

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St James Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School			
Address	Church Lane, Coldwaltham, Pulborough, West Sussex RH20 1 LW		
Date of inspection	08 February 2019	Status of school	Voluntary Controlled Primary
Diocese	Chichester	URN	125987

Overall Judgement	Grade	Good
How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?		
Additional Judgement		
The impact of collective worship	Grade	Good

School context

St James is a primary school with 61 pupils on roll. The school has a very low level of religious and cultural diversity and no pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is below the national average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with the national average. The school has been in collaboration with Amberley CE Primary School since 2005 and share a headteacher.

The school's Christian vision

The spirit of the school community is: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness and self-control. The fruits of our school are children with a love for life and learning, with confidence to aspire to be the best they can be. We are all equal in Christ Jesus.

Key findings

- The committed leadership of the headteacher, supported by a passionate staff team, demonstrates a Christian vision for all pupils to be the best they can be. This promotes the school's Christian character well
- The school's Christian underpinning permeates its life and work ensuring that everyone grows and flourishes within an inclusive and nurturing community
- The vision has been recently refreshed and rooted in biblical teaching. The new emphasis of the revised vision is not reflected in key policies which pre-date the recent reworking. Therefore the revised vision is not embedded across all practice in the school.
- The broad curriculum, shaped by the Christian vision, offers rich experiences for all pupils. More vulnerable pupils are supported well
- Collective worship and religious education (RE) contribute effectively in promoting the distinctive Christian vision, supporting positive behaviour and relationships for all. There is a strong sense of community.

Areas for development

- Ensure the refreshed vision and values positively influences the strategic and operational direction of the school so that it firmly impacts decision making, policies and practice at all levels
- Ensure a systematic and rigorous approach to monitoring and evaluation provides detailed analysis on the impact of the vision and values on the Christian character of the school
- Ensure that the school community applies its own understanding of spiritual development to encourage pupils' deepening understanding of personal prayer, reflection and spirituality

How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?

Inspection findings

St James' school lives out a clear Christian ethos which is welcoming to all. Shared by staff, governors, pupils and parents, it underpins everything that the school does. The vision has recently been revised by staff and governors in order to strengthen and root it expressly in biblical teaching. The vision stems from the school's original foundation stone from 1848: 'The Fruit of Christian Love'. Core Christian values associated with the fruits of the Spirit are explored well in collective worship and RE. They include peace, kindness and self-control and clearly influence behaviour and relationships at all levels. The school has made effective use of professional development from Chichester Diocese to support the refreshing of its Christian vision. A strong nurturing and inclusive approach is embedded; parents comment that, 'The values are in everything. The children are being guided on the right path'. The provision for the diverse needs of individual pupils demonstrates effective leadership based upon current practice in Church school education. Priority is given to the development of collective worship and RE meaning that governors invest in action which is leading to improvements.

The headteacher is supported by a staff team who are passionate and effective in providing for individual pupils' wellbeing. They are determined that every pupil should be the best they can be. Accordingly, provision for those with additional learning or personal needs, and those who are vulnerable, is strong. Parental comments support the school's commitment to meeting the learning and emotional needs of their children, a point verified through the inspection process. Leaders ensure persistent absentees are closely supported. Training in mental health and wellbeing for all staff, in partnership with local schools, has ensured a unified approach. One teacher described how the school enables pupils, 'to step back and understand themselves'. Priority is given to the mental health and wellbeing of everyone. Staff speak of the many ways they are supported, attributing this to the school's Christian ethos. The positive approach to equality and valuing difference means that everyone in school is treated with dignity and respect. Consequently, there is a deep sense of belonging to a community. Effective mutual support is provided through the school's collaboration with another local Church of England school. School leadership is supported through strong links with the vicar; pastoral links between church and school are interwoven to positive effect. This strong partnership also provides for good engagement with the wider community. Governors periodically evaluate the effectiveness of the school's Christian vision and values. However, monitoring systems lack rigour and therefore do not impact deeply on practice.

The Christian vision shapes curriculum decisions and extended learning enables pupils to live life to the full. Pupils are excited about learning within the natural world at Forest School, and the enjoyment gained from the breadth of sporting and music opportunities contributes well to their spiritual development. However, there is no shared understanding of what is meant by spiritual development within the school's context. This means that some opportunities are missed. The school's curriculum and good teaching has improved outcomes so that more pupils are working at expected outcomes when compared with national averages. Pupils' behaviour is strongly influenced by the Christian vision; the peaceful harmony of the school community is impressive. Pupils feel safe, valued and understand the impact of their behaviour on others. The Christian vision influences pupils to understand the importance of forgiveness, reflection and reconciliation. Older pupils talk about their role in being peacemakers in school and how they try to exercise self-control when they become frustrated and make positive choices instead. They openly share their aspirations for the future and understand how their learning today will help them become what they aspire to be, sharing positive relationships. The school demonstrates Christian compassion for justice in local and national settings. They support a number of charities including donating goods to a local food bank at harvest time, and pupils exchange letters with pupils at a link school in Malawi. This involvement leads to a growing understanding and quest for social justice based upon the school's Christian foundation.

Collective worship is at the heart of school life. It is rooted in biblical teaching, the life of Jesus, and Christian festivals underpinning its Christian vision and impacting on pupils' relationships and behaviour well. The headteacher and vicar lead the planning following themes based on the school's Christian values. Other staff, classes and visitors lead worship and pupils and adults benefit from this variety in approach. The vicar leads worship in church each week and at specific times during the year, welcoming parents and members of the local community. This contributes to a strong bond between church and school. Worship encourages spiritual development and

opportunities linked to the themes spill over into class reflection areas. Pupils write and join in saying prayers such as the Lord's Prayer but are limited in their expression of how personal prayer and reflection may support them in daily life. Class reflection areas provide opportunities for engagement but are not seen by pupils as a place for quiet contemplation. Pupils show growing understanding of the Christian belief about God, as Father, Son and Holy Spirit; they clearly express how Jesus lived on earth to show people how God wants people to live. Evaluation of worship involves pupils in expressing their thoughts on the themes explored. Themes such as forgiveness guide pupils to understand that Jesus taught people how to treat each other, and that reflection and reconciliation are promoted. However, monitoring by governors is not rigorous enough in reflecting on the impact worship has on school life based on its Christian vision.

RE strengthens the school's vision and values and reflects the Church of England Statement of Entitlement well. The RE plan is based on the Locally Agreed Syllabus, and ensures pupils develop appropriate knowledge of Christianity and other major world faiths. Visits to a mosque, and experiences such as a multi-faith day, enhance pupils' appreciation of the beliefs and customs of faith, guiding them to express respect for world religions. Pupils show a good knowledge of the life of Jesus and Bible stories. Evidence in books, supported by the assessment system, show standards in RE are in line with other subjects in the school. The headteacher has ensured RE maintains a high profile by undertaking training linked to a resource called Understanding Christianity. Leaders and governors have conducted monitoring of RE. However, the systems in place are not thorough enough to understand the full impact RE has on pupils and how aspects could be enhanced.

Headteacher	Jon Gilbert
Inspector's name and number	Susan Costa 902