

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

### Wath Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Barnsley Road,  
Wath-uopn-Dearne,  
Rotherham.  
S63 6PY

<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Diocese / Methodist District</b> [delete as appropriate]	<b>Sheffield</b>
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Date of academy conversion	1 March 2017
Name of multi-academy trust	James Montgomery Academy Trust (JMAT)
Date of inspection	2 March 2017
Date of last inspection	19 March 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	143480
Head of School	Paul Beevor
Inspector's name and number	Louise Patterson (310)

#### School context

The school is quite a large Voluntary Aided primary with 290 full time pupils and 45 part-time. It converted to academy status on 1st March 2017, joining the James Montgomery Academy Trust, a trust is supported by Sheffield Diocese. The previous head is now the CEO of the JMAT and there is a head of school in place. Both these leaders have been in position for two years. Attendance is above the national average. Pupils are from predominantly white British backgrounds and a range of socio-economic situations. There are falling numbers who are eligible for free school meals.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Wath Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary as a Church of England school are good.

- The school's Christian values, known and understood by all stakeholders, are securely embedded and impact positively on the school's provision and outcomes for pupils.
- The sense of community and high quality of relationships enhance the quality of school life for both pupils and staff.
- Both collective worship and religious education are making a contribution to the spiritual development of all involved.

#### Areas to improve

- Introduce the formal monitoring and evaluation of the Christian distinctiveness and ethos of the school, including collective worship and how the foundation is communicated to parents.
- Involve pupils in the planning, leading and evaluation of collective worship to give them more ownership of worship and impact on their own lives.
- There needs to be more formal monitoring of the teaching of RE, including classroom observation, to ensure consistency.

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

Wath C of E is a friendly, caring school whose Christian ethos is based on its core values of love, hope, peace and joy. These values are clearly expressed visually in displays and in the 'reflective' areas in all classrooms. The values are successfully promoted through acts of worship and the wider curriculum, and they contribute to the pupils' academic achievement, personal development and well-being. The impact of the values is evident in the very high quality of relationships between members of the school community. Teachers are providing good role models of the school's values in their interaction with the children and each other. The pupils display very good behaviour as observed in lessons and at lunch time, showing a caring ethos for each other. This is also seen in the care and support between older and younger pupils and the support for several charitable causes. It can also be seen in the high level of quality provision of care and support provided by the school for all learners with particular emphasis on the all-round development of the individual. All children are made to feel they can achieve. Pupils are keen to achieve and work hard as a result of the good range of rewards, not only for achievement but also for behaviour and thought for others. Pupils say that they feel safe and well cared for, which contributes to the above average attendance. Pupils are able to articulate what it means for them to go to a church school, saying such things as 'it really feels like God is in our school' and 'if it wasn't a church school then it would be just plain and there would be no joy in it'. Data confirms that pupil attainment is above national averages at the end of key stage 2, and the input given to pupils is a reflection of the support and intervention for children of all abilities and the teachers' commitment to the school as a caring, inclusive school. Pupils are developing into well rounded, caring and morally grounded individuals through the priority placed on the development of the individual and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school demonstrates respect for diverse communities through a range of activities including exploring different faiths in both RE and worship and inviting a range of leaders to deliver worship. Charity fund raising plays an important part in the life of the school. Parents speak very highly of the school in general terms saying such things as 'it gives a really good grounding', 'there is a really good support network' and 'there is a real community within the school'. However, there is nothing mentioned about the overtly Christian nature of the school and how that impacts on their children. The Christian character of the school is not yet outstanding because pupils were not passionate about the spiritual opportunities afforded to them, the nature of the school is not effectively communicated to parents and the distinctiveness of the school is not formally monitored with a view to informing future developments.

**The impact of collective worship on the school community is good.**

Collective worship plays an important part in the life of the school, contributing to the spiritual growth of all involved. The Christian foundation of the school is reflected here and it is enabling staff, students and visitors to develop a sense of community and Christian fellowship. Although staff regularly attend worship they are not all present on a daily basis. Singing, prayer and periods of quiet reflection offer opportunities for the development of the spiritual dimension within worship for all involved. The opportunities afforded are taken up with some enthusiasm, with all involved demonstrating a knowledge of the school prayer and the call and response at the opening of the worship. Pupils have an understanding that the biblical themes and stories are taught in worship and lived out through their behaviour and the choices they make. These teachings are regularly reinforced through the appropriate use of Biblical content. As a pupil commented 'we talk about God a lot'. Pupils and staff are fully engaged in the worship and clearly enjoy the experience, especially opportunities to talk in pairs, which staff readily joined in with. Prayer is a regular feature of the school day, with pupils having some understanding what prayer is. Grace is said before lunch and also an end of day prayer is said. Many classes have their own prayer book in which pupils have written their own prayers to use on a regular basis. Worship is monitored with the use of a Reflection Book into which classes take turn to comment on the worship. Comments have recently become more linked to the Christian values evident in school rather than content. A pupil wrote 'we all agreed that without hope the world would be an unhappy place'. The Worship Committee, which consists of pupils from across the school, have suggested that each class has its own reflection book. This suggestion is being actioned in the near future, demonstrating the effective voice of pupils. All staff deliver worship at some level. Pupils said that they would welcome the opportunity to be more involved in both the planning and leadership of worship in the future. Visitors who deliver worship are widening the positive Christian experience within the school. There is an understanding of the concept of the elements of the Trinity within worship, with good use being made of analogies of an apple and a cream egg. Pupils can articulate that the three candles lit before worship represent 'three different parts of the same thing'. Christian worship is well planned by the co-ordinator in conjunction with the leadership team. There is currently no formal assessment by the school of the impact of worship on staff or pupils to inform future developments.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is good.**

