



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

### Manston St James Primary Academy

Sandbed Lane  
Leeds  
LS15 8JH

**Previous SIAMS grade:** Outstanding

**Current inspection grade:** Outstanding

**Diocese:** West Yorkshire and the Dales

Local authority: N/A

Date of inspection: 16 June 2015

Date of last inspection: March 2010

School's unique reference number: 138824

Headteacher: Mark Edwards

Inspector's name and number: C Roberts 469

#### School context

Manston St James Academy is a larger than average-sized primary school. Almost all pupils are White British. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium is below the national average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is below average. The school became an Academy in October 2012. It is a member of the LEAF (love, enterprise, aspiration, faith) Academy Trust and works in partnership with David Young Community Academy and Rothwell Church of England Primary Academy. The parish Church of St James is next door to the Academy.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Manston St James as a Church of England Academy are outstanding

- A very welcoming and inclusive community where children and adults alike are proud to belong. Leaders show a passion for upholding the clear Christian vision and values of the Academy. Children thrive personally and achievement is good and improving.
- Collective worship which is exciting, uplifting and challenging. It supports the whole school community on a daily basis.
- The very dedicated and knowledgeable governors who promote the Academy's vision well.
- Excellent religious education (RE) which enhances pupils understanding of faith and belief and has a strong impact on the Christian character of the Academy.
- Relationships with the church are enriching and positive community links ensure the Academy has an outstanding impact on the community.

#### Areas to improve

- Develop ways to increase the involvement of pupils in monitoring and evaluating worship, so that worship continues to evolve and meet the needs of the Academy community.
- Develop further assessment strategies for learning from religion to ensure continued effectiveness of RE.

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

Everyone at Manston St James speaks of a 'special community' where values of love, hope and compassion shape their daily lives. There is a real passion amongst all leaders and staff to ensure the Christian vision impacts on the community in a positive way and staff talk of 'always going that extra mile'. This drives initiatives to support all children but especially the vulnerable and also those families who face challenging circumstances. For example, through the work of a dedicated behaviour support worker, the learning mentors and play leaders, whose work is underpinned by Christian values of respect and care for each other. This vision and explicit Christian values can be seen in action at every turn, from the welcome and courtesy shown to visitors by children, the exemplary relationships and excellent care for the children and staff. Children state 'It's a loving place where people take care of us' and 'You can talk to teachers if you have a problem'. Furthermore children relate their actions and behaviour to Bible accounts such as Noah and the rainbow 'I should keep my promises like God did'. Leaders ensure that through a dedicated tracking system children have the best possible support not only in lessons but through learning mentors who support children personally and academically. Attitudes of hope, honesty and trust underpin their approach to learning. Consequently, the distinctive character of the Academy supports children in an exemplary way and their achievement is good and improving. All groups of pupils make good progress and growing numbers are reaching higher standards in English and maths. Disadvantaged children are achieving increasingly well. Pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance is high and above the national average. Opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and promotion of Christian values across the curriculum and beyond are excellent, although not yet always highlighted explicitly in curriculum planning. For example through prayer/reflection stations in every classroom often used for class worship but also for personal reflection such as by writing a prayer or posting a comment. These comments and prayers show sensitivity and great love for others. The prayer garden offers further space for children to 'be calm'. The Academy's behaviour policy firmly rooted in forgiveness and restorative justice has an outstanding impact on children. Children know what is right and wrong and state 'God forgives us, so we should say sorry' and 'You can have a fresh start and redeem yourself'. Children are directly involved in supporting each other in the playground through an excellent peer mentoring scheme. This further develops children's understanding of the importance of good behaviour and relationships built on Christian values. Children and adults talk about faith and belief openly showing great respect for those of faith or none. The close proximity of the church, regular worship in church and the frequent visits by the vicar further impacts on understanding of Christian faith in practice. Children talk animatedly about their visits to the mosque and gurdwara, part of a planned series. They thoroughly enjoy such visits and show great maturity when they talk about 'learning about a religion so as not to offend people'. Throughout the year there are many opportunities for children to fundraise for example through Pancake Pandemonium and by supporting Children in Need. This supports understanding of the Christian value of service to others. By developing a link with a church school in Sri Lanka children learn about Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith. Excellent experiences in RE such as exploring courage, wisdom and questions about creation contributes to the outstanding distinctive Christian nature of the Academy.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding**

Pupils and staff alike state that worship is a special time of day when the whole school can reflect and 'feel calm'. Furthermore it inspires everyone in their day to day life, as they feel supported by the Christian values. Themes for worship are based on a monthly Christian value and throughout the week further topics link to this value such as Christian festivals and celebrations. The themes challenge the worshipping community to reflect on their behaviour and actions. They are regularly linked to Biblical accounts and material, which impacts on children extremely well. For example one child states 'The story of Jonah and the Whale made

