

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St James' Church of England Junior School

Vision

Care, share and respect

'For with God nothing shall be impossible.' (Luke 1:37)

St James' Church of England Junior School is living up to its foundation as a Church school and is enabling pupils and adults to flourish. It has the following notable strengths.

Strengths

- St James' Christian vision and values are at the heart of what the school does. Leaders' passion for improvement enables pupils and adults to develop and grow.
- Positive relationships enable a culture of nurture, care and support to be practised daily. There is a strong sense of belonging to what is seen as St James' school family. Consequently, pupils and adults are loved and valued as the unique person they are.
- Collective worship plays an important part in each school day. It is invitational and inclusive, allowing pupils and adults opportunity to participate in moments of reflection and spiritual development.
- The well-planned and adapted whole school curriculum meets pupils' needs. Therefore, pupils are encouraged to make progress, developing their knowledge, skills and understanding.
- Extensive enrichment opportunities celebrate and support pupils' gifts and needs. These experiences equip pupils for the future, adding depth to their curriculum learning.

Development Points

- Enrich pupils' understanding of the school's language of spirituality. This is so they can articulate how moments of reflection and prayer impact on their own lives.
- Widen pupils' knowledge of injustice and inequality. This is to support them in appreciating how their own actions can affect the wider world.
- Embed the newly implemented religious education (RE) curriculum, further deepening pupils' knowledge and understanding of religions and worldviews.



Inspection Findings

St James' Church of England Junior School has a happy, warm and welcoming atmosphere. The Christian vision of 'care, share and respect' is a lived-out reality in the life of the school. This is firmly rooted in the Bible verse 'For with God nothing shall be impossible.' School leaders use the shared vision to drive important decisions, enabling pupils and adults to have high aspirations. It has been developed in response to the specific needs of their local area. Over time, the school has developed strong links with local churches, the diocese and wider community groups. These relationships have enabled St James' to become what many rightly describe as a 'pillar of the community.' Governors support leaders in making important strategic decisions based on the Christian vision and values. There is clear evidence these decisions support pupils' development, as well as improving staff mental health and wellbeing. Effective governor questioning leads to striving for improvement across the life of school.

The school's curriculum is challenging and aspirational. Pupils are excited about learning and they are passionate about developing their knowledge, skills and understanding. Leaders are aware of the importance of adapting the curriculum to best meet pupils' needs. Consequently, pupils, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), achieve and make progress. A knowledge-rich, experience-led curriculum offers pupils the skills for later life. Staff recognise moments for spiritual development and pupils are encouraged to make the most of these opportunities. The effective support and intervention programmes give pupils a sense of self-worth and success. Staff benefit from extensive training which positively enhances the development of the curriculum. Significant enrichment opportunities have been carefully planned to ensure pupils receive a broad and balanced learning experience.

Collective worship is well-planned, clearly sequenced and consistently evaluated. Leaders regularly revisit and review worship to help make it relevant and accessible for pupils and adults. Worship is inclusive and invitational. It provides opportunities for spiritual development through prayer and reflection in a supportive environment. The shared idea of coming together as one school family is important at St James'. The daily act of worship for pupils and adults is whole school or class-based. Additionally, leaders have consciously decided to begin and end the week with whole school worship. It is evident that pupils and adults appreciate these opportunities to explore their own spirituality. A wide variety of Christian traditions are celebrated, adding depth of experience for pupils. Leaders are embedding the shared language of spirituality of 'windows, mirrors, doors'. This is helping pupils and adults talk about their individual spiritual journey.

Leaders have purposely created a culture of care and support where both adults and pupils are treated well. This is directly driven by the school's Christian vision and values. The school's decisions are made to help pupils grow, develop and thrive. Staff ensure pupils in their care do not only learn in lessons. The teachings of Jesus are lived out in school by meeting the needs of the whole person. This enables pupils to thrive, be safe and be happy. Parents and pupils are extremely grateful for the nurturing support school offers. It makes them feel valued, appreciated and accepted. The welcoming atmosphere stems from the values of 'care, share and respect'. Carefully agreed training opportunities for staff development are widely available, allowing staff to grow both personally and professionally. Leaders recognise the challenges of working in a busy school. Consequently, a determined effort to reduce staff workload supports adults' mental health and wellbeing.



The school's Christian vision helps pupils understand justice and personal responsibility. They are aware of what it means to be a good friend and how their own actions might affect others. There is a mutual respect in school, with a clear sense of treating others how you would like to be treated. A number of pupil-led groups in school have made a positive impact on daily life. For example, the eco team helps pupils understand the importance of looking after the environment. This enables them to be aware of climate issues and to be actively involved in caring for God's creation. A number of pupils have also visited a local Dementia Café. This experience has inspired them to make an impact in the lives of local people in their community. It is a natural outworking of the school's Christian values, committed to educating pupils to show dignity and hope. Pupils take part in projects such as the Mini Police. This encourages them to be responsible citizens and effective agents of change in their locality. School leaders are beginning to identify further opportunities for pupils to understand the difference they can make in the wider world.

RE holds a central place in the school's curriculum offer. The recently adopted RE curriculum is now in place. Progression, depth of knowledge and skills are built into the curriculum. However, the extent to which the curriculum enhances pupils' understanding of faiths and other worldviews is at an early stage. Through rigorous monitoring and evaluation, there is greater consistency in planning and delivery. This provides an improved continuity in the teaching of RE. The new curriculum develops staff subject knowledge so this enables confident delivery of more challenging content. Effective monitoring of RE this academic year is already demonstrating subject improvement. Planned visits that have taken place and visitors into school effectively enhance the RE curriculum.

Pupils enjoy the learning opportunities provided in RE lessons. The diversity of activities helps to stimulate and focus pupils' discussion when considering deep and challenging questions. Pupils are able to talk about world faiths with some understanding of people and beliefs. When learning about wider worldviews, there is a culture of welcome, respect and acceptance. Consequently, pupils understand and apply the importance of accepting diversity and difference in their own community. Regular assessment opportunities are built into the new RE curriculum, giving staff a clearer picture of pupils' understanding. Pupils are encouraged to use self-assessment which helps them recognise their own learning. In RE lessons, pupils rely on and appreciate what are known as 'pause points'. They are used to reflect on what they have learnt.

Information

Address	Blake Street, Barrow in Furness, Cumbria, LA14 1NY		
Date	16 June 2026	URN	112362
Type of school	Voluntary aided	No. of pupils	119
Diocese and Methodist District	Carlisle		
Headteacher	Jacqueline Rushton		
Chair of Governors	Sarah Heywood		
Inspector	Andrew Kay		