

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St John the Evangelist Church of England Primary School

Address	Ivy Road, Macclesfield, Cheshire, SK11 8QN		
Date of inspection	31 January 2019	Status of school	Voluntary aided
Diocese	Chester	URN	111311

Overall Judgement	Grade	Good
How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?		
Additional Judgements		
The impact of collective worship	Grade	Good
The effectiveness of religious education (RE)	Grade	Good

School context

St John's is a primary school with 297 pupils on roll. The school has a very low level of religious and cultural diversity and very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is below the national average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is in line with national averages. The school received an overall judgement of Good from Ofsted in April 2018.

The school's Christian vision

St John's is a caring Christian community striving to support its members to achieve their God-given potential. Exploring our unique gifts and raising aspirations, we prepare children for the challenges of the modern world. Following Jesus' example we seek to grow good people who can make a difference.

Key findings

- With the support of her staff and governors, the headteacher has been instrumental in successfully developing a Christian ethos of respect, trust and kindness, where all feel loved and nurtured.
- The broad and balanced curriculum and wide range of extra-curricular opportunities enable pupils to develop as thoughtful and aspirational learners.
- Good links with other local church schools and innovative theme weeks enable pupils to acquire some understanding of wider global and social issues and to respond with compassion.
- All members of the school community value collective worship which makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual development and to the compassionate ethos of the school.
- The introduction of new curriculum and assessment systems for Religious Education (RE) together with engaging teaching are giving pupils greater opportunities to reflect and think more deeply about issues of faith and religion.

Areas for development

- Develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of other world faiths in order to prepare them more effectively for life in a diverse society.
- Enable pupils to have a more active role in the planning and leading of collective worship in order to further promote their spiritual development.
- Improve pupils' understanding of Christianity as a worldwide faith in order to broaden their perspective on global issues.

How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?

Inspection findings

The motto 'Children are a gift from the Lord.' is at the heart of all that the school does, however the love and care offered to pupils is extended to all members of the school community. The long-serving headteacher and other senior staff lead by example to ensure that the school is a harmonious, Christian community. One member of staff commented, 'Everybody looks after each other. The school is very much a family.' The headteacher is very highly regarded by staff and parents who speak movingly of the sensitive support provided when they have needed it. Staff turnover is low and colleagues value the teamwork and mutual support that help to reduce their workload and promote their wellbeing.

All members of the school community have recently been involved in developing the overall vision through statements using the acronym 'gift' which are based firmly in biblical teaching and which are prominent throughout the school. Governors acknowledge that not all policies have yet been reviewed in the light of this renewed vision.

Parents feel that the school's Christian vision creates respectful, caring pupils who have a 'good awareness of right and wrong.' Pupils behave extremely well. They treat each other with kindness and respect and value the opportunities they get to help younger pupils as buddies. Instances of bullying or of prejudicial language or behaviour are extremely rare and pupils are confident that they can go to adults for help if they need it. They ascribe their good behaviour, however, to the well-embedded and consistently applied behaviour policy based on a system of rewards and sanctions, rather than to the schools' Christian vision and values. Forgiveness and reconciliation are certainly practised in school but are not explicitly referred to in policies.

The progress of all children is carefully monitored and interventions put in place where needed. As a result, rates of progress, including those of disadvantaged pupils, are improving and are generally in line with the national average. The school is currently involved in a local authority programme to support disadvantaged learners, but it is as yet too early to tell how successful this will be in accelerating progress for this group. Parents appreciate that the school treats each pupil as an individual and encourages them to be 'the best that they can be'. The school has achieved the Challenge Award from the National Association for Able Children in Education and pupils enjoy school and value the opportunities to discuss and ask questions.

Pupils have high aspirations for the future. These are fostered by a rich, broad and balanced curriculum, a wide range of extra-curricular activities and initiatives such as a Year 6 residential visit to Liverpool Hope University. This is organised through an effective partnership with other local faith schools including the nearby Catholic high school. This partnership has clearly provided many benefits to the pupils of St John's through visits, visitors, shared good practice and training. As an example, the cluster worked together to embed the Cheshire East Toolkit for Special Educational Needs. Theme weeks are also used to widen pupils' horizons. Pupils spoke enthusiastically about Science Week, which has evidently fired their imaginations and ignited in some pupils what may be a life-long interest in science.

The use of books such as 'Dreams of Freedom' and 'Great Women Who Changed the World' as a whole school focus for Book Week has enabled pupils to begin to consider and reflect upon matters of social justice. The school has been involved in fundraising for a range of charities, both national and international including 'Run to Rio' for street children in Brazil, Water Aid, and the Christmas Shoebox appeal. This has resulted in pupils having some awareness of global issues but they would benefit from the broader perspective of Christianity as a world-wide faith gained from involvement in global partnership links.

Governors know the school well and are very supportive of the headteacher and staff. They have undertaken joint training with staff and been fully involved in the recent self-evaluation of the school as a Church of England school. As a result they have a good understanding of its strengths and are aware of areas for future development. Although the connection with St Johns Church is particularly strong, Governors attend a range of local churches giving the school connections with the wider local community. Pupil involvement in community projects, such as making bird boxes for a local wildlife area, also strengthens these links.

Pupils attend St John's Church for the major festivals. This gives them some insight into Anglican liturgy and practice and enables them to feel part of the local church family. The clergy visit the school regularly to lead collective worship, which is generally based on Christian values or the church calendar and is linked to Biblical teaching. The style of worship is varied and engaging and pupils clearly enjoy volunteering to take part in games and role-play. Pupils value the opportunity collective worship offers for prayer 'because we get to speak to God by ourselves' and 'it is nice to reflect and have a little time to think'. Prayer corners in classrooms provide pupils with opportunities to offer their own prayers, which may be used at lunchtime or home time. Opportunities for personal prayer and reflection are further enhanced by the recent provision of a reflection area, which is also deepening pupils' spirituality. Pupils have had some involvement in evaluating acts of collective worship and this has resulted in them having greater opportunities for spontaneous prayer. Whilst being active participants in adult-led collective worship they do not yet play a significant role in planning and leading worship themselves.

During the past two years the school has introduced a revised RE curriculum and a new system of assessment. The very experienced RE Leader has ensured that staff feel well prepared for delivering the new curriculum. They consider that this demands more of a response from pupils and prompts them to think more deeply. Pupils are responding well to the challenge provided and talk enthusiastically about activities such as 'conscience alley' and role-play. They are developing a good understanding of Christianity, but their knowledge and understanding of other major world faiths and their impact on society and culture is still limited. Statutory obligations are met for both collective worship and RE.

The exemplary pastoral care offered by the school, together with the many opportunities provided for pupils to discover and develop their unique skills and talents, enable them to enjoy school and to develop, as one governor put it 'as well rounded individuals who do well at high school.'



The effectiveness of RE is Good

Regular learning walks and scrutiny of pupils' books enable the experienced RE Leader to have an accurate understanding of the quality of teaching and learning in RE. Teachers use a variety of strategies in engaging lessons that pupils respond to positively. Teachers remark that pupils are developing the ability to think more carefully and challenge what they are told. Marking is consistent and enables pupils to further develop their ideas through 'response tasks.' Less able pupils are supported through the use of support staff and through the provision of more practical tasks requiring a verbal rather than written response. They say that 'if you need any help the teachers will help you'. The new assessment system is beginning to provide quantitative data about pupils' attainment in RE which is beginning to ensure that their progress is measured more systematically.

Headteacher	Caroline Waites
Inspector's name and number	Carolyn Whiteway 933