

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

### St James Church of England Academy

Dorchester Road, Bransholme, Hull HU7 6BD

<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>York</b>
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Date of academy conversion	February 2015
Name of multi-academy trust	SALT Diocese of York Educational Trust
Date of inspection	29 June 2017
Date of last inspection	09 February 2011
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary Academy 141387
Headteacher	Jane Daniels
Inspector's name and number	Lizzie McWhirter 244

#### School context

Currently there are 225 pupils on roll in this school which is smaller than the national average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or who are eligible for free school meals is above the national average. St James became an Academy in February 2015. A new vicar was appointed for St James' Church, Sutton in October 2016. She is also a foundation governor at St James Academy. The headteacher has been in post for ten years and works closely with the principal of the multi-academy trust.

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

- Exceptional pastoral care serves the pupils and their families exceedingly well at their point of need in this welcoming and nurturing Christian family community.
- The excellent partnership between church and school enriches the worshipping life of the St James community where prayer and reflection make a significant difference to the daily life of pupils and adults alike.
- The strong leadership and direction the headteacher gives is supported by the whole community. This is because exemplary relationships are rooted in Christian values of kindness, respect and perseverance, which underpin all school life and practice. As a result, pupils make good progress, given their starting points, and achieve well.

#### Areas to improve

- Embed the programme of visits and visitors to enable pupils to meet people of faith from diverse communities and cultures more frequently to nurture their spiritual and cultural development.
- Embed the good work already achieved in religious education [RE] with more regular book scrutinies and the implementation of new resources to constantly monitor, improve and maintain the quality of teaching and learning in this key subject.

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

St James' Christian foundation is rooted in its core values of kindness, respect and perseverance. These are embodied in exceptional pastoral care, guidance and support for all members of its extended family. Attendance is good, with most pupils making good progress, given their starting points, because of the support which is in place.

For example, the school provides transport when needed to enable pupils to get to school, staff listen to parents and reassure them that their children are being well cared for whilst at school. Vulnerable groups are tracked carefully. Gender outcomes are cohort specific. For example, in Year 6 a number of girls have special educational needs, but boys are achieving very well, whilst in Year 2 the picture is reversed. In Key Stage 1 results were above the national average last year. This is because the school has devised its own way of tracking pupils, with a focus on greater depth. Working closely with the learning mentor as well as drawing upon prayer, and co-operative peer support, with an emphasis on friendship is making a real difference. All pupils leave the school feeling they have not let the school down and are now doing incredibly well. As a result, attendance, especially from older pupils has been a real success story. Pupils are then helped to make the transition to secondary school. Musical and sporting activities enable a wide range of achievement. Some pupils say they aspire to be teachers in the future because of the good role models they see at St James. Excellent relationships, built on trust, result in exemplary behaviour, with the whole school community living the school's values daily.

Worship, circle time and RE all make very good contributions to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural [SMSC] development and to the school's Christian character. For example, links with the Gambia and Sierra Leone and charitable fundraising help pupils' awareness of diverse communities and cultures. A variety of places of worship are visited. For example, Year 6 visit churches in Beverley and Year 5 visit the local synagogue. In addition, Beverley racecourse was enterprisingly used to enrich pupils' SMSC development, as well as their Mathematical skills in measuring the course. In addition, 'Hull a baloo' days are held every six weeks as part of the school's work with Hull as the city of culture. This involves a carousel with pupils learning about different aspects of local history. The school recognises the need to extend the programme of visits and visitors so pupils meet people of faith from diverse communities more frequently to nurture their spiritual and cultural development.

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

Inspiring and inclusive collective worship is a time of reflection, prayer and celebration and an important daily event at St James. Worship involves and engages pupils and staff. This is because the excellent partnership with St James' Church has ensured that prayer and reflection makes a significant difference to daily life. For example, many pupils choose to read the Bible or pray creatively in their class reflection areas at the start of the school day. Pupils in the Year 6 collective worship group meet with staff and visitors who lead worship and regularly reflect and evaluate worship in detail. Such collaboration ensures pupil voice is always listened to and acted upon so worship is always evolving. This results in pupils who delight in talking about collective worship and are 'really excited about church life'. They are proud of the fact that they belong to a Church of England school. The clergy, including their new vicar, are welcome and regular visitors, leading worship and sometimes a learning Eucharist service. They are training up Year 5 pupils as part of their approach to succession planning for worship.

Church/school links are strong, with some pupils being baptised and confirmed. Some pupils met the Archbishop of York on his recent pilgrimage. This helped their awareness of what it means to be part of the diocesan family. School and church worked closely together to celebrate the school's 40th anniversary. The numbers of parents attending worship is high, with some parents saying they find the hymns in church very moving. Pupils say they find worship in church gives them space to reflect and 'be calm' and enables them to understand the Bible more. This makes a difference to both their school work and relationships. For example, pupils reflect on such stories as The Good Samaritan, which encourages them to 'always be kind to everyone'. Acting upon Jesus' teaching in the Bible makes them, they feel, become a better person.

