



# St John's Church of England Primary School



## Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools

### Inspection Report

School address	Swan Lane Whetstone N20 0PL
Headteacher	Mrs Jane Martin
Type of School	Primary
Status	Voluntary Aided
Unique Reference Number	101321
Diocese	London
Local Authority	London Borough of Barnet
Date of last inspection	September 2007

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Inspection date	13th March 2012
National Society Inspector	Miss Gladys Vendy (NS 299)

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The Education Act 2005 (Section 48) requires the governing body or foundation governors of Church of England Schools to appoint a person to undertake the inspection of denominational education and collective worship in schools with a religious character.

## Context

St John's Whetstone is an attractive and heavily oversubscribed one form entry school with a newly integrated foundation stage unit which includes children of nursery age. The school which is situated close to the church of St John's has been extensively modified and refurbished over the last six years. Pupils come from a broad range of socio-economic backgrounds. The demographics of the intake have changed in recent years. A quarter of the children come from non-British white backgrounds. 20% of the pupils now speak English as an additional language. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals has risen and is now slightly above the national average. The proportion of children with special educational needs and /or learning disabilities and those with statements is above average. Mobility of pupils and staff is low. Children enter the school with skill levels average for those expected for their age. They make very good progress and levels of attainment at the end of Key Stage Two are well above the national average. A significant number of pupils are from practising Christian families who attend a range of local churches including the Greek Orthodox and Roman Catholic.

## **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St John's Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding.**

The school has very close links with the parish church of St John's and is highly regarded in the community. Pupils' spiritual, academic, personal and social development is enhanced by the Christian vision which is lived out within the school. The school is effective in valuing all members of its community.

## Established strengths

- The Head Teacher's Christian vision together with strong and supportive links with the clergy secures the inclusive nature of the school where every child is valued and nurtured and where strong relationships are built.
- High priority is given to the careful provision of collective worship, quality teaching of Religious Education (RE) and communication of the Christian ethos by the Head Teacher and the Senior Leadership Team.
- The visible evidence of Christianity permeates all areas of the school environment and makes a major contribution to the excellent social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of the school community.

## Focus for development

- Evaluation of collective worship and Religious Education by the Governing Body.

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

The vision 'to nurture everyone in a calm, caring and welcoming way' underpins the philosophy of the school of Christian love in action. The children speak confidently about the Christian values of fairness, love, honesty and loyalty. Excellent provision to meet the needs of all its learners is based on these values which are embedded in every aspect of school life. Children with particular needs, including medical and emotional, are warmly embraced and respected by all. This has made a huge impact on developing the emotional intelligence of other children who share delightedly in their successes. The school's excellent reputation in the locality as a caring school means it is often a named school for children with statements of educational need. A member of the support staff said 'we don't just nurture – we educate!' The creative curriculum, enhanced by multi-cultural weeks, themed weeks (including Christmas and Easter) and the 'Broadening Horizons' programme, gives all children, including the more able the chance to learn to love learning and develop their skills. Older children, supervised by adults, often lead activities for the younger children. The school places great emphasis on being an inclusive school that promotes community cohesion and has very good links with local businesses, a hospice, residential homes and secondary schools. A breakfast and after school club, in addition to a wide range of extra curricular activities, provide wrap around child care. Pupils' behaviour is of a high standard and very good relationships are forged between all groups. Children use every opportunity they can to

help others through prefects, monitors and buddy systems. The school council is influential in representing the pupils' voice. Visible evidence that this is a Christian school is found in all areas of the environment. High quality displays of RE work and celebrations, religious artefacts and symbols, a whispering garden, an interactive prayer board and reflection areas in each classroom encourage spiritual development. Parents speak warmly of the school as a place where friendships continue after the children have left. They feel the Christian values impact upon the lives of others and children sometimes pray at home and are 'always talking about worship and church'. Children recognise the need to help others and support charities both at home and overseas and link with the church to support a school in Africa.

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

Worship is of central importance in the life of the school and underpins its Christian character. Themes of worship which reflect the Christian year are carefully planned by the subject leader and the Priest-in-Charge. The weekly pattern includes provision for whole school and separate key stages to meet together. The school visits church weekly for worship and the Foundation Stage is included at the celebration of major Christian festivals. Parents and Governors also attend. In the observed act of worship in church pupils came in quietly and reverently to music using the opportunity for reflection. Children took a full part reading their own poems, presenting a sketch about the care of mothers and leading prayers they had written. Children enjoyed listening to the harmony of the choir and sang joyfully and tunefully themselves. Pathway, a religious organisation, leads worship each month. A well attended Sunday service is held monthly for the church and school at which the Eucharist is offered. A 'Welcome' service is held annually when those who are new to the school are received into the church. Year Six children are given a Youth Bible at their Leavers' service. Prayer is an important feature of daily life which helps the children to develop spiritually. Each class makes its own prayer book which it uses regularly. These show progression from the Foundation Stage books with simple thank you prayers which Year Six pupils scribed for the children, to the intercessory petitions of the older classes. Children are encouraged to come forward and say impromptu prayers in worship. Children are also able to use the prayer tree in church. Children show a growing spiritual intelligence. Children say they enjoy all worship and that the clergy make 'you think'. One child said that although his parents are atheists he wants to learn more and is reading through the Bible 'this school has changed my mind – I know what my goals ahead are'. The Head Teacher attends the PCC meetings to maintain the good links between church and school. The school and church work in mutual harmony to support each other in many ways. The Head Teacher's report to Governing Body meetings always includes a section on Worship and RE. The Priest in Charge evaluates the worship with the Senior Leadership Team but as yet there is no formal reporting or evaluating of worship or RE by the Governors.

