

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St James' Church of England Infant and Nursery School

Vision

Teach children to choose the right path, and when they are older, they will remain upon it. Proverbs 22:6

St James' Church of England Infant and Nursery 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.

Notable Strengths

- The Christian vision and associated values are deeply embedded, clearly articulated and consistently lived out by pupils and adults. They shape decision-making, provision and loving relationships.
- The curriculum is designed to be rich and inclusive. It builds strong foundations enabling pupils to thrive personally, socially, emotionally and spiritually.
- Collective worship is central to the life of the school and is a valued part of its daily rhythm. Drawing pupils and adults together through prayer, reflection, music and celebration, it contributes significantly to belonging and spiritual flourishing.
- A strong culture of care ensures that pupils, families and staff are known, valued and supported. This creates a welcoming and inclusive school community.
- Spirituality is threaded through daily school life, with space to reflect on values and beliefs. It gives pupils and adults regular opportunities to reflect on themselves, others and the wider world.

Development Points

- Create deeper opportunities in the RE curriculum for pupils to learn about world religions and non-religious worldviews. This is so that pupils can gain a secure understanding of religions and non-religious views, informing their own viewpoints.
- Strengthen opportunities for pupils to share ideas, make choices and take action that prioritise the needs of others in school. This is so that pupils develop a deeper understanding of fairness and responsibility and are able to make a positive difference within the school community.



Inspection Findings

Vision and Leadership

Leaders and governors use the Christian vision to shape the school's direction and priorities. 'Choose the right path' places pupils and families at the centre and is lived through warm, loving relationships. Adults know pupils and families well and respond with care and ambition. Leaders' decisions reflect a clear understanding of local need; the nursery provision is a purposeful example. It strengthens early relationships and supports families from the start, building belonging, confidence and readiness for school. Leaders look outward and value partnership beyond the school. Productive diocesan links strengthen Church school leadership, RE and collective worship. Church and community partnerships broaden pupils' understanding of service, responsibility and care for others. Governors share the vision and use it to shape strategic thinking. Evaluation is used well to understand what works and what needs improvement, with evidence considered carefully before planning further development. At St James', the vision gives meaning to 'choose the right path in decisions, relationships and daily life.

Vision and Curriculum

The curriculum reflects the vision through ambitious, learning opportunities connected to real world contexts. Pupils successfully build knowledge, skills and deeper understanding over time. Leaders use the vision to shape curriculum choices meeting the school's context. They have developed powerful partnerships enhancing, science, technology, engineering, the arts and mathematics. This provides rich opportunities that can link learning to the world around them. Shaped by the vision, the curriculum provides meaningful experiences that respond to pupils' starting points and life experiences. Diversity is actively promoted through curriculum content and resourcing, such as carefully chosen reading books. This fosters respect and develops pupils' understanding of acceptance, inclusion and equity. Learning is adapted so that pupils can access the curriculum with confidence and dignity. This includes pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and pupils who require additional support. Spirituality is woven through the curriculum. Guided by an understanding that it is an established part of school life. Pupils are given opportunities, for example, in art lessons and outdoor learning, to reflect on and ask important questions. They explore their thoughts, feelings, relationships and responses to the world around them. The curriculum provides opportunity to broaden thinking, strengthen confidence and encourage curiosity. This brings learning to life, helping pupils 'remain on the path'.

Worship and Spirituality

Collective worship is central to school life and clearly expresses the vision. Rooted in Christian values, it engages pupils and adults in familiar and accessible ways, helping them connect meaningfully with themes that relate to everyday life. It is invitational because pupils and adults are encouraged to participate, including shared time for prayer, stillness and reflection. Worship draws on biblical teaching, values and special times in the Christian calendar. The language of 'ows, wows and nows' help the community talk about spiritual experience, providing shared ways to notice, wonder and act in daily life. Biblical teaching connects with friendship, kindness and responsibility. Pupils explain that living the values 'helps you be a better person'. This supports spiritual flourishing by linking encounters with faith, choices and relationships. Worship is enhanced by the mutually beneficial relationship with the local church. Clergy and church members positively and generously support worship, wellbeing and community events where all are welcome. Leaders review worship, seeking pupils and adults' responses to understand its impact. This helps worship remain relevant, participatory and rooted in context. As a result, it strengthens belonging, leads to spiritual flourishing and helps the community live well together.

Vision, Justice and Responsibility

The Christian vision nurtures a culture of justice, responsibility and care. Pupils learn about these through worship, the curriculum, relationships and play. They link the vision with doing good, treating others well and



seeking help when someone is worried, hurt or treated unfairly. This leads to trusting relationships helping pupils to practise kindness, forgiveness and care for others. Pupils growing awareness of global issues and their understanding of sustainability and care for creation is developed through discussing world events and taking part in outdoor learning. Pupils develop awareness of global issues through discussion of world events. Outdoor learning strengthens their understanding of sustainability and care for creation. Pupils, supported by adults, take age-appropriate action. This includes working to protect habitats, reduce plastic pollution and care for the local area. They contribute through charitable activity, community events, worship responsibilities and the school council. These experiences help them recognise unfairness, consider the needs of others and see that they can make a positive difference. However, adults take the lead on these initiatives. Pupils are ready to take greater responsibility, but there are limited opportunities for them to influence decisions and shape action themselves.

Religious Education

RE is led with enthusiasm and careful consideration for the way that it addresses the school's context and the needs of pupils. Subject leadership benefits from diocesan training and local RE networks. Leaders gather evidence through monitoring activities, including pupils' views and RE assessment checkpoints. This helps them understand the curriculum's effectiveness, enabling support for colleagues to be up to date and relevant. Leaders, including governors, check that RE meets Church of England expectations and they make informed decisions about subject development. The RE curriculum ensures that Christianity remains central. Greater opportunities have been introduced for pupils to learn about different religions and non-religious worldviews, although this remains underdeveloped. Wider experiences include visits to places of worship and hearing from people of faiths. The curriculum promotes enquiry questions that guide investigation, critical thinking and research. This helps pupils explore what people believe, how they live and their practices.

Vision and School Culture

'Choosing the right path' at St James' is creating a culture of dignity and care. When additional support is necessary, there is a flexible response because people and families are well known. Staff work respectfully with families, taking time to understand their circumstances and offer support that is practical and personal. Staff rightly describe a 'loving, family-like culture where people are noticed and valued'. This creates a strong sense of belonging. Difference is accepted, and adults and pupils are encouraged and supported to thrive. Wellbeing is carefully planned to be practical and relational. Leaders prioritise staff time, career development and manageable workload, alongside formal and informal mental health and wellbeing support. High staff retention and positive morale reflect this. As a result, adults flourish and say that 'people want to work here.' Pupils benefit from a wide pastoral offer, including targeted emotional support. This is strengthened by appropriate external expertise, including from the local church. Carefully planned outdoor learning, including a whole school approach to outdoor play, strengthens relationships, independence and confidence. Understanding pupils' needs enables leaders to remove barriers to their learning and guide them to make thoughtful choices. As a result, pupils have positive attitudes, attend well and value being part of the school. They are included and feel loved.

Information

Address	High Street Whitehaven, Cumbria. CA28 7PZ		
Date	18 June 2026	URN	112297
Type of school	Voluntary Controlled	No. of pupils	98
Diocese	Carlisle		
Headteacher	Alex Moore		
Chair of Governors	Katie Kinrade		
Inspector	Paul Bowlas		