



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

St James Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Brook End
Longdon
Rugeley
Staffordshire
WS15 4PL

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Current inspection grade: Good

Diocese: Lichfield

Local authority: Staffordshire

Date of inspection: 9 July 2015

Date of last inspection: July 2010

School's unique reference number: 124260

Headteacher: Claire Shaw

Inspector's name and number: Lizzie McWhirter 244

School context

St James Primary School is smaller than the average primary school with 98 pupils on roll. A high proportion of pupils live outside the village of Longdon. The number of pupils receiving pupil premium funding is below the national average. Almost all pupils are from a White British background. The headteacher has been in post since September 2014. The school enjoys close links with its parish church, which is within walking distance of the school.

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

- The level of pastoral care in this welcoming and nurturing Christian family community ensures all children are encouraged to be the best they can be.
- Very strong and important mutual and substantial links between school, church and village communities are valued by everyone.
- The Christian vision of the headteacher and parish priest-in-charge are embraced by everyone. This ensures the Christian character of the school permeates all school life.

Areas to improve

- Ensure the governing body monitor and evaluate collective worship and religious education [RE] as part of their rigorous monitoring cycle of aspects of Christian distinctiveness.
- Enable pupils to meet people of other faiths by developing the visits and visitors programme to enhance their spiritual and cultural learning.
- Deepen pupils' understanding of The Holy Trinity to extend their understanding of core Christian belief and its worldwide dimension.

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

All children are encouraged to be the best they can be in the welcoming and nurturing Christian family environment which St James Primary School provides. There is a good level of pastoral care which enables positive attitudes amongst its pupils who grow in their self-esteem and confidence. This is much valued by the parent body who appreciate the nurturing relationships which exist across the whole school community. This is because the school's chosen core Christian values of friendship, respect, love, honesty and truthfulness permeate all school life and practice. Attendance is good and exclusions are rare as children want to come to school. Attainment shows a positive and improving picture. This is because honesty and truthfulness are top of the school's agenda when looking at progress and standards. Some children have made good progress and achieved well, given their starting points. Pupils' achievements, both inside and outside school are celebrated weekly to boost morale. The school takes the approach of staff working closely with parents, showing a spirit of respect at all times. A hallmark of St James is the approach taken by the headteacher who visits every class at the start of each day. She asks pupils how they can be successful that day and challenges them to be the best they can be. Every day is seen as a fresh start, which builds self-esteem. Children are taught that the best learning they can do is learn from the mistakes they make. A range of extra-curricular activities, including music and sport, enables a wide range of achievement, which contributes to an exciting learning environment. In addition, regular fundraising ensures pupils learn how to serve as part of their Christian responsibility. A good example was a recent 'fiver challenge' when pupils used their talents to raise money. Pupils enjoy helping to care for the school's environmental garden, which encourages them to look at the beauty around them and see God in creation. The bulbs planted after the Remembrance Day service illustrate this. Pupils show a growing respect for diverse cultures and communities through teaching and learning in RE and experiences in worship. This makes a good contribution to pupils' personal, social and cultural development. Children enjoy RE and can relate well to the Christmas and Easter story. Their knowledge of Ascension, Pentecost, Trinity and St James the Great, after whom their school is named, is less certain. The school has rightly identified the need to extend pupils' understanding of worldwide Anglican tradition and practice. In addition, it recognises the need for children to meet people of other faiths to enhance their learning and support their spiritual and cultural development. Plans for these aspects to develop have yet to be put in place.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Worship at St James involves pupils and engages them because the relationship between church and school is strong and planning is good. As a result of the priest-in-charge's involvement in the life of the school, she is able to offer pastoral care and support and to be a chaplain to the staff. Parents and pupils alike enjoy church worship, with parents saying how worship helps their children to understand and cope in a global environment. Pupils say one of the things they like about church worship is that is '*more like a praying area*'. They enjoy 'Messy Church' and key services throughout the church year such as Easter. Children say they enjoy listening to Bible stories, especially those told by their priest-in-charge, with one pupil saying, '*The Bible makes me feel warm inside*'. A favourite hymn is 'Lord of the Dance', which pupils say reminds them of the life of Jesus. Pupils welcome the idea of a worship council to help gather pupil views on worship. Currently, pupil perceptions are gathered from the classes. Each class has its own prayer and reflection area, which are well used. Older pupils have recently been using worship books to record their own private prayers and thoughts. Pupils are becoming confident in praying their own prayers. Children can articulate the importance of Christian symbols used in worship, such as the cross, fish and dove. However, pupils' understanding of The Holy Trinity is less well developed.

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

Parents, pupils and staff value the supportive partnership between the church and school. Good community links extend beyond the parish church, into the village community. Good examples include volunteers helping with the summer fete, Christmas fair, sports day and Harvest Festival. In addition the pre-school children regularly use the school's resources and get to know the school staff, which help make their transition to school smooth. Parents testify to their children flourishing here, saying the pastoral care is, '*second to none*'. They say they always feel welcome as part of the St James family. They like to see the older children taking on roles of responsibility. In addition to the head boy and girl, older pupils nurture younger pupils. Parents praise the teachers who are '*very approachable*'. They speak highly of the headteacher, relating how their children explain how every day the headteacher '*asks how we are and she really means it*'. RE and worship meet statutory requirements and are well led and managed by the headteacher and a senior teaching assistant. As such, both these key areas enjoy a high profile. All areas from the previous inspection have been addressed, with the school identifying clear priorities for future action. Governors are committed to the wellbeing of pupils and their families. Pupils have a voice through the school council. Governors look closely at data on standards and progress in pupil learning. They use learning walks to evaluate and gather information. Governors plan for, and monitor the development of the school's Christian character, ensuring that Christian principles underpin everything. However, they acknowledge that the monitoring of worship and RE is an immediate priority for action. They support staff professional development and training, in preparation for future school leadership. Staff and governors have benefitted from diocesan training and support. This has had a positive impact on pupils' learning. Weekly newsletters and 'Longdon Life' successfully promote the children's achievements. St James Primary School has begun to work collaboratively with other church schools and community schools in the area as part of a hub, which is an encouraging new development.

SIAMS report July 2015 St James VC Primary School, Longdon, Staffordshire WS14 4PL