

I LOVE St James' Roman Catholic High School in Cheadle Hulme

Family. Faith. Excellence. These are the core values at Cheadle Hulme's high-performing and nurturing St James' Roman Catholic High School. These values aren't just trotted out, nor are they simply about the brand or marketing. They're a strong ethos; embodied throughout the school and lived up to daily by everyone – management, teachers, pastoral team, site staff and students.

Ethos and Pride

That ethos, and the pride at being part of the school, a real community, are palpable as soon as the doors open. Faces are friendly and welcoming; students are smiling, artwork is bright and proudly displayed. St James' is a happy school, and it shows.

- **FAMILY:** The family aspect of the core values works two ways. Family is vital. St James' involve parents and carers as much as possible, including with the school's innovative Parent Forum. Feedback from parents is actively encouraged and acted upon. The excellent home/school communication could teach other schools a thing or two. Family also aptly describes the feeling within the school, the sense of belonging, of everyone looking out for one another.
- **FAITH:** Faith schools are often high-performing, and St James' epitomises that. As a school with such a forward-thinking management team and staff, perhaps even more than most. The high levels of achievement are apparent throughout the school, not just academically.
- **EXCELLENCE:** Everyone within St James' community strives for excellence in everything they do. Academically, the school gets excellent results, but that's true across the arts and sports, too. Every student is unique, with varying talents and thus different measures of success. That is celebrated at St James'. Every form of success matters.

Headteacher Anthony Pontifex leads the school with passion and commitment, which are both tangible and captivating. Those same qualities flourish throughout the entire school. After what Anthony describes ruefully as 'one heck of a year', this has never been more apparent.

Tradition Meets Progress

The dedicated head and the entire team are both progressive yet traditional, embracing the best of old school values while developing new, better ways of working. One example is Parents' Evening. Covid restrictions necessitated moving this online, but this has worked well so it will continue. Parents love the convenience and lack of usual hustle-and-bustle, plus there is a clear environmental benefit. Naturally, living up to the family value, parents will continue to be welcomed into school in person regularly and whenever required.

Innovation has been evident in dealing with precautionary Covid isolations, too. Pupils at home can 'Zoom In' to lessons, ask questions and generally be more involved than simply working remotely.

St James' - the RIGHT School

Choosing the right school for your son or daughter can be a minefield, fraught with difficulties and stresses. Always oversubscribed, if you're lucky enough to fit the criteria for St James', you can relax in the knowledge that this IS the right school. Most schools have outstanding features. Anthony says that ultimately, the people who matter most at St James' Catholic High School are the students, and

every decision is reached with them in mind. Every decision process begins with the question “what will be best for the children?”

Every student at St James’ gets all the support they need to achieve, even exceed their potential – and that can be in any sphere. Some students are more successful academically or in sport; others in the arts and more in many other ways. Support is in place throughout the school, whether a student has learning difficulties, is disadvantaged, or gifted and talented. EVERY student is given the very best possibilities and opportunities.

This support isn’t limited to lessons. Staff have provided life skills sessions, which have covered mortgages, finances, and banking – this is something that school leavers often find daunting. Mental health and well-being are also covered. Students know there is always someone to listen and to help.

St James' Makes All Things Possible

The school motto is “With God All Things Are Possible”, which encapsulates everything about St James’. St James’ is different from other schools. Yes, students attain excellent results and enjoy superb facilities. However, the ethos, the family, the community, the sense of belonging - that’s what sets St James’ apart.

As the saying goes, you learn something every day. That’s certainly the case at St James’ Catholic High School. For everyone. Staff, students and visitors too. Another saying is that school days are the best of your life. Everyone at St James’ would agree. There’s a whole year of that to catch up on and everyone will do their utmost – as they do with everything – to facilitate that. Academically and in every other way too.

Learn about joining the St James’ family for yourself at the open evening. Prospective parents will be welcomed into school on 23 September 2021 from 5-8pm with the Headteacher’s speech at 6 and 7pm.

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