

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St James' Church of England Primary School, Wigan	
Address	Tyrer Avenue, Wigan, WN3 5XE

School vision
Luke 1:37 "For with GOD nothing shall be impossible". At St James' Church of England Primary School, children will understand that our strength comes from God. By following in Jesus' footsteps, with spiritual mindsets at the heart of everything we do, we are shaping confident, thoughtful, courageous advocates of the future and growing God's kingdom on Earth. Our vision inspires and challenges the community we serve in Worsley Mesnes to achieve excellence in all they do, and to learn about life in all its fullness, within a welcoming Christian family.
School strengths
• The ambitious and context driven Christian vision lies at the heart of all aspects of school life at St James'. It provides leaders and pupils with a sense of hope and inspiration. Consequently, the school community flourish together. • Collective worship is thought provoking and a practical outworking of the inclusive vision. Strong links with the local church along with opportunities for vibrant community fellowship enrich spiritual flourishing for staff, pupils and families. As a result, the impact of collective worship reaches beyond the school. • Inspired by the idea of life in all its fullness, leaders have designed a curriculum which mirrors the vision. The strong emphasis on equal opportunities or never giving up means that pupils feel equally challenged and supported. This means they develop into resilient learners who are proud to be part of St James'. • Motivated by the aspirational vision, staff offer nourishing support to pupils who face barriers to learning. This creates a sense of equity. Consequently, pupils, including those with special educational needs and / or disabilities (SEND) thrive. • As a result of the vision of growing God's kingdom, pupils demonstrate a mature understanding of ethical issues. Their actions make a positive difference to those in the local community and beyond.
Areas for development
• Embed the whole school approach to spirituality. This is to enhance opportunities for spiritual development for pupils across the wider curriculum. • Monitor the impact of recent changes to the religious education (RE) curriculum. This is to inform leaders about its effectiveness in reflecting the vision of inclusion and equality. • Work alongside the trust and diocese to monitor the impact of the Christian vision across all areas of school life. This is to inform development plans and secure ongoing improvements.

Inspection findings

The highly appropriate Christian vision and associated values provide the cornerstone upon which St James' is built. The school community derives self-belief through the bible quote 'for with God nothing shall be impossible'. This guides leaders in their daily work and provides strength when making more challenging or strategic decisions. The newly formed leadership team understands the needs of the school community exceptionally well. They are compassionate role models who lead with love. Highly effective partnerships between the school, Liverpool Diocesan Schools Trust (LDST) and the diocese provide support. This leads to rapid change and improvements. Ongoing monitoring and self-evaluation in conjunction with LDST is impactful. Leaders accurately identify strengths and next steps to enhance the impact of the vision. They are aspirational for the community they serve and for themselves. Senior leaders support LDST by delivering training on areas of expertise. Therefore, partnerships are mutually beneficial. This enhances flourishing for both adults and pupils.

The vision supports a culture in which pupils achieve their potential. This is reflected in the design of effective learning experiences. Leaders make bold and ethical decisions such as the provision of nurture rooms known as the 'Three Shells'. These spaces offer exceptional provision for pupils with SEND. Reflecting the aspirational vision, highly skilled staff provide bespoke support. Teaching focuses on removing barriers and equipping pupils with the skills they need to return to the mainstream classroom. This affirms the vision of inclusion and equity. Pupils relish learning because teachers challenge and uplift them. Reflecting the vision of life in all its fullness, the school offers a wide range of clubs, visits and visitors. These enrich learning experiences. While leaders have developed a shared approach to spirituality this is in the early stages of development. Consequently, some teachers lack confidence in planning opportunities for spiritual development across the curriculum.

There is a strong emphasis on pastoral care for adults and pupils, including those who are vulnerable or disadvantaged. Staff frequently go above and beyond. For example, providing assistance to vulnerable families throughout the school holidays. Leaders value a range of cultures and customs. Displays in classrooms celebrate the multicultural community. Furthermore, documents translated into a range of languages make them more accessible. Relationships are strong. Staff feel supported in terms of wellbeing and workload. Inspired by the vision, they have high aspirations and value the effective training provided by LDST. Staff feel cared for and supported. Consequently, morale is high and staff turnover low.

Inspiring collective worship has a positive impact on the school community. Leaders plan meticulously for this. They are accurately motivated by the belief that it 'is the glue which holds us together'. Worship is underpinned by biblical teachings. However, links to meaningful real-life experiences ensure it is inclusive. Consequently, adults and pupils participate in and enjoy worship. Pupils demonstrate high levels of respect for one another along with a growing awareness of the unique nature of spirituality. Impressive partnerships with local churches enrich collective worship for the wider community. 'St James' benefits from the support of local clergy who sensitively understand the needs of the diverse school community. Termly sessions, known as 'Vicar on the Box', provide opportunities for communal worship on the playground. Parents of different faiths and those of none describe how this creates a sense of belonging. Staff are offered dedicated time for personal reflection. This deepens understanding about their own spirituality. Pupils recognise the power of prayer and do so spontaneously. All classrooms have reflection areas that are well used. Mirroring the vision of inclusion, a range of holy books are provided. This enables pupils of a variety of faiths to use these spaces.

Pupils actively live out the vision of growing God's kingdom and following in Jesus' footsteps.

Through their study of significant people, they know that a courageous advocate is someone who stands for positive change. Pupils challenge injustice. For example, writing to their MP regarding an increase in knife crime in the local area. Equally, they are empathetic towards the needs of others. This is demonstrated by their support for global charities. Leaders have introduced a new approach to behaviour management based on restorative justice. This reflects the values of respect and forgiveness. Pupil leaders, known as 'PALS', assist their peers at playtime. They help to resolve minor conflicts by displaying the school values of friendship and compassion. Pupils link positive behaviour to the way Jesus lived his life. They eloquently provide examples of how this guides their own actions. Consequently, pupils confidently and thoughtfully reflect on their own behaviour, disagree well and resolve differences. They feel safe and enjoy coming to school. As a result, attendance levels are rising.

The school community values RE and it has a high profile. Leaders, LDST and the diocese provide staff with impactful training. Pupils enjoy the challenge to answer big questions and talk confidently about their own views. They display a good understanding of significant Christian festivals and accurately recall events from the bible. Visits to places of worship help further develop knowledge of a range of world religions and viewpoints. The vision motivates leaders to strive for excellence. With the support of the diocese, they have recently reviewed the RE curriculum. This includes some changes around the world religions which are studied in order to reflect the school community more accurately. These changes are in the early stages. As such, it is difficult to evaluate their impact.

St James' is a place where the needs of the community are paramount. Adults and pupils alike benefit from the aspirational vision. As a result, they thrive together as part of this loving Church school family.

The inspection findings indicate that St James' School is living up to its foundation as a Church school.

Information			
Inspection date	22 April 2024	URN	145107
VC/VA/Academy	Academy	Pupils on roll	238
Diocese	Liverpool		
MAT/Federation	Liverpool Diocesan Schools Trust		
Executive Headteacher	Alison Jackson		
Chair	Joel Thornton and Lynne Ryder		
Inspector	Joanne Hyslop	No.	972