



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

East Crompton St James' Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

St James Street

Shaw

Oldham

OL2 7TD

Previous SIAMS grade: Satisfactory

Current inspection grade: Good

Diocese: Manchester

Local authority: Oldham

Dates of inspection: 8 June 2016

Date of last inspection: March 2013

School's unique reference number: 105710

Headteacher: Adam Laskey

Inspector's name and number: Robert Haigh 660

School context

St James' is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The large majority of pupils are White British. The proportion known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is slightly below the national average. The proportion with special educational needs or disability is below average. In July 2015 the school formed the Dove Shell Federation with St Thomas' Moorside Church of England Primary School. Each has a head of school with a shared executive head and a joint governing body.

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

- Strong Christian leadership ensures that the school's loving Christian ethos contributes significantly to children's well-being, personal development and academic achievement.
- Relationships at all levels are informed by Christian values and guarantee a high level of pastoral care and support for all members of the school community.
- The school's approach to prayer, reflection and learning nurtures children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development enabling them to become increasingly confident, spiritually aware and resilient learners.
- The flourishing link with St James' church nourishes the school's Christian character.

Areas to improve

- Ensure the core values are securely embedded so all children understand them and can explain their distinctively Christian basis and characteristics.
- Develop children's participation in planning, leading and evaluating worship to give them greater ownership and deepen their spiritual understanding.
- Enhance the governing body's role in the planning, monitoring, review and evaluation of church school development priorities so they remain a key feature of the school's agenda.

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

Enthusiasm for learning and a desire that each child experiences the love of Christ are at the heart of this improving school. Its mission statement, 'Nurturing hearts and minds to love Jesus, love others and achieve our best' is lived out daily. The recently-introduced 12 Christian values, including compassion, respect, trust and kindness are becoming the language of the school. They are shaping daily life and relationships and creating a secure, harmonious environment enabling children and staff to give their best. Children are caring and respectful. A Year 5 boy said, 'We try to put our values into practice every day'. Not all, however, are able to speak confidently about the distinctively Christian nature of the values. Staff are seen as Christian role models. They demonstrate their commitment to the mission statement by supporting all children to achieve, whatever their circumstances. Children respond with politeness, good behaviour and a zest for learning. The caring Christian ethos ensures that children feel safe and valued. The good quality of teaching enabled KS2 progress and attainment to exceed national figures in 2015. This was also the case in KS1, apart from in mathematics. Staff diligently support those for whom learning is difficult and the disadvantaged. As a result, the progress of children with special needs is above average. Those for whom the school receives extra funding are progressing in line with others. The school's Christian ethos, clear expectations and liaison with families encourages children's good attendance and behaviour for learning. Children's SMSC development is promoted strongly. Interactive biblical and values displays and Christian symbols prompt children's spiritual awareness. They show a prayerful concern for global issues and a strong moral and social conscience. Their many school-based roles enhance their social skills. Children grow in their understanding of cultural diversity through the links with multi-faith partner schools and centres of worship. The school council leads much charity fund-raising, sometimes explaining it as an expression of Christian service. Religious Education (RE) makes a strong contribution to the school's Christian character. It helps children understand Christian belief and practice, appreciate Christianity as a global faith and value religious diversity.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Worship contributes strongly to children's spiritual development. It is inclusive and valued. Worship enables children to discover the relevance of faith and express its meaning in their lives. They speak with confidence about the inspiration they draw from it. A Year 5 boy stated, 'Worship boosts our faith and brings us nearer to God'. Worship includes classroom and larger school gatherings and church services for the Eucharist and Christian festivals. These occasions enable children to appreciate different expressions of Christian belief and thereby grow in their understanding of faith. Christian values, the life of Jesus, Bible stories and the church calendar feature in worship to give children a secure understanding of Christian teaching. Children are able to speak about their understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit which is enhanced by the use of the symbols of the Bible, cross and candle flame and in worship songs and prayers. Choral and instrumental music is prominent and inspires children to sing joyfully. They join in Anglican prayers and responses, including the Lord's Prayer. Children value opportunities for prayer and reflection which they say increase their sense of God's presence. They have a high regard for their classroom worship areas. Here they write their own prayers and 'holy poems' or pray quietly. In the words of a Year 6 girl, 'Prayer helps us to grow in faith and look at things through the eyes of Jesus'. A Reception boy affirmed, 'Prayer helps us get more strength from God so we can make the world shine'. The planning, leadership and evaluation of worship is mainly an adult responsibility, providing too few opportunities for children to contribute. The involvement of the clergy is highly valued and enables children to understand different styles of worship and strengthens the

school's partnership with the church. Children also appreciate it when other faiths are included in worship planning. This increases their awareness of key similarities and differences.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

RE is a popular subject and makes a strong contribution to children's spiritual and moral development. Attainment is good in respect of school and national standards. The recently-introduced Diocese of Manchester syllabus has a good balance between learning about religion and opportunities for children to reflect on what their learning has meant for them. Both strands are being utilised effectively. Thus, children have a confidence with religious vocabulary and know Bible teachings. They relate Christian belief and principles to their own experience and to the lives of others. They show an understanding of other world religions. Children make good progress, as evidenced in floor books, written work and in oral responses to the creative and challenging teaching. The subject is well led. The federation and school RE leaders' expertise, vision for the role of RE in a church school and monitoring of planning and teaching, enhances children's learning. The development of best practice and the sharing of resources with colleagues across the federation means the quality of teaching is good. Specialist subject knowledge, well-focused teaching strategies, effective questioning, creative use of media and trips to places of worship all contribute to children's learning. Recording, marking, assessment and tracking processes are not yet sufficiently rigorous and consistent. Steps are being taken to address this. RE lessons contain opportunities for independent enquiry and group discussion. Children ask searching questions about issues of ultimate concern and value exploring spiritual and ethical issues. This improves their ability to question, listen, analyse and reflect.

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

The Christian vision and dynamic leadership of the executive head and head of school are strong. Their desire that the children realise their God-given potential is shared by governors and staff and motivates them to do their very best. The impact of their Christian leadership and management is also seen in improved academic outcomes. RE and collective worship are well-resourced and given a high profile. Provision in both areas meets requirements. The school knows itself increasingly well. Self-evaluation is becoming more robust and insightful and informs planning. Christian values are referred to in key policies. They are also woven through the exciting curriculum to enhance the spiritual dimension of learning. Priorities for church school development appear in the school improvement plan. Governors provide challenge to enhance the focus on standards. They are proud of the school and excited by the opportunities the federation is offering for collaboration. Although ambitious to sustain the school's Christian character, their strategic role in church school improvement is not yet fully developed. Issues from the last inspection have been addressed successfully. The school values diocesan and local authority support which improves the abilities of governors, leaders and teachers in enhancing the school's effectiveness. Local links are strong. The relationship with the parish is mutually beneficial. The pastoral ministry of the clergy is valued by adults and children alike. The connections with local groups, faith centres, including Manchester Cathedral, and partner schools are highly effective. They enhance children's skills and the school's community role whilst facilitating the professional development of staff. The school knows its children and their families well and meets individual needs through a culture of Christian nurturing. Parents endorse the school's success in developing well-motivated and considerate children. They say their children's happiness is rooted in the school's Christian ethos which they see as being at the heart of its daily life.

SIAMS report June 2016 East Crompton St James' C of E Primary School, Shaw, Oldham OL2 7TD