

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Southam St James Church of England Academy

Vision

‘Let your light shine’ (Matthew 5:16)

We are striving for everyone to flourish, shining as lights in the world, following the example of Jesus. We are nurturing and treasuring the unique God-given light in everyone, children and adults, to light up our academy, homes and community with lived friendship, hope and compassion.

Southam St James Church of England Academy is living up to its foundation as a Church school and is enabling pupils and adults to flourish. It has the following notable strengths.

Strengths

- The strong Christian vision permeates all aspects of school life, enabling adults and pupils to ‘shine their light’. It is the driving force of the school and unites the community in a common purpose. As a result, pupils and adults flourish.
- There is a positive relationship between school, the multi-academy trust (MAT) and the Diocese of Coventry. Consequently, this enables leaders to embrace an ambitious vision inspired curriculum. This means that pupils, deemed to be vulnerable, disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and disability (SEND), can thrive.
- Inspired by the Christian vision, successful partnerships enhance the inclusive, nurturing and aspirational culture of this school. These are instrumental in promoting academic and personal success.
- Wellbeing is a high priority for the school. Leaders work tirelessly to provide a caring school. As a result, individuals are treated well.
- Led by a range of school and church leaders, collective worship is valued as a time to come together. It supports spiritual growth and strengthens opportunities to learn about biblical teaching and understand the school’s vision and values.

Development Points

- Extend the school’s shared interpretation of spirituality. This is to promote pupils’ and adults’ spirituality in a range of contexts.
- Embed pupils’ understanding of social justice to enable them to take greater ownership in making a difference.



Inspection Findings

The Christian vision and 'Shine Values' are at the heart of Southam St James. Pupils and adults are enabled to 'let their light shine' because of the bold decisions taken by the school's leaders. Its refreshed approach to supporting pupils' behaviour and the introduction of an ambitious curriculum is vision driven. A pupil confidently spoke about how they are enabled to shine as a mathematician. Others talked about how the half termly 'Shine Value' helps with their learning and at playtimes. Staff describe being appreciated both as a team and as individuals. Consequently, adults and pupils feel empowered to 'shine their lights'. Parents cite difference being valued, respected and supported. Staff are unequivocal in their commitment to meeting the needs of everyone in the school. This includes those with SEND. As a result, the vision is a lived reality throughout the school community, enabling pupils and adults to flourish. The MAT's vision, 'Together, pursuing life in all its fullness', resonates with the school's vision. This drives the strong partnership between the trust and the school, further enhancing opportunities for individuals to thrive.

Inspired by the Christian vision, and in partnership with the trust, the school has introduced a knowledge rich curriculum. It has widened extra-curricular activities to ensure that pupils have greater opportunities to participate. These include working with a dance teacher and a German club for younger pupils. These sessions enable them to use their talents and 'shine their lights'. The highly valued relationship with Coventry Diocese has supported the school to develop a shared understanding of spirituality. This is in the early stages of implementation. Consequently, there are limited planned opportunities identified for spiritual development within the curriculum. Ethical decisions have been taken to provide alternative learning spaces for pupils with additional needs. Skilled staff provide effective support in these moments. Pupils talk about some needing extra help and that it's alright to be different. This combination of strategies empowers pupils and adults to succeed.

Collective worship forms the beating heart of the school. Underpinned by the 'Shine' and other values, it provides a daily opportunity for pupils and adults to celebrate, be silent, reflect and pray. The Bible stories shared help pupils understand the school's values. Worship is enriched through singing. Both pupils and adults mention that they appreciate this calm time together. This instils spiritual growth. Staff sensitively support SEND pupils so that they can participate. Those present are invited to join in with the welcoming call and response, the prayer and singing. Parents and the wider community attend the weekly 'Shine' celebration worship. They speak of the warm welcome they receive and how this makes them feel valued. Strong, established links with St James' and other local churches enhance the worship experience. This includes local clergy and the 'Open the Book' team leading worship, alongside school services in the parish church. These provide pupils and adults with opportunities to deepen their understanding of Christian traditions and to grow spiritually.

A warm welcome permeates this school because of the positive relationships within it. The school's 'Shine' awards, and the St James' Way encourage individuals to 'shine their light'. These provide clear expectations for life in school which ensures that pupils are treated equitably. Reflection slips are an effective method to help pupils when things go wrong. These enable them to be supported in a fair and respectful way. Forgiveness is at the heart of this restorative approach. Pupils explain how the St James' Way helps you recognise your mistakes and apologise. Consequently, pupils feel listened to and that their concerns are acted upon. Mental health and wellbeing are prioritised for both pupils and adults. Staff and parents speak passionately about how this supports them and their children. Trust leaders aid the school when need arises. As a result, leaders feel valued and cared for. Relationships



with parents, built on trust, also enable concerns to be addressed in a timely and respectful manner. Parents speak positively about this. Consequently, parents enjoy an effective partnership with the school.

Pupils have a clearly defined sense of justice, which underpins the 'Shine' values and St James' Way. They speak about treating people fairly and ensuring that everyone is given the same opportunities. The vision inspires pupils to recognise, value and celebrate diversity. Parents talk of how this is preparing their children for life in a multi-cultural society. As a result, pupils live out the St James' Way and the 'Shine Values'. They are proud of their 'Shine Awards', which recognise and celebrate this. There are strong, fruitful partnerships with local churches, care homes and the council. These enable pupils to play an active role in the local community. They include the choir singing at the switching on of the Christmas lights and in a care home. A recent school service in church saw pupils raise funds for the church restoration. However, opportunities are currently limited for pupils to make their own ethical choices and be agents of change. The mutually beneficial partnership with the church strengthens the community. This is seen in the well-attended shared Messy Church services in school for the wider Southam community.

The refreshed RE curriculum is ambitious and meets the requirements for the subject as a Church school. Leaders and local governors ensure that RE is prioritised for all year groups. In partnership with the diocese the school draws on the Coventry and Warwickshire Agreed Syllabus for RE. Pupils access topics about major religions of the world. They also examine spirituality and different worldviews. This is enhanced by opportunities to visit places of worship beyond Southam. These visits inspire pupils' understanding of what it means to have a faith. RE enables them to express their own point of view. Leadership of RE, supported by the diocese, is effective. Therefore, leaders ensure that the subject is well-resourced. Governors also benefit from quality diocesan training, developing their understanding of the subject.

RE teaching is good. The curriculum provides opportunities for pupils' thinking to be challenged within lessons. This provides a safe space to debate and explore ideas. Pupils explain how they learn about different faiths and viewpoints. They also use an effective Christian resource that deepens pupils' knowledge and confidence to talk about key Christian beliefs. As a result, the curriculum enhances pupils' understanding and thoughtfulness for people from a range of views and faiths. Leaders and governors evaluate the quality of learning. This updates future actions. Outcomes inform teaching and staff professional development. This approach is being implemented at pace because of positive staff engagement following diocesan training.

Information

Address	Tollgate Road, Southam, CV47 1EE		
Date	6 March 2025	URN	146151
Type of school	Academy	No. of pupils	160
Diocese	Coventry		
MAT	The Diocese of Coventry Multi-Academy Trust		
Headteacher	Laura Richards		
Chair of Governors	Roderick Clark		
Chair of Trust	Barry Cockcroft		
Inspector	Helen Robertson		