hope.</p>	

Leaders apply the school's vision to the design and delivery of the curriculum. This leads to a balanced focus on the whole child, in mind, body and spirit. Pupils are taught to understand and regulate emotion, which has a positive impact on their learning experiences. Staff regularly make time for pupils to reflect. However, an explicit approach to spirituality, in the context of each curriculum subject, is not fully developed. Teachers provide an environment of structure and consistency, which supports pupils' learning. Leaders, including PDET, provide high levels of staffing and space for teaching. This ensures that the needs of pupils with SEND can be met successfully alongside their peers. A well-structured programme of experiences, visits and visitors enrich the curriculum. Leaders take care to ensure that these are accessible for all pupils. British sign language is taught across the whole school. This contributes to pupil's personal development, as they consider the needs of others while learning a language.

Collective worship is a vital part of the life of the school. It is valued by both pupils and adults. Leaders use worship effectively to develop a strong sense of community. Pupils are highly motivated to work towards completing 'values passports'. They are inspired by what they hear in collective worship. Families from all backgrounds are involved in the exploration of how Christian values are lived out. Those leading worship ensure that the language used in prayers and songs invites involvement. As a result, pupils and adults, from a wide range of backgrounds, feel welcome and comfortable. They are able to flourish spiritually as they consider teaching from the Bible in the context of their own lives. Strong partnerships with the local church and other organisations contribute to the impact of collective worship. Clergy lead regular Communion services in school. These provide rich and deeply meaningful spiritual experiences for pupils and members of staff. Celebration worship is a vibrant and joyful expression of the school community working towards the goal of living well together.

Leaders are guided by the vision to respect similarities and differences and see everyone reach their full potential. This leads to an approach, built on the principle of equity, which serves the needs of both pupils and adults. Help is given where needed most at any given time. This is reinforced by the work on site of a unit supporting pupils from other schools with social and emotional needs. There is a shared commitment to fairness and helping others, whatever their needs or differences. Pupils in the school benefit from a wide range of therapies and specialists. Their needs are identified early, which builds trust between home and school. This is due to the commitment of leaders to open communication and a determination to provide what is necessary. Staff are well cared for by leaders, including those of PDET, in both their professional and personal lives.

Pupils recognise and respond to the active culture of justice they experience as they grow through the school. They take action that makes a difference for others. Older pupils receive training through a young leaders award. This prepares them well for roles, such as Year 6 ambassadors, leading others in fund raising and social action. Pupils contribute to, and help develop, the work of the local church's homeless charity.

RE is highly valued across the school. It is given priority as an important academic subject, contributing significantly to learning and broader flourishing. The well-structured curriculum ensures pupils develop a strong understanding of their own identity before exploring religious beliefs and practices. In addition to Christianity, the curriculum includes the study of a wide range of religious and non-religious worldviews. Guided by the school's vision, pupils learn to respect similarities and differences. This gives them confidence to question and discuss matters of faith in an inclusive environment. They are keen to listen to the points of view of their peers from a wide range of faith backgrounds. The language of belief is a natural part of everyday communication in school. This motivates and encourages curiosity. Knowledge organisers for each topic are effective in clarifying what pupils will learn and support the development of vocabulary. Leaders are

supported and kept well-informed through regular training provided by the diocese. PDET monitors and evaluates RE provision, which guides leaders in their planning for future development.

Pupils make good progress in RE as a result of an effective curriculum and high-quality teaching. They benefit from creative approaches that allow them to explore ideas and respond to what they learn. However, the balance of focus between thought, belief and religious practice, is less developed. Teaching is carefully structured to ensure that lessons build on what pupils already know. Regular quizzes and direct questioning help staff to assess how well pupils are learning. Where gaps or misunderstandings are identified through monitoring of assessment data, leaders provide specific training. This ensures accuracy, builds confidence in staff and contributes to pupils' knowledge and understanding.

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	3 May 2024	URN	141724
VC/VA/Academy	Academy	Pupils on roll	449
Diocese	Peterborough		
MAT/Federation	Peterborough Diocese Education Trust		
Headteacher	Sarah Beach		
Chair	Philippa Jeyes-Blackburn		
Inspector	Peter Barfoot	No.	2216