



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

St John's C of E Voluntary Aided Primary School

Spring Park Road, Croydon,
Surrey,
CR0 5EL.

Previous SIAS grade: Outstanding

Current SIAMS grade: Outstanding

Diocese: Southwark

Local authority: Croydon

Date of inspection: 20 November 2015

Date of last inspection: 21-22 October 2010

School's unique reference number: 101788

Headteacher: Martina Martin

Inspector's name and number: Pamela Draycott 161

School context

St John's is an averaged sized primary school. Around 75% of pupils come from Christian backgrounds. The percentage of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds is high at around 55%. Those pupils who speak English as an additional language is increasing and now stands at about 20%. The percentage with special educational needs is around average whilst those for whom the school receives extra funding due to social disadvantage is below average. Since September 2015 the parish church has been without an incumbent.

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

- High academic standards and very good progress are underpinned by the school's very strong Christian motivation to serve each pupil and their varying needs.
- The very strong, supportive relationships, exemplary behaviour and positive attitudes which strongly promote the personal development of pupils so that they grow in confidence and in their 'love for one another'.
- The collective worship programme which furthers the school's explicit and inclusive Christian vision and provides outstanding religious, spiritual and moral development opportunities for pupils.
- The strong leadership of the headteacher and her deputy effectively supported by the work of the governing body and the commitment of parents to St John's a church school.

Areas to improve

- Ensure that the global and multicultural nature of Christianity as a world faith is celebrated as part of the further development of the Religious Education (RE) curriculum.

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

The caring Christian ethos of St John's is encapsulated in the school motto which is 'Love one another'. This is clearly expressed in Christian terms and permeates all aspects of school life and work. Pupils know that it comes from the teaching of Jesus. They speak confidently about how it affects the very strong and positive relationships in school as well as the exemplary behaviour. The school's core values, through which it successfully aims to shape pupils' behaviour and attitudes, are presented acrostically as 'Christian' – creativity, honest, resilience, independence, support, talent, inclusion, achievements and neighbourliness. This reminds pupils and adults of the school's foundation. Pupils have an embedded understanding of its Christian underpinning and relate this extremely well to their life both inside and outside of school. Academic standards are high and the learning needs of all pupils, regardless of ability or background are taken into account. This means that progress is very good and often outstanding. St John's school is consistently in the top 20% of all schools nationally for both attainment and progress. Classroom and corridor displays are vibrant and well linked to both learning and to its Christian ethos and values. Pupils have a very strong sense of belonging and feel happy and safe in school. They are supportive of one another. This results in attendance which is above the national average and minimal instances of poor behaviour. Where they do occur they are dealt with sensitively and in a loving but just way. Pupils' very strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development is emphatically supported in the worship programme. RE, other areas of the curriculum, the pastoral system, the areas of responsibility the pupils take on and extra-curricular activities likewise support SMSC development very well. Pupils, irrespective of faith or non-faith background, respond very positively to all these opportunities. RE, through both its content and the range of teaching and learning activities planned for, makes an unquestionable contribution to the school's Christian ethos and values. Pupils recognise the importance of learning about a range of religions in RE. They see this as part of 'caring about others' and 'understanding other people's beliefs and ways of life'.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Daily worship is highly valued by the school community. It is very well planned and delivered. Pupils are appropriately involved in leading worship. This is especially so during class led worship which is of an extremely high standard. Pupils and adults, including governors and parents, understand the importance of worship in supporting and expressing the school's Christian ethos and values. It also clearly contributes to the school's strong community feel. Monitoring occurs through the 'faith committee' and also through 'pupil voice meetings'. Suggestions made here are considered and 'taken on board' appropriately. For example in terms of encouraging more pupil leadership of worship. The programme is led by a range of people, including local clergy from different Christian denominations. These different perspectives enhance the worship experience. Regular visits to the parish church enrich the worship programme. Pupils speak positively of 'their church'. They enjoy visiting for worship and feel a sense of purpose and peace when doing so. Christian festivals are appropriately celebrated both in school and at church services. There is a clear focus on Jesus and his importance for Christians, as well as on biblical teaching during worship. Music positively impacts on the quality of worship. Pupils and adults, including the large number of parents who attend class and church worship, join in singing enthusiastically and tunefully. Prayer and reflection has a central place in school life, during worship and at other times in the school day. Reflection tables in each classroom and around the school, including a spiritual garden provide further opportunities for prayer. Pupils use these respectfully. Pupils speak confidently about praying on their own outside of school. They know the Lord's Prayer and have some age appropriate understanding of its meaning for Christians. They know the school prayer which is said periodically. Aspects of Anglican worship such as a bell signifying the start of worship, opening and closing sentences with response and lighting candles are well embedded. Pupils have an age-appropriate understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit but do not understand that this expresses Christian belief in the 'Trinity'.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

RE has a high profile alongside English and mathematics. The school has recently applied for and been granted a gold standard RE Quality Mark. This is awarded by the RE Council for England and Wales in recognition of outstanding RE. The subject is very well led and teachers are very well supported in the teaching of RE. This has helped develop confidence in teaching RE which is consistently good and often outstanding. The subject leader and senior staff, as well as the link governor, have a clear understanding of the strengths of the subject area and of the areas that they wish to refine further. Standards of attainment, are well above the national expectation, and are at least as high as standards in literacy. This means that pupils make at least good and often very good progress in RE. A range of activities leads to strong engagement in lessons and to extremely good behaviour. Teacher marking and assessment of pupils' work is happening regularly, in line with whole school policy. It is well focused and helps pupils improve their work. Pupils respond well to opportunities within RE to apply their learning to situations in the world today. For example, in a Year 4 unit on 'creation' pupils address what it means to be a global citizen and to be a 'steward' of God's creation. Following the Diocesan scheme of work, there is a good balance between learning about Christianity and learning about other faiths. However, teaching about Christianity as a world-wide faith with a consequent multi-cultural dimension is under-developed.

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

The headteacher works very effectively with her deputy to lead a school driven by its Christian ethos and values. In this, she is very well supported by her governors who are strongly committed to its Christian foundation. Leaders articulate this Christian vision well including its impact on the standards achieved by pupils of differing abilities and backgrounds, though for example the school's value of resilience, talents and achievement. Staff and parents, as well as the pupils, recognise the importance of 'the St John's way'. Consequently, there is a wide-ranging commitment to implementing and living by the school's Christian vision and values. The school will, from September 2016, and beginning with Reception, move towards being two form entry. A driving force for this expansion is that of Christian service to a larger number of pupils and their families. Leaders, including governors, other staff and parents are more than aware of the need to ensure that the school's existing Christian ethos and values are maintained and enhanced during the expansion period. Firm plans and good steps have been taken to ensure this. Key issues from the previous denominational inspection have been fully addressed. St John's is a school that strives to be continually 'moving forward'. Leaders have a deep understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development as a church school. This means that the school's self-evaluation and strategic improvement planning are accurate and well-focused. RE and worship meet statutory requirements. The link governor is active in her support and monitoring of these vital areas of school life. The Faith Committee contributes well to driving forward developments. Parents are appropriately involved in school life and are extremely appreciative and supportive of the schools explicit and inclusive Christian ethos. Links with the parish church and other churches are strong. There are some appropriate but limited links with faith communities other than Christian. Links with the Diocese of Southwark are good. The school's 'GROW' programme, provides appropriate professional development for those who may want to become leaders in church schools in the future as well as supporting specifically identified school needs for training. New staff are well inducted into working in a church school and there are positive links with other church schools in the area which supports professional development well.

SIAMS report November 2015 St John's CE School Croydon, Surrey, CR0 5EL