

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

St James' Church Of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Guildford Road,
Colchester,
Essex,
CO1 2RA

Diocese: Chelmsford

Local authority: Essex
Date of inspection: 13th September 2007
Date of last inspection: 6th February 2006
School's unique reference number: 115131
Headteacher: Mr Jeff Graham
Inspector's name and number: Andrew Binnell .

School context

St James' is a town centre primary school with 229 pupils on roll. Most pupils are from white British backgrounds, with 60 pupils for whom English is an additional language, primarily from Eastern Europe. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is about average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St James as a Church of England school is satisfactory

The school has a clear capacity to develop as a school with a distinctive Christian character. There is a clearly understood whole school vision in place for this to be achieved.

Established Strengths

- The shared vision of the Headteacher and the Rector for the future Christian development of the school
- Strengthening links between the school and the parish church
- The centrality of collective worship to school life.

Focus for development

- To continue to develop the Religious Education curriculum
- To consider more fully the views of pupils, parents and members of the parish church in the making of future decisions
- To continue to develop the Christian ethos of the school.

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

The school makes satisfactory provision to meet the needs of all its learners. Learners from all groups feel valued and special in this inclusive school environment.

The school achieves its aim to promote Christian values through the experience it offers to all members of the St James' school community.

The school also achieves its aim for its pupils to take responsibility and are responsible in school and in the wider community.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

School worship is good. It is central to all aspects of school life. It is very well planned and reflects Christian celebrations and the school year. Pupils experience a good variety of worship over the course of the school week, with each assembly having a different focus. Pupils particularly enjoy the 'Star Work' assembly.

Parish mass takes place each week in school. Each class, on a rota basis attends and contributes fully. This act of worship brings together the community in a highly effective way.

The Eucharist is celebrated both in the school and at the parish church. This greatly enriches collective worship accessed by all pupils.

The Worship Committee meet regularly and their work gives great impetus to school and church worship.

Pupils particularly enjoy it when drama is used to support the assembly and generally when they are encouraged to actively participate. They would hope the school would consider inviting more visitors to lead worship.

The parish church is used in a highly effective way to support school worship and as a resource to support learning.

The effectiveness of the Religious Education is Satisfactory.

Religious Education is important within the school. It makes a significant contribution to the distinctive character of the school. There is a clear policy and a scheme of work in place that is understood by all and which support teaching and learning.

There is an RE subject leader and clear plans for the future are outlined in an effective School Development Plan. These plans include the review of the scheme of work for RE as part of a redesigned curriculum.

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

The Headteacher provides good leadership, which is recognised and commented upon by all members of the school community. Building on current strengths, and with the support of the school community, the Christian ethos of the school can continue to be developed.

The School Council has much to offer and the school should consider gaining their views, together with those of the wider pupil community, through pupil perception surveys. Added to this, it would also be beneficial for the school to seek the views of parents, staff and members of the parish church on a more regular basis. The information gained may well support future decision making.

The Headteacher works closely with the Rector in planning worship both in school and in the parish church. This significantly enhances the Christian dimension of the school.

The Governors, though very supportive, need to be more proactive in monitoring and challenging the school community. This will help the realisation of the school's Christian vision.