me think that I should forgive just as God forgave Jonah'. A variety of quality leaders, including the vicar, senior staff, visitors and teaching staff ensure that children remain excited, engaged and challenged by the messages. Likewise resources are high quality and ensure immediate engagement of children's attention such as clips from the Brick Testament to tell a Bible story. Beautiful music and praise through singing further enhances the experience of worship. Children also plan and lead some aspects of worship for example for class worship they will develop a presentation on an aspect of the weekly theme. They also support leaders for regular church worship and lead particularly for major festival celebrations. Children have an outstanding understanding of the life of Jesus and the Trinity through the creative way leaders have introduced the lighting of three candles and also through prayer responses about The Trinity. RE supports their understanding. They state 'Jesus was God but human, and the Holy Spirit fills you with God' and 'the Holy Spirit blessed humankind and it means God is looking after you'. Prayer is highly developed not only in formal worship, but throughout the day and also by writing prayers in class at the prayer stations. Children really enjoy the spontaneous prayer in key stage worship when the leader will develop a prayer with children. This is exemplary. Such is the status of worship and faith at Manston St James that several children have expressed an interest in confirmation classes and will be confirmed shortly. Monitoring and evaluation of worship is on-going with learning walks and discussion with children, undertaken by very knowledgeable governors. This has led to recent training for staff on good practice ideas for worship. Leaders and governors have a thorough understanding of 'next steps' for worship to ensure children are constantly stimulated and engaged in their worship journey. In order for worship to evolve and develop further leaders recognise the need to increase opportunities for pupils to be involved in monitoring and evaluating worship.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding**

Religious education has a very high status at Manston St James and expectations are high. The subject is led by a very skilled and dedicated co-ordinator. Standards are at least as good as core subjects. Planning is thorough and staff say they feel very well supported by the co-ordinator. This is partly through an exemplary programme of individual coaching and tailored training, but also through daily support. The overview for the RE curriculum based on the diocesan syllabus shows the teaching of Christianity fulfils the National Society's statement of entitlement. Opportunity for learning about religion as well as learning from religion can be seen in lesson planning and in pupil written work. Pupils have a great deal of opportunity to discuss questions of meaning and purpose. In Year 6 they demonstrate higher level thinking by engaging in discussions about the concept of 'This is my flesh' in the Eucharist. Children can also relate themes to Christian values for example one child articulated how the 'disciples trusted, loved and respected Jesus'. In Year 1 children show excellent recall of Shabbat and through exemplary teacher questioning, link this to the creation story. Pupils say they enjoy RE when they 'Learn about other faiths' and 'Explore Christian symbols'. Furthermore they really enjoy the creative aspect of RE such as designing a Christian church and making Torah scrolls. Monitoring and evaluation is on-going, through book scrutiny and lesson observation. School monitoring supported by observations on the day, shows that teaching is mainly good with some outstanding lessons. The school has good systems in place to assess pupil's progress in learning about religion, and is exploring ways to further develop assessment for learning from religion. It is a reflection of leaders' excellent understanding of future development needs for RE, that they recognise the need to explore this area of assessment. Written work is marked regularly and children given both verbal and written feedback, which they really value. This supports improvement. Visits to places of worship are a very popular part of the RE curriculum and really enhance children's understanding of faith in a meaningful way. RE makes an excellent contribution to the Christian character of the Academy.

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

The Principal, very ably supported by the Deputy Principal, leads with conviction and has a clear

Christian vision for the Academy. At the heart of this vision shared by all is a passion for supporting children 'made in God's image' with their academic development, and also their spiritual and personal journey. Children blossom through the impact of many strategies such as the successful nurture group and the recent 'scrap cabin', where children can role play situations to help develop their confidence and self-esteem. Governors work exceptionally hard to promote this vision and their knowledge about the impact of Christian values on the lives of learners is impressive. They regularly undertake learning walks and talk to children about all aspects of Academy life including worship and RE. The effective governor ethos committee evaluates all aspects of impact on learners. Consequently, leaders have clear improvement plans in place to secure future development of the distinctive Christian nature of the Academy. Governors ensure that RE and collective worship fulfil statutory requirements and that the focus for development points from the last inspection have been addressed. Recruitment and induction processes for new staff in terms of what it means to work in a church backed Academy are outstanding. For example candidates on interview lead an act of worship. Leaders also understand the need to develop and grow future leaders for church schools. There have been several promotions internally and to another church school. The school has strong links with the church, local and wider communities and with parents. For example through the Principal writing regular articles in the Parish magazine, through the highly successful Leeds Citizen UK project and through links with faith leaders and Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. The partnership between schools in the LEAF Academy trust adds further support and puts Christian faith at the heart of all that takes place. Parents are proud of their Academy and pleased with the 'love and care' shown to their children. For example one parent was 'very touched' by the welcome card her family received when her children joined the school mid-way through the year. Another parent cites the caring work of staff to support her child's challenging needs. Furthermore, they value the fact that staff and leaders are very approachable and work exceptionally hard to support their children spiritually, morally, socially, culturally as well as academically. For example, parents welcome the weekly newsletter with the Christian value of the month highlighted with examples of questions to discuss as a family. Leaders and governors recognise the need to monitor the impact of such strategies. Overall, leadership and management is highly effective in maintaining and developing a distinctive and inclusive Academy with clear benefits for pupils, the school and the community.

SIAMS report June 2015 Manston St James Primary Academy, Crossgates, Leeds LS15 8JH