Prayer is an important part of daily life, with pupils knowing and using the school prayer and The Lord's Prayer. A Prayer Spaces Day was held in January 2017. Consequently, pupils use reflection areas in classrooms creatively every day, such as the prayer kite, prayer boat and the prayer wall. Year 5 pupils made a prayer chain in response to recent national terrorist attacks. Pupils say they find these helpful ways in which to pray, 'if we have any worries or want to pray for something'. They cite how teaching on prayer in the Bible helps them to be joyful and thankful for the world God has created.

Pupils say they enjoy 'coming together to all pray to God and thank him for all we have'. This includes caring for God's world. For example, pupils are inspired to make a difference in their community by becoming 'super litter pickers'. They see themselves as stewards of God's creation with his wonderful world in our hands. They know that hymns are 'only one way to talk to God'. They enjoy taking part in worship and leading key aspects as well as providing their own ideas. Anglican tradition and practice is an integral part of the worship the school community experiences. For example, pupils can explain the symbolism of Christingle in great detail, knowing 'God's love has no beginning or end'. They are growing in their understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit by speaking of the Trinity as 'multiple parts of God'. They refer to the Bible which 'mentions three different versions of God'.

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

Standards in RE have improved. They are judged in line with core subjects across the school and achievement is

good. Rigorous planning and assessment ensures continuity and progression. Learning Journeys are used to record pupils' work. Pupils are now asking more questions and thinking at a deeper level, with more independent learning taking place. 'I can' statements are used to provide child friendly learning objectives, with each lesson starting with a learning question. Passport to religions is used in Year 3 so they encounter four major faiths; Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism and Islam.

'Understanding Christianity' has been introduced, and is being trialled in Year 5. This is already making a difference as pupils are now 'asking very deep questions which need answering'. Godly Play is used throughout the school. This range of approaches to teaching and learning ensures that pupils have a good understanding of Christianity. They enjoy RE and it has a high profile in school. RE both excites and challenges pupils and they are engrossed in Bible stories. They can relate the Christian narrative in great detail, especially the birth and boyhood of Jesus and the Christian story of salvation.

The RE subject leader is a professional lead teacher for RE and shares good practice with other schools locally. She is currently working with Heritage Learning to develop a unit of work on RE and the Arts. She benefits from training and support offered by the diocese and by RE advisers and consultants working in Hull and the East Riding.

The school has already identified the need to ensure that book scrutinies take place termly. In addition, the RE subject leader teaches RE in Year 4 and 5 to provide continuity. Pupils say that reflecting and responding to key questions helps them improve in their work. For example, 'What does it mean to be a Muslim and follow the teachings in the Qur'an?' They enjoy meeting people of faith and learned a great deal from a Sikh visitor. The school has already identified building on the good work already achieved to maintain the quality of teaching and learning in RE.

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

Christian values underpin the curriculum and every day school life. This is because the strong leadership of the headteacher has 'created an amazing environment for all'. She understands the needs of individuals which is evident in her excellent relationships with pupils and adults. She is an exceptional leader and an experienced headteacher who helps other schools. She meets monthly with the principal of the Trust, who commends the way she goes above and beyond her role. The school's leaders review their mission statement and aims every year, with a robust self-evaluation system in place. This includes the monitoring of RE. Consequently, both RE and worship are well led, managed and resourced and both meet statutory requirements. Pupils thrive at St James and achieve well, academically and personally, within the nurturing Christian environment. Pupils have the opportunity to participate in citywide events which include musical and sporting activities. The school has addressed all areas from the last inspection and has clear priorities for the future. The school has identified future leaders of church schools and there is an excellent training programme for all. Links with the church are very good, and are enriched by the link with their vicar who is also a foundation governor and who has developed very good links with staff and many of the pupils. Parents are involved with the life of the school, supporting sporting events and worship. Links with the diocese are very supportive, with the school's leaders and governors benefitting from training and advice. The Christian spirit within the school permeates all areas of school life. For example, staff say the school is like an extension of their own family and they are proud to be part of the St James family. They say, 'love abides in this school and this is a place where I feel I belong.' This is true for experienced staff as it is for students on placement who all testify to seeing Christian values in action. This caring and inclusive approach to families ensures they want to support this school. Parents speak highly of the warm and friendly atmosphere where their children 'are loved and not forgotten' when they leave. Their needs and those of their children are met exceedingly well because the wellbeing of the whole community is paramount. In learning together, they support each other on the journey. They praise the good grounding they receive here which stays with them for a lifetime.

SIAMS report June 2017 St James CE Academy, Bransholme, Hull HU7 6BD