

# St James' Catholic Primary School

URN: 106239

Catholic Schools Inspectorate report on behalf of the Bishop of Shrewsbury

09–10 May 2024

## Summary of key findings

### Overall effectiveness

The overall quality of Catholic education provided by the school

#### Catholic life and mission (p.3)

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission

1

#### Religious education (p.5)

The quality of curriculum religious education

2

#### Collective worship (p.7)

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school

1

The school is fully compliant with the curriculum requirements laid down by the Bishops' Conference

Yes

The school is fully compliant with all requirements of the diocesan bishop

Yes

The school has responded to the areas for improvement from the last inspection

Fully

2

## What the school does well

- St James' school is a happy, safe, joyful, and welcoming community for all pupils, families, and staff.
- Pupils feel valued and know that God loves each one of them.
- Pupils enjoy their religious education lessons and from the earliest years to the end of Key Stage 2 they are fully engaged in their learning.
- The well planned progression of prayer means that pupils develop skills to lead meaningful prayer in the classroom.
- Leaders provide opportunities for the pupils to develop a secure and meaningful understanding of the Church's liturgical year.

## What the school needs to improve

- Develop a formal monitoring strategy to analyse provision and outcomes in religious education to ensure accurate and consistent assessment for all pupils.
- Review and develop a feedback policy that identifies how pupils can improve their learning.
- Develop effective procedures for self-evaluation of Catholic life and mission, religious education, and collective worship

## Catholic life and mission

How faithfully the school responds to the call to live as a Catholic community at the service of the Church's educational mission.

### Catholic life and mission key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

The extent to which pupils contribute to and benefit from the Catholic life and mission of the school

1

#### Provision

The quality of provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

1

#### Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life and mission of the school

1

1

Pupils are proud of their school. They know their mission statement and they understand that they are 'learning to follow Jesus'. Pupils regularly review what this means to them. It is an important part of their religious education lessons and is reflected on during times of prayer. They know that to follow Jesus means 'treating others like you want to be treated'. They articulate clearly what makes St James' school special as they model themselves on Jesus' disciples because 'we are disciples'. Pupils feel safe and happy because they have good friends. Older pupils who join the school are made welcome and know that in St James' school, friends make them 'feel special'. They are confident that adults are there for them. They get help with work and if they are upset there is always someone to listen to them. They appreciate the nurture group where they 'can speak about worries'; therefore, pupils feel valued. During the weekly community assembly parents, pupils and staff gather to pray and celebrate the pupils' achievements. The whole community listen with interest when pupils are chosen to receive their certificates and awards from activities outside school. This is another way pupils develop a sense of their own worth and uniqueness. Recognising that God loves everyone, they enthusiastically support fundraising events, many of which are organised by the active Mini Vinnies group. They support the food bank, Mary's Meals Porridge Party, Royal British Legion, Children in Need, Cafod, and Cancer Research.

The mission statement is reviewed annually by staff and pupils, and daily life at St James' reflects the commitment of the community to follow Jesus. Therefore, Christ is truly at the heart of the school. Staff relationships and their genuine care for the pupils are a shining example of how to show God's love. There are many examples of the support and care given to those experiencing difficulties or sadness in their lives. Parents, staff, and governors believe that everyone goes the

extra mile to ensure pupils learn in a safe, happy, and exceptionally supportive place. This is a great strength and there is a warm, authentic culture of welcome so that everyone feels part of the family of the school. The breakfast club, projects with the St Vincent de Paul, signposting to many agencies, and the nurture group are a few of the practical ways staff show pastoral support to the community. Parents and staff are keen to share their personal experiences to demonstrate their appreciation, and all responses to the questionnaires are positive. The interactive displays in classes and meaningful displays around the school effectively create signs of the Gospel values which the whole community tries to follow. There is a deep commitment to provide a wide range of opportunities throughout the liturgical year to support spiritual and moral development of pupils and staff.

