

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

West Didsbury Church of England Primary School

Address	Central Road, West Didsbury, M20 4ZA		
Date of inspection	22 November 2018	Status of school	St James and Emmanuel Academy Trust
Diocese	Manchester	URN	141967

Overall Judgement	Grade	Excellent
How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?		
Additional Judgements		
The impact of collective worship	Grade	Excellent
The effectiveness of religious education (RE)	Grade	Good

School context

West Didsbury is a primary school with 222 pupils on roll. It is a Free School founded three years ago. It currently takes pupils up to and including Year 3. It is one of three schools that make up the St James and Emmanuel Academy Trust. The school has a high level of religious and cultural diversity with many pupils speaking English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is below the national average as is the proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Attendance is high at 97.9%.

The school's Christian vision

The school's intention, and that of the Trust to which it belongs, is to grow a diverse and creative educational community, encouraging belonging, nurturing believing and together becoming responsible members of God's world. - Mark 4: 30-32

Key findings

- The Christian vision permeates every aspect of the school's daily life. It is understood and articulated by all members of the school community. Together with core Christian values, the school's vision ensures that everyone grows and flourishes in a loving and caring community.
- All members of the school community are treated with Christian dignity and respect. The nurturing ethos ensures that every individual feels safe and valued as a unique child of God. There are excellent relationships across the school and pupils' attitudes are highly positive. Consequently, behaviour is outstanding.
- The outstanding Christian leadership of the executive headteacher and head of school, with excellent support from staff and governors, demonstrates the clear Christian vision.
- Collective worship and religious education (RE) contribute significantly in promoting distinctive Christian values and significantly deepen pupils' spirituality.
- Extremely strong and mutually beneficial links with the parish church and church family make significant contribution to the school's distinctive Christian character and to pupils' spiritual development.

Areas for development

- Develop the role of the school council to enable its members to become more involved in enriching the school's Christian ethos. Involve them in the evaluation of worship, so that their ideas and thoughts can be shared and discussed to further enrich the experience of worship.
- To raise standards in RE further by ensuring that more teaching over time is of the quality of that of the best.

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 school's very clear Christian vision is rooted in the community and has developed from the church's vision of creating a Free School to meet the needs of the locality. It promotes a family where everyone is cherished and challenged to achieve everything they can, creating a living and thriving community. As this vision underpins everything that the school does, it is reviewed regularly. A community magazine produced by the Trust and distributed widely to parents and the community demonstrates the strength of the commitment by all. 'Three schools, one ethos. A family where everyone is challenged to achieve everything they can.' Staff, pupils and parents believe in the school because everyone belongs and feels a part of the ethos. The school's admission arrangements ensure that all are welcome. This can be seen in the provision the school makes for the diverse needs of individual pupils. The executive headteacher and the head of school demonstrate inspirational Christian leadership that ensures senior leaders and staff understand current practice in church school education. Priority is given to the development of collective worship and RE. The school has a strong link with Manchester Diocese which ensures appropriate professional development support as the school lives out its Christian vision. The head of school has recently completed the Christian Leadership course, which has further inspired her.

The local governing body is made up of people with a range of skills who are passionate about the school and community. They demonstrate a high level of commitment and purpose. They and the Trust Board are fully involved in the strategic monitoring of the school's work, demonstrating a high level of commitment and purpose. They are proud of what the school has become and have a clear five-year action plan which demonstrates next steps of development. The local governing body and Trust Board are actively involved in school self-evaluation. They support and challenge robustly in all areas of school improvement. The local governing body have regular involvement in the school's life and work through their visits, learning walks and conversations with pupils. They also receive detailed information from the headteacher. There are extremely strong, tightly interwoven links with the clergy team and the church family. These enhance learning and provide spiritual opportunities for the pupils as well as ensuring that church members are aware of and involved in the school's Christian development.

The Christian vision shapes the way decisions are made regarding the curriculum and extended learning. Staff ensure that enquiry is at the forefront of lessons, providing opportunities for deep and meaningful discussion so that spiritual development is fundamental to their teaching. As a result, pupils express their ideas and opinions with confidence and age-related maturity. Pupils' excitement about learning and school life is reflected in their outstanding attendance. Provision for those with additional learning or personal needs and those who are vulnerable is exceptional. It is rooted in Christian love and understanding and seen as, 'Nurturing God's plan for these pupils so that they can go on to achieve wonderful things.' Recent data shows that outcomes for all pupils are at least good with disadvantaged pupils and those who speak English as an additional language making outstanding progress from their starting points. Parents speak highly of the school's commitment to supporting families and meeting the learning and emotional needs of their children.

