

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

### St James' Church of England (Aided) Primary School

#### Vision

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." Psalm 119 v105.

St James' Church of England (Aided) Primary 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

- Rooted in a clear Christian vision, the school's work is shaped by inspirational leaders who model faith in action. This vision drives strategic decisions and daily practice, ensuring that members of the community are valued and able to flourish.
- Leaders, including governors, are resolute in their drive to ensure that pupils and staff flourish. This is driven by the vision to educate the whole person. They know the community well and cultivate a culture of strong, supportive relationships where individuals are known and valued. As a result, meaningful experiences enrich pupils' lives, supporting both academic success and personal development.
- There is a culture of dignity, inclusion, and equity in this school. Provision is thoughtfully designed, resulting in personalised support which enriches lives and meets individual needs. As a result, the vision is evident across school life.
- Collective worship is central to the daily life of the school, being valued and enjoyed by both pupils and adults. It is carefully planned to be welcoming and accessible, enabling pupils of diverse backgrounds and worldviews to participate with integrity.
- Brave decisions about how learning in religious education (RE) is recorded have reshaped the school's approach, engaging and inspiring learners. Strategic curriculum planning ensures clear progression.

#### Development Points

- Embed a shared understanding of spirituality across the whole curriculum. This is so that pupils consistently experience planned and meaningful opportunities for spiritual flourishing.
- Develop experiences that help pupils to recognise their potential to make a difference to the lives of others in the wider world. This is so that they understand how their choices can contribute to positive change.



## Inspection Findings

### Vision and Leadership

Inspired by the biblical imagery of journey in Psalm 119, leaders at St James are deeply committed to the development of the whole child. Their biblically rooted vision informs decision making, curriculum design and pastoral support. The school values of love, kindness, trust and forgiveness, guide relationships and inform leaders' decisions with clarity and deep understanding. This large school community has a culture where relationships are prioritised, and individuals are known and valued. Rooted in love, leaders place people before policy, ensuring that pupils and families are supported with care and dignity, regardless of need. Staff work highly effectively together to support pupils, families and each other. Parents and carers speak warmly of their appreciation of this strong community. Governors collaborate closely with school-based leaders, drawing on a range of information to understand how pupils are flourishing. This collective approach enables meaningful experiences that support both academic success and personal development for pupils. Careful monitoring and evaluation support impactful strategic decisions, ensuring that the vision remains a lived reality.

### Vision and Curriculum

The curriculum, designed around enquiry-based questions, encourages debate and reflection. Topics broaden pupils' understanding of the wider world, including stereotypes, the role of women and fairtrade. Carefully planned experiences, such as workshops, visitors and residential opportunities, enrich learning beyond the classroom. Extra-curricular provision is varied and inclusive, ensuring that pupils can participate fully, including those who are disadvantaged. Funding enables equitable access to clubs, music and wider experiences. Leaders prioritise an active and engaging approach, ensuring that learning intentions allow pupils to be successful. Outdoor learning opportunities support pupils to reflect on the natural world and their place within it. However, spiritual development is not consistently planned across the curriculum. The absence of a consistent approach to spirituality limits pupils' ability to engage in deeper reflection.

### Worship and Spirituality

Collective worship is central to school life at St James' and enables pupils and adults to flourish spiritually. Rooted in the Anglican tradition, it is carefully planned, reflecting the Church calendar and current affairs. The Christian vision and termly value shape worship themes and deepen pupils' understanding of them. Worship is experienced as a time of joy, laughter and thoughtful questioning. It is engaging, with no compulsion, enabling participants, including those who have special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND), to participate fully. Pupils and staff value this daily opportunity to come together and reflect. They recognise how worship shapes their thinking and actions. Strong partnerships with the local church enhance the quality and authenticity of worship. Initiatives such as 'Wednesday biscuits' create space for pupils and families to explore big questions together. Termly church services are highly valued and bring the large school community together. Planned and led by pupils, these provide some meaningful opportunities for spiritual flourishing. However, the absence of a shared language of spirituality limits pupils' depth of reflection on themselves, others and the wider world. Pupil reflections inform leaders' planning and development of worship. This ensures that worship helps pupils and staff apply important messages to their everyday lives.

### Vision and School Culture

Leaders have established a deeply nurturing culture in which individuals are treated with dignity and respect, as individuals on their own journey. This creates a calm and purposeful environment where pupils show kindness and understanding towards one another. Policies and practices are thoughtfully designed to prioritise wellbeing and inclusion. As a result, pupils feel safe and grow in confidence because adults listen and respond with care. Supporting good mental health is central to the school's work. Strong partnerships with families, external agencies and pastoral teams ensure effective and timely support. Staff respond swiftly to difficulties, enabling pupils and families to receive appropriate care. Pupils who have additional needs benefit from sensitive guidance



and flexible provision. Staff wellbeing is strengthened through open communication, professional development and a culture of mutual support. This enables staff to give of their best. As a result, members of the community are supported to flourish, particularly during times of challenge.

#### Vision, Justice and Responsibility

The school's Christian vision fosters a developing culture of justice and responsibility. Pupils understand how their actions impact on others and they show care in their relationships. School values are deeply embedded and shape pupils' understanding of personal responsibility. Adults model justice and compassion, helping pupils to reflect on consequences and ethical choices. A wide range of leadership roles, including anti-bullying ambassadors, sports leaders, house captains and road safety officers, develop responsibility. These roles enable pupils to contribute actively to school life and support the wellbeing of others. Curriculum experiences introduce ideas of rights and responsibility in age-appropriate ways. Through discussion and reflection, pupils begin to explore ethical issues and consider fairness. However, these opportunities are not consistently planned to deepen understanding beyond the school context. As a result, pupils do not always recognise how they can take actions for the benefit of the wider world.

#### Religious Education

The RE curriculum is effective and holds a high profile. Leaders ensure that RE is carefully planned, well sequenced and balanced, including Christianity alongside a range of religious and non-religious worldviews. The curriculum has been recently reviewed, which has reinvigorated teaching and learning and the recording of pupils' thinking. A question-based approach encourages discussion and deep respect for different viewpoints. Units build progressively, enabling pupils to develop increasingly thoughtful responses. Visitors from various faith traditions enrich learning and deepen pupils' understanding of how beliefs can shape people's lives. Subject leadership is knowledgeable and reflective, strengthening staff confidence and curriculum delivery. Governors monitor RE regularly and provide effective strategic support. This ensures that the subject is well resourced and continues to develop in line with school priorities.

The quality of teaching in RE is good. Leaders ensure that teaching is accurate and relevant through detailed planning and clear, consistent assessment approaches. Assessment in lessons and at the end of units informs teaching and tracks progress carefully. Pupils engage confidently through varied activities, including drama, art, storytelling and outdoor learning. This supports deeper understanding and makes learning memorable. Teaching is adapted effectively so that pupils who have additional needs can participate fully and succeed. Pupils enjoy learning that challenges them and deepens their thinking. They are proud of their work and make good progress over time. Effective professional development strengthens teachers' subject knowledge and practice.

## Information

Address	Sandrock Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN2 3PR		
Date	19 March 2026	URN	118725
Type of school	Voluntary aided	No. of pupils	633
Diocese	Rochester		
Headteacher	John Tutt		
Chair of Governors	Judith Hammill		
Inspector	Sarah Alexander		