Governors and leaders embrace the Catholic mission of the school, and it is central to all that takes place at St James'. Therefore, the school community experiences Gospel values in their daily lives. Leaders and governors readily engage with the diocese and the head teacher supports other Catholic schools in the diocese. They value the well-established working relationship with the parish priest, who speaks highly of the pupils' participation in school Masses. The preparation for the first sacraments and opportunities for Reconciliation are celebrated during the liturgical year. Parents speak fondly of these times and appreciate the Catholic values that their children experience. Leaders and governors are developing ways of helping the pupils understand more fully why we strive to support those in need throughout the world.

## Religious education

The quality of curriculum religious education

### Religious education key judgement grade

**Pupil outcomes**

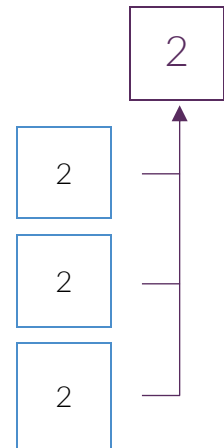
How well pupils achieve and enjoy their learning in religious education

**Provision**

The quality of teaching, learning, and assessment in religious education

**Leadership**

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for religious education



Pupils enjoy their religious education lessons and are enthusiastic when working in groups and independently. This means behaviour is good in all age groups and pupils of all abilities are keen to produce written work that they are proud of. This high standard of written work and presentation in books is acknowledged by professionals visiting St James'. From an early age pupils develop a good understanding of the topics covered. For example, in Key Stage 1 they think 'apostles would have been shocked, confused or impressed' at the Ascension. By Lower Key Stage 2 pupils use the Bibles to help their understanding and in Upper Key Stage 2 pupils are asked to give their own views using key vocabulary such as faith, hope, humility, service, and martyr. Recalling previous learning is a strength of pupils of all ages, and this enables them to make good progress. However, they do not always have the opportunity to deepen their understanding or correct misconceptions because feedback isn't as clear or consistent as it could be. Attainment in religious education is in line with other core subjects.

All teachers have a good knowledge of their subject, so they confidently plan meaningful lessons for the pupils they teach. For example, teachers in Early Years Foundation Stage make sure children learn through practical experiences including small world or role play to learn about the Ascension story. This helps them to remember the story, but also to understand the emotions of the disciples and the wonder of this event. By the end of Key Stage 2 appropriate planning means pupils can use their previous learning and understanding to have quality discussions about the role each of the apostles had when following Jesus. Teachers clearly appreciate the value of religious education and have high expectations of themselves and their pupils. Teachers are using some strategies which help them to make their assessments accurate, however these are not consistently used in all classes. In the best lessons teachers use effective questioning to deepen understanding, but in some classes, pupils' answers are not always developed to

enhance learning. Teachers and support adults encourage, and praise pupil effort and verbal feedback is used to indicate how to improve. However written feedback is not always in line with the school policy.

Leaders and governors are committed to ensuring religious education truly reflects and delivers the curriculum aims required in the *Religious Education Curriculum Directory*. They ensure that all aspects of this subject are resourced as well as other core subjects, and the religious education professional development plan for staff is a strength. Therefore, teachers have access to high quality training and courses which enhance their subject knowledge and therefore increases their confidence and effectiveness in the classroom. Leaders ensure that learning is enriched by encouraging creative ways for pupils to learn. For example, music and art are used effectively as a means for pupils to express their understanding. The introduction of maps contextualises pupils' learning when using Bible stories. Senior leaders work hard to ensure that pupils make good progress by setting high expectations and focusing on the importance of quality teaching. They support the staff so that teaching is at least good in all classes, and from their starting points pupils' progress is good by the end of Key Stage 2. Leaders have introduced a variety of ways to assess pupils' knowledge and understanding, for example, the use of targeted questions in lessons, analysis of assessments and the use of feedback and marking policy guidelines. However, these strategies are not consistently used to ensure the more able pupils make progress.

