

St. James Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Hillside Avenue
Farnworth
Bolton
BL4 9QB

Diocese:

Manchester

Local authority:

Bolton

Date of inspection:

15th March 2012

Date of last inspection:

1st October 2008

School's unique reference number:

105208

Acting Headteacher:

Mr. J. Bonner

Inspector's name and number:

Mr. Philip Massey 649

School context

St. James' is a larger than average sized voluntary controlled primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is well above the national average as is the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The majority of pupils reside in the local council housing estate and the school experiences high levels of pupil mobility.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St. James CE Primary School as a Church of England school are good

St. James' is an inclusive church school that reflects its Christian foundation extremely well. The school displays a loving and affirming character which supports the spiritual development of the children and ensures that the school stands out like an oasis in a very needy area.

Established strengths

- a very strong Christian ethos that successfully permeates throughout the school and which helps to raise the self-esteem of all pupils.
- a whole staff team who together are dedicated to the Christian nurturing of each individual child.
- the leadership and commitment of the acting headteacher who is ably supported by a talented and committed staff.

Focus for development

- establish ways to involve pupils more in the planning and delivery of worship.
- develop effective ways of monitoring and evaluating the impact of collective worship on the school community.

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

Christian values, clearly demonstrated in relationships, care for others and personal responsibility, have a positive impact on all members of the school community at St James'. Parents and carers are happy with the school and feel that the level of care and support for their children is "fantastic". They recognise how well the teachers and support staff work effectively as a team to nurture well-rounded, mature young people. The school actively raises the self-esteem of all pupils and, as a result, they develop self-confidence and demonstrate support and care for each other. Pupils of all abilities mirror the excellent relationships and sense of fun displayed by adults in school. This enables pupils to make comments such as "this is a great school because the grown-ups always have time for us" and "the school is really like one big family". Pupils feel happy and safe in this family environment which is clearly underpinned by strong Christian values. They feel that their

opinions are valued and their suggestions are often acted upon through their involvement in the school council. There is a calm and purposeful atmosphere within the school with pupils being polite, welcoming and well-behaved. Christian symbols and stimulating displays around the school, along with worship walls in classrooms, are constant reminders of the school's foundation and encourage reflection and thought for others.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship maintains a significant place in the daily life of the school by effectively promoting the school's ethos and the spirituality of all pupils. Staff take an active part in worship and acts of collective worship are well co-ordinated and planned by the acting headteacher, with input from key stage leaders and the clergy. School collective worship of the main Christian festivals was celebrated in the linked church building prior to its recent closure. However, the church was part of a joint pastorate and so the weekly leadership of school worship by the team rector, vicar and curate has continued to be welcomed and appreciated by pupils and staff. Pupils show their enjoyment of worship by their orderly entry into the hall, enthusiastic singing, quiet prayerful reflection and creation of a respectful atmosphere. They benefit from the time for reflection and prayer which are key features of school and class worship. Along with sensitive planning, circle time and discussion, worship contributes significantly to pupils' spiritual development. Pupils understand that worship is a time when they learn more about God and how to speak to him through prayer. Children's prayers are used at lunchtimes and at the end of the day and opportunities to write prayers are built into classroom activity with the use of prayer boxes. Pupils say that they would like to take a more active role in the planning and delivery of worship.

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

The leadership and vision provided by the acting headteacher is central to the improving success of this church school. There is a shared vision for developing the "whole child" which is firmly grounded within Christian values. Adults in school are good role models and provide direction for the high expectations of behaviour, care and respect for the individual which are characteristics of the school. Staff feel valued and appreciated and there is a good team spirit. Parents and carers are made welcome to the school and know that they can approach the school's leaders with any concerns they may have and be confident that those concerns will be dealt with. The school council is developing pupils' skills in decision taking and is giving them a voice. A range of good consultation processes are in place to ascertain the views of parents, carers and pupils which then feed into the school's improvement plan. At present, the role of the Interim Executive Board, which replaced the school's governing body when it was disestablished in September 2011, in monitoring and evaluating worship is under-developed.