Religious education is making a good contribution to the school as a religious community, enabling pupils to question and discuss in a safe and understanding environment. Pupils are acquiring a secure subject knowledge which is increasingly being applied so that pupils are demonstrating that they are not only learning about religion but also from religion. Standards in RE are broadly in line or slightly above national expectations by the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6. They make expected progress across the school. Good use is being made of Rotherham Agreed Syllabus with appropriate adaptations made by the school. There is an appropriate balance between the teaching of Christianity and the other major world faiths. The co-ordinator and senior team review progress and attainment using the Milestones assessment criteria, highlighting positives and areas for development within each class. Lessons are well planned with clear links to learning intentions which identify what the pupils should be expected to achieve. Differentiation of work goes some way in assuring pupils are being stretched. Pupils are starting to be aware of how to improve their work and the next steps they need to take. Teaching is good over all with some outstanding elements. However, there needs to be ongoing formal monitoring of the teaching within the subject as there are currently inconsistencies in outcomes across the school. The subject co-ordinator is committed to the subject and ensures that it has a high profile in the curriculum. She is aware of latest developments through regular attendance at courses and training opportunities and therefore has a good grasp of what needs to be done to continue to develop RE. The regular involvement of the link governor for RE is having a positive impact as the developments are reported to the rest of the governing body to ensure parity with the rest of the curriculum.

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

The committed Christian leadership and management of the head of school and governors contribute significantly to the success of this good church school. The self-evaluation of the distinctively Christian nature of the school is accurate, demonstrating that the leadership of the school has a clear understanding of where the school is and how it can improve. The areas they have highlighted are entirely appropriate to enable the school's further development, including strategic planning. This self-evaluation has been undertaken on an informal level with discussion about the vision and ethos taking place at regular intervals. The Christian vision of the school is promoted through the mission statement, prospectus and website but parents are unaware of the impact the Christian foundation is having on their children. However, they speak very highly of the school saying such things as, 'it gives a really good base', there is a good balance between learning and fun' and 'all the staff are good role models - my child has never had a bad teacher'. They say that they are kept well informed about their children and that they appreciate the 'open door' policy that that school has in place. They particularly like the Dojo system through which they can access rewards and photographs regarding their child. The committed and enthusiastic staff team fully support the vision and ethos of the school and there is a real sense of them working well together to enhance the very good support being given to every child. They are providing very good role models for pupils in the living out of the Christian values of love, hope, peace and joy which run through the life of the school. Pupils are encouraged to take on appropriate responsibilities from quite an early age which is helping them to develop a genuine sense of community, conscientiousness and duty. Pupils feel that they have a voice within the school, especially through the various groups and committees they are involved in. They say that their ideas are taken seriously and are often acted upon. Though there is currently an interregnum within the local parish the school is still well supported by surrounding local churches. This takes a variety of forms including an RE team, Godly play and the pre-school, all of which are effective and have a positive impact on the school as a Christian community. The school feels that it is very well supported by the diocese having accessed their training and a diocesan review of the school. Governors are effectively acting as critical friends and are acutely aware of their role as leaders of a church school. They take their role as leaders of a Christian community very seriously and meet with the school regularly to discuss the ethos. Foundation governors have a clear and positive view of the future of the school and their role within it. RE and collective worship comply with statutory requirements.

There are reflection activities in evidence within a number of areas of the school including in RE, worship and reflection areas in classrooms. The school takes succession planning seriously with staff and governors grouped into effective teams where there are opportunities for growth and personal development. Members of staff have been identified for the Leaders of Tomorrow programme. The school is well placed to move forward within its Christian foundation and to continue to embed the very good developments introduced in the last two years.

SIAMS report [March 2017] [Wath Church of England (VA) Primary School, Rotherham] [S63 6PY]