



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

St John's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Westmorland Avenue

Dukinfield

Cheshire

SK16 5JA

Previous SIAMS grade: Outstanding

Current inspection: Outstanding

Diocese: Chester

Local authority: Tameside

Date of inspection: 10 December 2015

Date of last inspection: July 2010

School's unique reference number: 106228

Headteacher: Vicki Hewitt-Lee

Inspector's name and number: Robert Haigh NS660

School context

St John's is an average-sized primary school. The very large majority of pupils are of White British heritage with English as their first language. The proportion of pupils with disabilities and special educational needs is below average, as is the proportion eligible for the pupil premium. The school holds a number of accreditations including the Healthy School Award, the Active Mark, the Eco Silver Award and the Arts School Award. The inspection occurred during the consultation period regarding the governing body's proposal to change the status of the school to voluntary aided.

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

- The visionary, dynamic and creative Christian leadership of the headteacher, very effectively supported by all staff and governors, shapes and sustains the school's vibrant Christian ethos. It also ensures that deeply embedded Christian values contribute strongly to children's personal development and achievement.
- Worship is central to the school's life and makes a significant contribution to the spiritual growth of the whole school family.
- Exceptional pastoral care reflects the Christian values of love, trust and forgiveness. As a result, children's behaviour, relationships and attitudes to learning are outstanding.
- The school is a beacon of Christian care and love in the community. Strong links with the parish church draw school, families and church together in harmony

Area to improve

- Review and evaluate the mission statement involving the whole school family so that it proclaims the school's Christian vision and future aims clearly and boldly

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

The adopted motto 'Love of God. Love of neighbour. Love of oneself' is at the heart of this popular school. Christian values make an impact on its life at every level. Its Christian character

and inclusive ethos show in the attitudes and actions of all. Children explain confidently, 'We are a big loving family looking to Jesus as our guide and example as we grow together'. A belief in the God-given value of each child is paramount. It inspires staff in their commitment to ensure all children achieve their goals. They see themselves as Christian role models. Children respond with exemplary behaviour and a thirst for learning. A Year 6 boy said 'Our teachers expect a lot of us and push us to our limits, but also make our learning fun'. Christian love and tolerance are the basis of harmonious relationships. Children are known well and feel safe. Their attendance level is high. As a result, they make good progress throughout the school and attain at or above national figures. Staff support the vulnerable and those with special needs enabling them to make good progress. Children for whom the school receives extra funding are rapidly catching up with others. The levels of children's thoughtfulness and care are striking. A Year 5 girl said 'Finding ways to show the kindness of Jesus and look after each other is an important part of us'. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC) is promoted strongly. Local community projects enhance social development and links with a school in India foster cultural understanding. Children develop a strong moral and social conscience alongside their excellent spiritual development. They support a variety of charities including the local food bank, explaining this as an expression of Christian compassion and generosity. Religious Education (RE) is well-taught and makes an outstanding contribution to the school's Christian character. It helps children understand the biblical basis of Christian belief and values, appreciate Christianity as a global faith, discover other religions and value social diversity.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Great importance is attached to collective worship. It is well-planned and firmly rooted in Bible teaching, Christian values and the church calendar. It is inclusive and valued by all. Worship supports children's spiritual growth and moral development, enabling them to discover the relevance of faith and express its meaning in their lives. They speak with clarity and spiritual maturity about the inspiration and learning they draw from worship and Bible teaching. Year 6 children stated 'We come together as God's family to praise, pray, give thanks, ask for forgiveness and listen to the Holy Spirit'. Worship extends beyond daily occasions in class and larger school gatherings. Children attend family services and church celebrations at Christian festivals. This deepens their knowledge of Anglican worship, the church's year and key Christian beliefs. They have a sense of the awe and wonder of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. As one Year 5 boy put it, 'God the Father above us, Jesus beside us, the Spirit within us'. This awareness is enhanced by the school's witness with the church in the annual Whit walk to celebrate Pentecost. Children sing joyfully and know the Lord's Prayer. The school is extending the use of Anglican responses in worship. Children say prayer and reflection increase their sense of God's presence and help them think about the needs of others as well as their own. Attractive displays of Bible verses in the hall are a stimulus to children's reflection. They also value the classroom and outdoor reflection areas where they can say the school prayers, write their own for use in worship or pray spontaneously. Children frequently plan and lead worship which they say enhances their understanding and leadership skills. Children, staff, governors and parents are involved in evaluation which informs future priorities. Eucharistic worship is not included in provision planning. The dynamic contribution of the vicar enables children to experience different expressions of worship and strengthens the shared sense of purpose between school and church.

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

The exceptional vision and inspirational Christian leadership of the headteacher, ably supported by staff and governors, motivates everyone to provide the very best for the children. The positive influence of leadership is also seen in the creation of an encouraging ethos for learning which enables children to be ambitious and resilient learners who achieve successfully. RE and collective worship are well led, have a high profile and meet statutory requirements. The school listens to and acts upon the views of children, for example in worship development and aspects of school

organisation. They contribute enthusiastically through the buddying and mentoring arrangements, the school council and the ethos group. The school knows itself well. Self-evaluation is robust and informs development planning. Christian values are explicitly referred to in key policies. The issues from the previous inspection have been fully addressed. The school values diocesan support which improves the expertise of governors, leaders and teachers and leads to further development of the school's Christian ethos. The governors are well-informed and very supportive. They also challenge leaders which enhances the drive for improvement. Their contribution to strategic planning and development is strong. They are constantly looking ahead to ensure the Christian character of the school is sustained, including in the recruitment and training of staff and the development of future leaders. Their ambition to secure aided status is an indication of their vigilance. It is also prompting the need to review the school's distinctiveness, vision and mission as a hub and agent for change within the locality it serves. Collaboration with the local community is already strong. The school hosts an ethos conference for partner primary schools, holds social events for local residents and supports neighbourhood charities. The historic and flourishing link with the parish enhances the school's Christian identity and strengthens the church's connections with families. Parents are very supportive of the school's Christian ethos. They are proud that the school 'does the very best for all the children' and enables them to become happy, confident and motivated learners who care for others.

SIAMS report December 2015 St John's C of E Primary School Dukinfield Cheshire SK16 5JA