



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

St John's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Charlton Park
Keynsham
Bristol
BS31 2NB

Diocese: Bath and Wells

Local authority: Bath and North and East Somerset

Dates of inspection: 12th June 2013

Date of last inspection: 11th June 2008

School's unique reference number: 109197

Headteacher: Mr Matthew Cottrell

Inspector's name and number: Mrs Daphne Spitzer- 37

School context

St John's Church of England Primary School is located close to the centre of the town of Keynsham, near the city of Bristol. There are 211 children on roll. The vast majority of the children are of white British heritage. The numbers with learning difficulties/physical disabilities are below the national average as is the Pupil Premium.

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

St John's Church of England Primary School is a community which loudly proclaims the roots of its ethos in Christian values and the Christian faith. This makes a profound difference to the life of the school and creates an environment where children are valued as individuals and whose talents are given every opportunity to flourish. It also has a very positive impact on children's academic, personal and spiritual development and achievement.

Established strengths

- Outstanding relationships between the children based on distinctive Christian values
- Exceptionally good leadership by the headteacher in developing the school's distinctive Christian character
- Strong partnership between the school, parents and church community demonstrated by the Church/ School Link Group

Focus for development

- Further extend the opportunities and spaces available for quiet reflection and developing spirituality
- Widen and extend opportunities for children's leadership of collective worship on a regular basis

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

St John's Church of England Primary School is a welcoming, happy Christian community. Christian values are recognised, celebrated and established in daily life. These values have

a strong impact on the children's very good attendance and excellent academic achievement. The school creates a special, caring Christian environment in which all children are cherished and highly valued in line with the core Christian belief that each one is created in the image of God. Children say that the Christian values of wisdom and creativity in particular help them to learn well. They say that having wisdom helps them to make the right choices which are to follow God's rules and Christ's teaching. Christian values have a good impact in promoting spiritual development. This is evident in the school's promotion of the value of peace. A child said that if she is stuck in her work she often tries to feel calm and peaceful and she knows that *'God will help her to learn'*. Relationships between the children are outstanding because they are built on the values of peace, friendship and forgiveness. Children say it is important to act peacefully instead of retaliating in any disagreement. The very caring relationships are promoted too by the school's strong focus on Christian family life and friendship. An example of the school's good provision for this is the forthcoming theme day, on the subject of the school's Christian values in which the children are grouped vertically in age with activities organised and led by the oldest children. The school promotes spiritual development very effectively by including times for quiet reflection and prayer in the school day. The focus on spirituality is apparent in the powerful image of Jesus the Good Shepherd and in a child's comment that it reminds her *'that God is always with us even in the difficult times'*. The prayer tree in the hall is used very well by children during lunch time. However there is no space designated specifically in classrooms for prayer and reflection, which would be more easily accessible or as yet in the school grounds. Religious education (RE) plays an important role in developing spiritual awareness. This was evident in an older class when children commented on the *'magical'* qualities of paintings depicting the nativity. RE also promotes the school's distinctive Christian values very effectively. This was reflected when the youngest children were learning about the value of respect as illustrated in the story of Jesus and Zacchaeus. Work undertaken to develop children's understanding of other diverse communities is good. This is evident in the link with the Christian school in South Sudan which enabled children to realise it could be possible for them to make a difference to the lives of other children by raising money to provide a window for one of the classrooms. The recent Hindu Day also had a very positive impact on the children as does the exciting and engaging learning in RE about people of other faiths living in this country.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is explicitly Christian and central to daily life at St John's Church School. This is because it is highly effective in promoting the school's distinctive Christian values. This was reflected in the worship observed on the Christian value of respect led very well by the Rector. Children were very attentive in worship because the methods used were highly engaging ensuring that children understood the message easily and that it was relevant on a personal level. This was evident in the good use made of technology to illustrate the story of Jesus and the centurion and the way that mutual respect was demonstrated. Worship develops spiritual awareness very effectively. A time of prayer and guided reflection is integral to daily collective worship and has an impact. This is evident in a child's comment that he valued worship as a time to talk to God and tell Him your worries. The siting of the school Prayer Tree in the large hall is very effective because children feel that their silent written prayers are part of the spiritual setting for worship. The weekly visits of the clergy to lead worship are highly valued by the children. This is evident in their comments about the way the Team Vicar uses the role of 'Rodney', not only to entertain but also to challenge perceptions and create empathy and compassion. Worship is led and coordinated very ably by the deputy head who closely involves a group of children, known as the Worship Team, in its planning and delivery each week. Members of this group have a high profile in school and are developing a very good understanding of the elements of worship. As yet however, children do not have opportunities to lead whole acts of worship on a regular basis. This area of school life is monitored exceptionally well by governors, staff and children in a variety of ways and issues raised are addressed. Monitoring by the Worship Team is innovative, emphasising its importance. Worship promotes an understanding of Anglican practice as seen from the simple liturgy used, such as greetings and responses. Children are also developing an understanding of the Trinity. The contributions of the local church as well as the Churches Together team are highly effective in the life of the school.

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

The headteacher's Christian vision and his unswerving commitment to this vision are the driving force at the heart of the school's success and ongoing improvement as a church school. The work of the Church/School Link Group, set up by the headteacher since the last inspection has been key to the progress made over the last few years. The clergy and governing body have made a significant contribution and ensured that this vision is shared and understood by the school community. The recent work on developing the school's core Christian values, involving the whole school community, has enabled staff to acquire a good understanding of how the school's Christian ethos and belief produce the values the school lives by- ie the text from St John that all (children) should have '*life in all its fullness*'. Parents say they have valued the way that recent developments led by the headteacher and his deputy have strengthened the school's existing good distinctive Christian character. The school has a very accurate picture of its strengths and areas for development. Governors are now very well able to identify the impact of their Christian values on the children's learning and achievement. The school's self evaluation process is good and issues raised by the leadership for development have been accurately identified. Parents are very supportive of the school's distinctive Christian character and feel fully involved in evaluating the school's performance as a church school. RE is given a high priority within the school curriculum and is led exceptionally well by the headteacher. He ensures that the subject is monitored and evaluated as a core subject, tracking children's learning to ensure that each child makes good progress. Professional development for both staff and governors has been very effective and the support of the diocese in leading recent Inset has been valued. The school works with the diocese providing support for aspiring headteachers of church schools. The school's partnership with parents, the church and its local community is very strong. A new and valued initiative from the Churches Together team is the presentation of Bibles to each Key Stage 2 child at the start of Year 3. An annual Patronal festival has been started by the Church/School Link Group which is held in the school grounds in the summer and enhances the spiritual life of the church school family; as also did recent the Easter Experience activities. A musical partnership with Bath Abbey is enriching the lives of children through the enjoyment of singing. Governors make an invaluable contribution to the life of the school. For instance, the governor who is the church Director of Music is also involved in the musical life of the school and part of the School Prayer Group, made up of local members of the congregation and parents.

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