



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

St John's CE Primary School

Stanmore Hill
Stanmore
Middlesex HA7 3FD

Previous SIAMS grade: Outstanding

Diocese: London

Local authority: Harrow

Dates of inspection: 7 July 2015

Date of last inspection: May 2010

School's unique reference number: 134929

Headteacher: Joanne Hester

Inspector's name and number: Barbara Chevis 794

School context

St John's is a larger than average primary school with 419 children on roll. It is the only Church of England primary school in Harrow. The percentage of children entering the school speaking little or no English is rising. Since September 2012 there have been major changes to the leadership team, including the appointment of a new headteacher and deputy headteacher. The school was judged as Requiring Improvement by Ofsted in 2013 and the leadership team has worked tirelessly to make improvements in order to secure a good outcome when next inspected. The parish church was without a permanent vicar for almost two years, until the appointment of the present Rector in July 2014.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St John's as a Church of England school are good

- The school has an outstanding Christian character where values are paramount. They are clearly articulated by all stakeholders. As a result learners are nurtured and achieve well
- Teaching, especially in Early Years, ensures pupils' have an exceptional knowledge of Biblical material and are able to apply messages from the teaching of Jesus to their own lives
- Prayer plays an important part in the life of the school and this contributes strongly to the spiritual development of all
- Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) development is strength of the school. As a result stakeholders of all faiths and cultures feel welcome

Areas to improve

- Formalise governor involvement in the planning and monitoring of collective worship to ensure consistency and high standards
- Use assessments more effectively to inform planning and teaching in Religious Education (RE) in order that pupils learn exceptionally well and that the majority of teaching is outstanding
- Develop and embed links between the church and the school to ensure all parties mutually benefit, resulting in a positive impact upon the whole community

