

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

The Academy at St James			
<b>Address</b>	Chelwood Drive, Allerton, Bradford, BD15 7YD		
<b>Date of inspection</b>	27 September 2019	<b>Status of school</b>	Primary Academy inspected as VC. Member of Bradford Diocesan Academies Trust (BDAT)
<b>Diocese</b>	Leeds	<b>URN</b>	<b>143847</b>

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

### School context

The Academy at St James is an average-sized primary school with 314 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage and very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is above national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above national averages. In January 2017, since the previous SIAMS inspection, the school converted to an academy and became a member of the Bradford Diocesan Academies Trust (BDAT). A new headteacher was appointed in January 2017.

### The school's Christian vision

'We aspire to do our best, we can achieve, respect, trust, have courage, forgive and believe as part of God's family and community. We will support everyone to succeed' (Psalm 29, 1 Corinthians 16:14:11 and Joshua 1:8.)

### Key findings

- The leadership team passionately articulates how the school's Christian vision drives the actions of the school, and makes an impact on the life outcomes of pupils, families and the local community.
- Staff care deeply about ensuring that every child is nurtured so that they can achieve their best. All understand this vision to be underpinned by the love that they demonstrate for one another.
- The curriculum has been expressly designed to meet the needs of this community. It raises aspirations in original and imaginative ways so that pupils and families 'expect more' and achieve their best
- Collective worship is warmly invitational and inclusive, inspiring adults and pupils, strengthened by the valuable support of the vicar. Currently there are insufficient opportunities for the pupil worship committee to lead worship.
- Religious education (RE) is taught well across the school; outcomes are improving and pupils overwhelmingly enjoy this subject. However, systems to evaluate the impact of religious education (RE) are not fully embedded.

### Areas for development

- Ensure that pupils deepen their understanding of global issues, enabling them to develop a concern for justice and become articulate advocates for change.
- Continue to develop the use of a prayer and reflection space so that all pupils have an opportunity to explore different ways to worship and extend their roles in planning and leading, harnessing the capabilities of the many articulate youngsters.
- Continue to improve the quality of assessment in RE. This is so that staff are equipped to support the progress of all pupils effectively.

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**

The headteacher, ably assisted by the deputy headteacher, has ensured the school's vision is distinctly Christian. The vision, 'aspire, achieve and believe' has been reviewed and leaders talk confidently about its biblical context. Pupils recognise the spiritual nature of their school and say 'we are one big family'. Inclusion permeates all aspects of school life. One pupil said 'we are all valued, we are all important and unique regardless of our faiths or beliefs'. Through their rigorous challenge, governors monitor the impact of the vision on the whole school community. They question school leaders to ensure that all children, including the most vulnerable, reach their potential.

School leaders have worked tirelessly to ensure the Christian distinctiveness of the school has been maintained following the transition to academy status. The school has flourished as part of BDAT and has a strong partnership with the Diocese of Leeds. It has robust relationships with other schools in the Trust which has mutually benefited pupils and adults with shared training and planning. Senior leaders meet regularly with diocesan advisers, attend training and have a receptive, open attitude to change. This expression of the vision demonstrates the school's commitment to providing a rich and memorable experience for pupils, parents and staff. Leaders are strategic in their thinking and confident in their understanding of current developments in church school education. All recommendations from the previous SIAMS inspection have been addressed.

The vision of the school has been the inspiration for developing the broad and engaging curriculum. The approach of 'aspire, achieve, believe', means that pupils have memorable experiences. Whole school trips, the community picnic and One Britain One Nation day showcased the vision and values of the school. There is a culture of loving learning and both pupils and parents attribute this to the school's vision and high aspirations. Leaders have an in-depth understanding of all pupils' academic and spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) potential. They strive to ensure all pupils achieve their best in all situations. This has resulted in many pupils matching, and sometimes outperforming, the academic achievements and progress of their peers nationally. The school effectively supports and promotes pupils' spiritual development. As a result, pupils know that their viewpoints are valued, but are equally confident if they are challenged. They say all their ideas are valued and that the teachers are very accepting of all pupils' views. A Year 5 pupil said, 'I love this school, I am always really encouraged, and it helps me to feel good about myself'.

Relationships throughout the school and local community are strong at all levels. This results in an environment of acceptance and love for everyone. Pupils demonstrate kindness and compassion for each other. They are keen to raise money for charity, often targeted at concerns with a local focus. The youngest pupils socialise happily with the residents of a local nursing home. Older pupils engage in community action in connection with Café West. This reflects the school's vision to 'to do their best'. Pupils are respectfully accepting of differences in lifestyle, faith and language. They readily express compassion for global problems, epitomised by their concern for children in an orphanage in Tanzania. Therefore, opportunities need to be developed to widen pupils' appreciation of global issues along with ways to support them in turning their concerns into a programme of social action.

The school's vision of developing responsible citizens has a positive impact on the behaviour of the pupils. Leaders have developed a behaviour policy in which the importance of forgiveness and reconciliation is paramount and where each pupil is treated as unique. Parents say that their children know that it is alright to be different, and that pupils have a clear understanding of the expectations for behaviour. Parents also recognise this and speak about the positive impact that these have on the wellbeing of their children. School leaders promote positive attitudes to mental health for staff and pupils. The recent training for staff to become adult and pupil mental health and wellbeing first-aiders demonstrates the school priority and is making a positive contribution. Likewise, the investment in training and status given to the school council and the office junior role, shows the school's commitment to preparing pupils to be active, healthy and responsible citizens of the future.

Being part of the worship committee is a much sought-after position. Helping to choose Bible stories has enabled pupils to really reflect upon the school's Christian vision and values. Pupils, staff and parents speak positively about services held at the church and the worship and fellowship in school. The church-school relations demonstrate the commitment of the school and church to the vision and to the Christian character of the school. As a result, the links between church and school are seamless.

One pupil said, 'we work together, we support the church and the church supports us, we are all one community'. Pupils recognise that they learn through worship and value the time when the school comes together. This typically begins with pupils assembling respectfully and Christian greetings being exchanged. Candles from each class are presented and pupils say a prayer. They also understand how worship impacts on their behaviour, saying that the Holy Spirit 'makes sure you have kind hands and are helpful'. Collective worship is well planned and monitored, which ensures that it is inclusive in its nature. Staff, pupils and parents speak passionately about the worship with the local clergy. Collective worship is based on the teachings of Jesus and pupils are given time to reflect and to think about how they can respond to these. Pupils understand the Christian belief in God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. They understand the importance of prayer and say that they know that God is always with them. One pupil reporting that 'prayer is a meeting with God in your head'. Pupils use the prayer spaces in classrooms and throughout the school. However, these are quite small in some classes and pupils have requested a larger space for them to use for prayer.

The school has prioritised religious education (RE) training for all staff. Strong support from the diocesan curriculum team and using 'Understanding Christianity' has strengthened teachers' knowledge and confidence. Pupils, including the most vulnerable, achieve well and make good progress. The RE leader is passionate about the subject and is well supported in his role. Pupils are engaged and challenged. The inclusive teaching environment means that pupils can reflect, ask questions and share their own beliefs with their peers. This results in pupils recognising the importance of learning about religions and world views. One pupil said, 'people believe different things, we need to know that that's ok, so that we are respectful to everyone'. Pupils are confident when thinking about and discussing big questions in RE. They know their contribution will be recognised which makes them feel valued and respected. Parents also speak about how their children discuss these questions at home and reconcile them with their own beliefs. A new assessment system is being developed with other schools in the MAT.

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