## Collective worship

The quality and range of liturgy and prayer provided by the school

### Collective worship key judgement grade

#### Pupil outcomes

How well pupils participate in and respond to the school's collective worship

1

#### Provision

The quality of collective worship provided by the school

1

#### Leadership

How well leaders and governors promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for collective worship

1

1

There is a well-planned progression of prayer at St James' school, which teachers use effectively; therefore, pupils enjoy their experiences of the celebrations of the word because they are linked to the age and development of the pupils. Pupils are keen to plan and lead celebrations of the word in their class and can confidently undertake liturgical ministries at Mass. Pupils are attentive, they reflect in silence and are ready to respond and join in prayer joyfully and enthusiastically. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils lead, participate and evaluate their celebrations of the word. However, these evaluations are not carried out formally in all classes. From an early age pupils develop a meaningful understanding of the liturgical year. This is a strength of the school and gives pupils a framework which develops their understanding of God's love for them, Jesus' life and, with the help of the Holy Spirit, their call to action. The pupils' behaviour, respect for each other, as well as their understanding about their responsibility to help those in need, shows that these prayer experiences influence their daily lives. Every class has a meaningful record of the creative and joyful times they gather for celebration and praise throughout the year. Their class prayer books also record the times they spontaneously gather after any local or global tragedies.

Prayer and liturgy are central to all that is done at St James' school. Staff provide regular daily times for prayer; therefore, this becomes a natural part of the pupils' daily lives. Through the creative opportunities provided during the year pupils also experience the richness of Catholic tradition. Staff understand the importance of prayer, and ensure that time and support is given to the preparation of celebrations of the word in the classroom. All class prayer books demonstrate the effort staff put in to recording these special times and pupils enjoy looking back through them when they need a little nurturing or reflective time. Throughout the year, staff enable pupils to engage in a wide variety of prayers, hymns and liturgies. Scripture is always read

from the Bible and staff make sure the reading is appropriate for their age group. They are committed to using their personal skills and demonstrate a clear understanding of how the scripture passages chosen link well to religious education lessons and the mission of the school. Creativity is encouraged and staff help pupils to develop their own skills which enhance the experiences of prayer. Art, music, and role play in Early Years Foundation Stage are examples of this. Staff commitment to providing the best experiences for pupils is a strength.

Leaders ensure there is a year plan that includes all major feasts and significant days. 'Progression of Prayer' is a key document that helps teachers plan appropriate experiences for pupils. A new Prayer and Liturgy policy is being developed in response to the new *Prayer and Liturgy Directory*. Leaders and governors have the experience and skills to ensure that pupils deepen their prayer life and develop abilities to plan and lead prayer. An annual plan is agreed at the beginning of each year so that all pupils and staff can celebrate key times in the liturgical year. For example, opportunities for the Sacrament of Reconciliation are appreciated by pupils and staff. Leaders realise the need for high quality resources, and they make provision in the budget to enhance the prayer life of the school. Leaders' and governors' genuine love for St James' reflects the wealth of spiritual, moral and educational opportunities offered to the whole community of St James' school.



## Information about the school

Full name of school	St James' Catholic Primary School
School unique reference number (URN)	106239
School DfE Number (LAESTAB)	3573305
Full postal address of the school	St James' Catholic Primary School, Cheriton Close, Off Underwood Road, Hattersley, Hyde, SK14 3DQ
School phone number	01613683455
Headteacher	Jackie Walker
Chair of Governors	Kevin Toms
School Website	<a href="http://www.st-james-hyde.tameside.sch.uk/">www.st-james-hyde.tameside.sch.uk/</a>
Trusteeship	Diocesan
Multi-academy trust or company (if applicable)	N/A
Phase	Primary
Type of school	Voluntary Aided School
Admissions policy	N/A
Age-range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Date of last denominational inspection	28 March 2017
Previous denominational inspection grade	2

## The inspection team

Susan Lyonette  
Claire Marrin

Lead  
Team

## Key to grade judgements

Grade	England	Wales
1	Outstanding	Excellent
2	Good	Good
3	Requires improvement	Adequate and requires improvement
4	Inadequate	Unsatisfactory and in need of urgent improvement