### **The effectiveness of Religious Education is outstanding**

Religious Education is given a high priority. The RE and Worship co-ordinator is passionate and enthusiastic about her role which she has held for some years. The Solihull scheme of work is used and has been frequently reviewed and adapted over the years to be meaningful. A creative cross curricular approach has given new impetus and teachers plan their lessons creatively. Children are enthusiastic about RE and enjoy learning about other faiths as well as Christianity. They said 'it teaches you not to judge people on what they believe'. Visits and visitors, often parents, support this learning. There is very good monitoring of RE through scrutiny of books and planning and classroom observations. RE books show that recording of non written work is sometimes through the use of photographs, comments and class books. Standards are well above average and comparable to those in other core subjects and often even better in written work. Assessment is well embedded and teachers track children's progress through the process. Level descriptors for the two attainment targets are pasted in the front of children's books and these show individual progress. The quality of learning and teaching observed on a Learning Walk was outstanding. The home corner in the Nursery near a stained glass window had been transformed into a church. Children, supported by an adult, were using it appropriately having great fun singing worship songs and saying prayers – even one for the dead mouse found in the playing field the week before! In all lessons children showed very good prior knowledge and understanding. Children in the lower juniors were able to give good explanations of the Beatitudes and relate them to Bible stories. Religious vocabulary such as 'heavenly', 'mercy' and 'visionary' was explored and correctly used. Children were purposefully engaged in their tasks and worked collaboratively. Excellent questioning developed thinking skills. There was a very good balance of teaching about and

learning from the stories as in Year 5 when children were able to learn from the wisdom of Solomon and sequence selected Proverbs that could help them to become better people. A parent of Hindu faith enhanced the Year Six lesson by talking to pupils about her faith and showing them the artefacts needed for puja. Pupils were responsive and knowledgeable asking sensible and insightful questions. Afterwards they had a time of quiet reflection where they could write, draw, paint etc. As children move through the school they recognise that they are on a spiritual journey and they are encouraged to ask questions about their own and others faiths. In-service training for religious education is held regularly and teachers showed they were secure in their subject knowledge. The issue from the previous denominational inspection of using the knowledge of clergy has been successfully addressed.

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

The Head Teacher has a strong and clear Christian vision for the school and conveys this by her own actions and care for the school community. She is fully supported by the Senior Leadership Team and the Governing Body. As excellent role models they make a significant contribution to the strength of the school as a church school which is seen as a 'living, breathing Christian family'. Succession planning is built into the school structure and the RE subject leader is being work shadowed by a less experienced member of staff who has already taken over some areas of responsibility. Great care is taken to recruit staff who are empathetic to the school vision. They are guided by senior mentors and are encouraged to attend the monthly Sunday Family services. Governors' skills are used to advantage. Foundation governors are part of the curriculum committee and plan and implement an annual curriculum evening. Individual governors spend a whole day in school each year and the programme always includes seeing an RE lesson. The cohesive quality of the school community, high staff morale, team work and excellent relationships between all groups exemplify the strong Christian foundation. Views of parents, pupils and staff are regularly sought and the findings analysed and quickly communicated. There is a very active Parents' Association who work closely with the church at social events. The school is very well supported by the diocese and takes trainees from the Diocesan SCITT teacher training course on placement. This is a school where children can be children, where laughter is frequently heard and joy abounds. The school well deserves its reputation in the community as an effective and distinctive church school. The judgement of outstanding in the previous denominational inspection has not only been maintained but in many areas has moved forward and there is every indication that it will continue to do so.



## Judgement Recording Form (NSJRF)



**Name of School:** St John's Church of England Primary School  
Swan Lane, Whetstone, N20 0PL

**Date of inspection:** 13th March 2012  
**Type of Church school:** Voluntary Aided  
**Phase of education:** Primary  
**Number of pupils:** 244  
**URN Number:** 101321  
**NS Inspector's Number:** 299

Rating 1-4

How distinctive and effective is the school as a Church school?	1
How well does the school, through its distinctive Christian character, meet the needs of all learners?	1
What is the impact of collective worship on the school community?	1
How effective is the religious education?	1
How effective are the leadership and management of the school, as a church school?	1
The school meets the statutory requirement for collective acts of worship	Yes
The school meets the statutory requirement for religious education *	Yes