



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

St James Church of England Voluntary Aided Infant and Nursery School

Leonard Street
Derby
DE23 8EG

Previous SIAMS grade: Outstanding

Current inspection grade: Good

Diocese: Derby

Local authority: Derby City

Date of inspection: 6 May 2015

Date of last inspection: June 2010

School's unique reference number: 112915

Acting Executive Headteacher: Gill Zelynskyj

Inspector's name and number: Lizzie McWhirter 244

School context

St James' Infant School is federated with St James' Junior School and Rosehill Community Infant School. The acting executive headteacher has been in post since Easter 2015. The majority of the 124 pupils are from minority ethnic groups. A large majority of pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils receiving support from pupil premium funding is above average. There are good links with the local churches.

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

- This accepting, welcoming and worshipping community is rooted in Christian values. It is a place where children enjoy learning together in love and friendship.
- Dedicated teachers work together as a team to ensure a nurturing environment within a Christian framework. This builds confidence in pupils which helps prepare them for junior school and later life.
- The partnership between the churches and the school is valued by everyone in this richly diverse religious community.

Areas to improve

- Review and embed the monitoring and assessment of religious education [RE]. This informs planning and teaching, which in turn raises the standards of pupils' attainment.
- Ensure the governing body evaluate aspects of Christian distinctiveness on teaching and learning.
- Enable pupils to develop a good understanding of Christianity as a worldwide faith, using parents as experts. This enhances their learning and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural [SMSC] development.

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

This urban infant school values, respects and positively welcomes children and families from a rich variety of cultures and religious backgrounds. It holds its vision of 'the circle of love is you and me' at the heart of everything it does. It enables children to become part of the circle of love and helps them to know and experience God's love for themselves. It provides a very positive learning environment to which its young pupils are proud to belong. This is because the school is a very accepting and worshipping community, rooted in the Christian faith and the school's Christian heritage. The whole school community lives out its chosen core values of love, respect, trust, perseverance, hope and friendship. As a result, attendance has improved and is now good. It is positively rewarded and celebrated weekly. Children come to school with a smile on their faces. Parents are supported with the school opening its doors early and providing engaging and exciting activities for their children as soon as they arrive. Vulnerable children are helped to grow in their self-esteem and cope with life and behave in a more appropriate way. Consequently, they feel valued and belong to the school family as part of the circle of love. All children thrive and succeed in this learning environment. This is because the value of perseverance is fostered. The majority of the children make significant progress in their learning, given their starting points. This is because everyone works hard and the leadership team have been very successful in recognising the help which is needed, such as removing barriers concerned with language issues and using support staff for individual intervention work. More importantly, true to the Christian character of the school, dedicated teachers persevere and work hard to ensure a nurturing environment throughout the school for the children. In addition, pupil progress meetings are attended by all staff, including teaching assistants, when good practice is discussed and shared. Consequently, the needs and wellbeing of the children and their families are being met. St James' pupils leave as well rounded individuals, empowered by their success. Pupils show Christian values in action through their fundraising for diabetes, which is a concern amongst Asian families, many of whom are part of this local community. Pupils show respect for the diverse cultures and beliefs represented in their school and community through worship and RE. These make a strong contribution to the Christian character of the school and to pupils' personal development. Children who come from other countries, such as Poland, have been welcomed into this Christian community. Good examples include Polish parents presenting The Nativity in Polish. However, pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity as a worldwide faith is less well developed. The school recognises the importance of using parents as experts to support pupils' SMSC development.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is engaging, involving pupils and adults. This includes parents, who frequently attend worship. Staff say they enjoy 'time to reflect alongside pupils'. Very good links with the local churches ensure that a team from Ozzy Road Baptist Church lead worship in school every Tuesday. Pupils say they enjoy hearing the stories the team share with them from the Bible. Good examples include the story of Jonah which pupils say 'tells me about what God does and tells you what to do'. In addition, the chaplaincy team from St Augustine's Church have brought prayer spaces to the school, which engaged pupils and parents alike. This led to the setting up of a central reflection area, which has been in place since Easter. It enables children to reflect, to be quiet and talk to God. A range of resources are available, inclusive of all faith backgrounds, supporting pupils' SMSC development. Pupils say 'the circle of love helps us to worship and focus'. Some pupils say their favourite part of worship is 'when we pray because God is important and he helps us all'. They say, 'nobody is better than God as he is the one who protects the world'. They explain Jesus as 'God's Son, who died on the cross and is King of the world'. Children are very involved in class led worship, writing prayers and choosing what they want to celebrate. They are able to make links between worship and their own lives. Good examples include a recent focus on the value of friendship. This was linked with Diwali and other festivals of light, culminating in a collaborative display, using hands of friendship. Pupils say they find worship helpful because 'it helps me reflect about love' and helps me to 'persevere at

home'. Worship has taken place outdoors in the school grounds, led by the chaplaincy team from St Augustine's Church. The children and clergy welcome developing this further, with the possibility of a Forest Church. Pupil and staff surveys on worship are used to provide valuable feedback to ensure the quality and integrity of worship is constantly evolving.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

RE enjoys a high profile and is well led, managed and resourced by the deputy headteacher. Pupils say they enjoy their RE lessons in this school where teaching is good and standards are in line with core subjects. RE makes a good contribution to pupils' SMSC development. Pupils speak with equal respect about the Bible and the Qur'an. Pupils can relate the Christian story and show good knowledge especially of the Christmas and Easter story. They speak of 'Jesus going to his father in heaven'. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are beginning to research Bible stories they have not yet met for themselves. Pupils ask important questions, such as 'Do you go to heaven when you die?' They say they would like to visit more places of worship. Tracking of pupils' progress is in place. Pupils know how to improve in their work and the 'next steps about things we don't know and what to do'. However, the school acknowledges the need to review and embed the monitoring and assessment of RE throughout the school to inform planning and progress, and raise attainment over time.

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

The schools' shared vision is one of strength through collaboration within the federation. Leadership is very strong and well supported by governors. Parents praise the fact that their children's needs are met very well and they know their children are safe. They speak highly of the teachers who are 'really dedicated to the children'. They go on to say how important this is as this is their first school, just the beginning, but the most important start in life. Parents also praise the fact that children with learning difficulties are integrated with staff who help and understand. Consequently, children succeed and achieve well in this environment where the wellbeing of all is important. Governors show a very good understanding of the school and work hard in the role of critical friends. Areas from the last inspection have been addressed, showing how the school has moved on, with clear priorities identified for future action. Governors recognise the importance of values underpinning curriculum development and what makes St James' Infants different. Evaluation is informal at present. However, governors recognise the importance of evaluating aspects of Christian distinctiveness. RE and worship meet statutory requirements well. This is because the headteacher and deputy headteacher work seamlessly together. Whilst both are relatively new in post, they bring their wealth of expertise in church schools and in RE in particular to this school. This is valued by all staff and governors. The chaplaincy team support staff in school. Staff take on many roles and responsibilities and benefit from the training and support given by the diocese. Community links are strong. Good examples include the Food Festival, Eid parties and children baking biscuits for the homeless who drop in to Ozzy Road Church. In all these ways the school works hard and is committed to serving St James' children and their families.

SIAMS report St James VA Infant, Derby