The school's Christian vision supports the character and moral development of pupils extremely well and allows them to flourish in all areas of learning. The wide range of opportunities the school offers strengthens pupils' aspirations and self-esteem. The Christian vision also gives high priority to wellbeing for everyone. Staff and parents agree that children are happy at school and as one member of staff stated, 'A sad brain isn't open to learning.' Mental health is also promoted as an integral part of each person's wellbeing. Parents feel welcome and included. This was summed up by one parent who said, 'Everyone is supported through the Christian ethos and values that are instilled in our children and which are reinforced each day.' There is respect for all religions without prejudice and all faiths are valued. Everyone is treated as an individual. One pupil explained this by saying, 'People are just people, they aren't different.' The Sex and Relationships curriculum and Personal, Social, Health Education and Citizenship programme, promote high self-esteem and emotional wellbeing. They help pupils to form and maintain worthwhile and satisfying relationships, based on respect for themselves and for others, at home, school and in the community. The whole school family demonstrates Christian compassion and concern for justice in local, national and global settings. They support a number of charities and pupils' involvement leads to a deeper understanding of poverty, disadvantage and deprivation. Pupils in the school know how important it is to care for God's world. They talked during the inspection about the support the school has given in providing water pumps in Uganda through the initiative 'No Barriers'. Staff and parents also support the Boaz night shelter at the church.

Pupils' behaviour is excellent and relationships between all members of the school community are extremely supportive based on forgiveness and reconciliation. Their behaviour is strongly influenced by the Christian vision, which is the foundation of school policy. Pupils know they can express their worries and anxieties and be listened to. As a result, the supportive and respectful harmony of the school community is impressive and welcoming. Parents report that there are excellent relationships between staff and pupils, confirming that the school is an inclusive community, based on the Christian vision, where all feel cared for and supported. Pupils feel safe, valued and understand the impact of their behaviour on others. Staff speak of the many ways they feel supported and valued, attributing this to the culture of the school's distinctive Christian ethos. The positive approach to equality and valuing difference means that everyone in the school family is treated with dignity and respect. As one member of staff stated. 'We are not just work colleagues but a well supported family.'

Great emphasis is placed upon worship being at the heart of school life where it effectively underpins and extends the school's well-embedded Christian vision and values. Planning is rooted in biblical teaching, the life of Jesus and Christian festivals and seasons. The school has worked hard to promote an understanding of the Holy Trinity and pupils have an age-appropriate appreciation of the Christian belief in God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Pupils enjoy worship and participate enthusiastically whilst maintaining a due sense of reverence. One child said, 'I imagine that God is talking and it makes me feel safe.' The clergy team regularly lead worship in school, strengthening the bond between church and school. Staff also actively lead worship in a variety of different settings. Pupils are involved in planning class led worship as well as at specific times during the year when the school shares in church events with parents and members of the local community. All of these experiences effectively underpin and extend the school's deeply embedded Christian vision. Worship places great emphasis on encouraging pupils to explore the Christian faith as well as providing an understanding of the beliefs and practices of other world faiths. As a result, pupils are prepared well for life in British society. Pupils know and use traditional prayers and responses. They understand the value and importance of prayer. As one group of pupils said, 'We pray about something so that we can make the right choice.' Reflection areas around the building offer a place for stillness and contemplation. Whilst the outdoor area and Forest School provision supports pupil spiritual development, the school also plans to create an outdoor reflection area in the school grounds where pupils can quietly think or pray. There are effective procedures in place to monitor and evaluate the impact of worship, however it is recognised that pupils need to be involved in this evaluation process.

RE provision strengthens the school's core values and vision and reflects the Church of England Statement of Entitlement. The RE leader ensures that the subject maintains a high profile and stimulates pupils' interest and enjoyment. He provides support to staff and monitors the subject well so that pupils benefit from stimulating learning.



The effectiveness of RE is Good

Teaching of RE is good. It draws upon pupils' own experiences and creates a safe space where they explore their own and others' religious beliefs. In lessons observed on the day of the inspection pupils were involved in enquiry based learning, sharing and discussing their own thoughts and ideas. Pupils spoken to during the inspection said that they enjoy answering 'Big Questions,' which challenge them to think deeply. Standards in RE are good and in line with those of other subjects. There is an effective assessment system in place. Pupils, including the most able and those with SEND, make at least good progress. To raise standards further, more teaching over time needs to be outstanding.

Executive Headteacher
Head of school

Matt Whitehead
Hannah Large

Inspector's name and number

Stephen Burrow Number: 622