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

Christian values are deeply embedded in the daily life of the school affecting everyone and everything. The welcoming reception area ensures that all are aware of the strong Christian ethos on entry to the school. The whole environment is rich with many reflective areas, artefacts and displays of the Christian values of the school. The memorial garden is a tranquil place used for reflection and prayer. These areas encourage a heightened awareness of the distinctive Christian vision based on Philippians 4:13 and inspires everyone to contribute towards making a positive difference. All members of the community are able to clearly articulate the school's core Christian values of faith, compassion, respect, perseverance and aspiration, linked to stewardship. They can eloquently discuss the impact of these values upon their own lives and that of others. The focus on the core values of the school which encourage perseverance and aspiration clearly impacts positively on academic achievement which is in line with and above national averages. All groups of learners are respected and supported to ensure they achieve their potential and this has resulted in gaps in the attainment of different groups of learners being closed. Attendance is high due to children feeling valued and safe at school. Staff are excellent role models for learners who are polite, supportive and courteous, living out the values of respect and compassion. Reflection and prayer are central to behaviour management, with pupils being given time to consider their actions in the light of the values of the school. Through being a diverse community, learners understand that Christianity is multi-cultural. With respect as a core value and a rich curriculum which includes the teaching of other faiths, diversity is highly valued. Consequently those of other faiths know that their religions are accepted and respected by the school community. Pupils are encouraged to have a duty of care towards each other and good relationships are fostered through a buddy system. Pupils take pleasure in being given responsibilities and as a result SMSC is excellent.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Pupils enjoy daily worship which is engaging and thought provoking, and they talk about their experiences with enthusiasm. Pupils play an active part in the presentation of worship through participating in a number of activities including the reading of prayers and the lighting of candles. Worship has a positive influence on the lives of all who attend through its links with Christian values. For example the Christian value of love was related to the Bible reading in the worship observed. The use of the Bible is very evident and linking passages to the school values is given a high level of importance. As a result children are able to relate Bible stories and passages to their own lives. Due to the explicit links with Christian values, worship has a positive influence on the behaviour of pupils and relationships are good. A large number of local clergy lead worship ensuring learners are aware of and appreciate the diversity of practice within the Christian faith. Through the celebration of the Eucharist and festivals in the church year such as Harvest, Christmas and Easter, learners experience Anglican traditions. Pupils plan and lead in-class worship each week and as a result increase their understanding of Anglican practice. Celebration of the Eucharist has resulted in learners being able to talk about God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit with some degree of understanding. Pupils and their parents appreciate the opportunities they have to pray. The introduction of prayer trees is popular and their use has resulted in learners developing their understanding of empathy and spirituality. The recent addition of a prayer space is extremely popular and used frequently by both pupils and adults, allowing time for reflection and individual prayer. Prayer groups for staff and parents are well attended and as a result adults in the school community are supported to develop their spirituality. Termly planning of worship is undertaken by the leader for collective worship. Other staff and the parish rector are not involved in planning, although informal discussions are held with those leading worship at a later stage. Monitoring is undertaken informally and therefore has little impact upon development planning. Collective Worship is not yet outstanding because planning, monitoring and evaluation are not influential in ensuring improvement in the delivery of worship.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Learners achieve well in RE and attainment throughout the school is generally in line with and sometimes higher than national expectations and that of other subjects. Data shows that pupils make good or better progress. Teaching of RE is good overall, although some activities lack creativity and inspiration leading to slower progress during these lessons. However learners enjoy RE lessons when teachers make learning fun and this results in their knowledge and understanding of Bible stories being high. Consequently pupils are able to make links between learning and Christian values and are able to relate learning to their own lives and that of others. For example one child in Reception related the story of Jonah to faith, whilst another thought that Noah had great perseverance when building the ark and reflected upon perseverance in their own lives. Teachers make clear links to Christian values when discussing learning and this supports pupils' strong SMSC development. Whilst the curriculum is mainly Christian, other faiths are taught and children enjoy looking at the differences and similarities between the faiths of their classmates and Christianity, stating that this helps everyone to feel part of the school family. This has resulted in a good level of inclusion with pupils showing respect for each other's beliefs whilst being confident and comfortable sharing their own faith. RE has a high priority in the school due to the focus on assessment and planning. Children respond well to marking which enables them to reflect further on their learning. This and the introduction of reflection books ensures that pupils' spiritual and moral development is well supported. Monitoring of books by the RE leader has led to procedures being secure and consistent across the school. RE is not yet outstanding as leaders do not regularly analyse attainment of the two RE strands separately (learning about religion and learning from religion) and do not always use this information to inform individual class and year group planning. Whilst the planning and monitoring of RE is undertaken by the lead for this subject, involvement of governors and other stakeholders is not formalised. The enthusiastic leader for RE has a detailed action plan in place to ensure continued improvement.

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

The Christian vision and ethos underpin all that happens in the school and impact positively on standards of achievement. Christian values are at the heart of planning throughout the curriculum and this has a positive impact upon SMSC development. Parents, staff, pupils and governors are able to articulate the values and vision and the impact they have on the well-being of the whole school community. Due to the Rector of St John's church only being in post since September 2014, links with the parish church are at an early stage. However the school has established links with a wide number of churches in the area which has resulted in school worship being led by a number of different clergy. This is broadening children's understanding and building strong links with the wider community. Plans are in place to strengthen links with St John's Church by, for example, encouraging teachers to take children to the church to encourage a more practical approach to learning in RE. The school has a good relationship with parents who appreciate that their views and opinions are taken seriously and acted upon. They value the school as a caring, nurturing and inclusive Christian community which has the academic and personal development of their children at its heart. Attendance at worship and workshops by parents is high and as a result parents feel involved in the life of the school. The RE leader has received effective support from the Diocese and there is an appropriate programme of staff development ensuring that all staff are well prepared as leaders in church schools. Leadership is not yet outstanding as links between the school and the church are not yet fully developed and embedded. Although governors are well informed and are supportive and encouraging, they sometimes lack rigour in challenging the school as a Church school. Their role in monitoring is not formalised. However the school's current self-evaluation of itself as a church school is helpful in setting the course for further development and improvement.