

The Academy at St James

Chelwood Drive, Allerton, Bradford BD15 7YD

Assessment date

25th April 2023

Award type

Bronze

The Academy at St James is situated in Bradford West Yorkshire and is part of the Bradford Diocesan Academy Trust. It has a pupil role of 295 with ages ranging from 2 to 11 years old. It was judged as a 'Good School' by Ofsted in May 2022.

When the Inclusion, Diversity and Equality Consultant, Anthony Peltier, arrived at the school, he was greeted with a warm welcome from the Headteacher and Diversity Lead, Mr Chris Tolson. The school's core values of peace, trust, respect, community, forgiveness, and courage shone through, highlighting the richness of diversity and inclusion present in the school. Mr Tolson proudly shared the school's five ways of being, emphasising on showing care, being confident, contributing to the community, being knowledgeable and being oneself. The school's vibrant and engaging curriculum was apparent through their strong book displays, aligned with the curriculum, where children had an opportunity to read and study a diverse range of books. The children's pride and enthusiasm in their learning experiences were also evident as they led the consultant on a lively and informative tour of the school, sharing examples of the different adults who supports their learning.

Standard 1 Establish a Commitment

The Headteacher and the Senior Leadership Team at St. James School worked tirelessly to cultivate an inclusive environment where every student felt valued and empowered. They fostered an atmosphere of acceptance, respect, and appreciation for one another, recognising that diversity was a strength and equality was a guiding principle. The commitment to this important work was robust and supported by an active board of governors.

The Board of Governors has shown that they are deeply committed to ensuring that the school follows through on its diversity, equality, and inclusion journey. With the strong leadership of Elizabeth Lawley as Chair and Josiah Sulc as Vice Chair and Diversity Link, the school is being held to account for their actions. During a recent meeting, Elizabeth Lawley outlined her scrutiny of CPOMS information, which tracks the school's efforts to support vulnerable pupils. This level of quality assurance ensures that the school is staying true to their commitment to making a positive impact on all pupils. The work of the Board of Governors is not only strong but also vital to the success of the school's diversity, equality, and inclusion journey.

At this school, diversity, equality, and inclusion are highly valued and actively promoted. Teachers are dedicated not only to academic achievement, but also to developing the whole child by fostering important life skills. Becky, the Pastoral Lead for example, emphasises the importance of life skills development for all pupils. The needs of EAL learners are also carefully considered, with well-planned support in place to ensure they receive the attention they need

to succeed. It is clear that the school's efforts to support all learners are paying off, with high levels of parent satisfaction and involvement. This is evidenced by the EAL booklet, which supports parents of newly arrived pupils, and the marked improvement in parental engagement over the past four years. With parent volunteers and governors actively supporting the school, it is clear that teacher efforts are deeply appreciated and highly impactful.

At the Academy at St James, diversity and inclusion are well understood and appreciated by the pupils. In a recent interview, one student perfectly summed it up by saying, "Inclusion means giving every child the same chance." The pupils talked about how they feel included and free to express their unique talents through after-school activities, catch-up lessons, and the school talent show. They also mentioned the unwavering support they receive from adults for their learning and behavioural needs. It is reassuring to hear that the pupils feel safe and supported at school, even if they experience anxiety or anger. The Academy at St James truly cultivates a welcoming and accepting environment where pupils are treasured and valued.

The members of the school council embrace their roles and believe they make a meaningful impact on the school. They enthusiastically shared their experience of culture day, where pupils have the opportunity to wear clothes from their own culture and taste food from different cultures. Kaden summarized it beautifully by saying, "Inclusion means everyone being included in everything we do."

The school has established statutory policies that guide its efforts in promoting diversity, equality, and inclusion. While there is some evidence of continuous professional development, it is limited to just two sessions across two terms for children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). As the school prepares for the silver standard, the next assessment will be looking for an improved CPD offer for staff across the school.

Summary

The assessment recommends the school is awarded the **Diversity Mark Bronze**, for demonstrating how it has established a commitment to inclusion, equality, and diversity. The school should now address any actions and continue working towards **Diversity Mark Silver**, where already they are achieving some of the standards in aspects of their work.