



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

St John the Evangelist Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Fosseway
Clevedon
North Somerset
BS21 5EL

Previous SIAMS grade: Outstanding

Diocese: Bath and Wells

Local authority: North Somerset

Dates of inspection: 20 January 2015

Date of last inspection: 15 January 2010

School's unique reference number: 109274

Headteacher: Catherine Cowell

Inspector's name and number: Muriel Griffiths NS268

School context

St John the Evangelist Church of England Primary School has 303 pupils currently on roll. The majority of children are white British and speak English as their first language. The proportion of pupils supported at school action and school action plus is below average. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for pupil premium is average. There are no children with a statement of special needs. The parish priest moved to another diocese several months ago and the school is maintaining their links with the church through the foundation governors during the vacancy.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St John the Evangelist as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The identified core Christian values underpin all aspects of the school, leading to a community where everyone is celebrated for their uniqueness.
- School leaders ensure that the Christian ethos is continually evolving and that children are placed at the heart of these developments.
- Collective worship is integral to the development of children's personal spirituality and to promoting the school's distinctive Christian values.

Areas to improve

- Share the school's core Christian values more fully with the wider school community so that parents have the opportunity to share in the promotion of these values.
- Further develop the spiritual garden and provide more opportunities for its use across the curriculum, so giving children more time for quiet reflection in order to enhance their spiritual development.

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

St John the Evangelist Church of England Primary school is a friendly, welcoming Christian community where the school's chosen Christian values are recognised, celebrated and strongly underpin the daily life of the school. These values are explored in depth through collective worship, as an integral part of the curriculum and are backed up by the example set by teachers and adults in school. The school's Christian character, through its values, contributes well to academic attainment and children achieve well. The school recognises children are unique as individuals and shows good awareness on inclusion provision, through the rigour it shows for the achievement of vulnerable children, using an 'Achievement for All' programme. Values also have a strong impact on children's very good attendance and on the excellent behaviour seen around the school. They promote a strong sense of belonging within the school community and the way that they are promoted enhances spiritual development with many opportunities provided to pause and reflect. One child, reflecting on the current value, 'hope', during a religious education (RE) lesson, commented, 'You cannot see it but you can feel it in the air'. The school's Christian ethos, collective worship and RE are effective in supporting children's excellent spiritual, social and moral development. Children listen respectfully to one another in an atmosphere of openness and trust. RE lessons give particular opportunities for children to demonstrate how they value the opinions of others. Child initiated activities demonstrate support for many local charities and also providing shoe boxes for the 'Mustard Seed Relief Mission', so recognising that they can make a difference to people's lives. Children understand that they are helping people who are suffering and understand that their contributions demonstrate God's love and care. These initiatives help children to have a better understanding of Christianity as a global faith. The school's values are evident through displays and interactive reflective areas, which are used regularly by the children, who explain they are 'places where you can be quiet and pray'. An area for development in the previous inspection was to develop an outside area for quiet reflection in the school grounds. A spiritual garden is being developed outside but this needs further consideration as to how it can be used across the whole curriculum for quiet reflection.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is an important time of the day at St John the Evangelist Church of England Primary School. This is because worship plays a key role in promoting the school's Christian values. Children learn about Christian values, Bible stories, religious traditions and special days in the Christian calendar. They say that they enjoy worship because 'we need to know about God and how He will help you in your lives'. Children are able to talk about acts of worship that have been special for them such the agape services. This was evident on the day of the inspection, during an agape service when they explored the meaning of the current value, 'hope'. There was a very special feeling of reverence and quiet as the children looked at symbols, listened to appropriate Bible verses and joined in responses, reflection, prayers and songs. The school visits the church for major Christian festivals for services which are well supported by parents, governors and the local community. After the Easter Service, a local church member commented in a letter to the school, 'how meaningful the service was'. Parents appreciate these opportunities to join their children for worship. The school community is involved in monitoring and evaluation so that the school can discover the impact of this special time in the school day. Children say that they especially like the regular opportunities to plan and lead worship and the school is planning more occasions when they can do this. Prayer is an important part of the daily life of the school through opportunities for children to write their own prayers. They know that prayers might be 'saying thank you or asking God for forgiveness' and that prayers can be said 'anywhere not just during worship'. They can explain the symbolism of the three wicks on the candle on the worship table as representing God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Consequently, they are beginning to have an understanding of the Trinity.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

RE has a high priority in the school and children clearly enjoy their RE lessons. They are taught about the main teachings, beliefs and practices of Christianity and other major world faiths. This underpins a respect for everyone's views and beliefs. Visits to a range of places of worship reinforce this respect and understanding of the beliefs of others. Children listen attentively to their teachers and to one another, participate with enthusiasm and in discussion. Good planning and teaching ensures that pupils learn well. Standards in RE are in line with national expectations and with other core subjects in the school and achievement is good. The RE co-ordinator, who has recently taken on this role, leads the subject very effectively ensuring that it is central to the life of the school. The school has given careful consideration to a focus for improvement from the previous inspection related to monitoring of the subject and 'ensuring that pupils of all abilities achieve their potential'. The monitoring of pupils' work is now systematic and in line with diocesan expectations. This means that careful tracking identifies that sufficient progress is being made by pupils of all abilities and that they achieve their full potential. Older children in the school especially enjoy opportunities to consider 'Big Questions' and have written their own questions for discussion, such as 'God, who are you?' These activities have provided challenging questions about the ultimate meaning and purpose of life and beliefs about God. Children enjoy reflecting on them and voicing their own thoughts and opinions. RE makes an important contribution to the school's Christian ethos through the strong links with the core Christian values. Lessons appropriately continue themes from collective worship, when children explore the current value through a number of appropriate activities, so helping them to increase their understanding of the value.

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

St John the Evangelist Church of England Primary school describes itself as 'a Christian community committed to excellence' and this is evident through the commitment of the headteacher and staff together with the governing body. The headteacher, staff and governors are united in their desire to strive for continual improvement which benefits all members of the school community. The school's vision is clearly articulated and a community has been created where Christian values are not only expressed, but are 'lived out' and are at the heart of the school. The whole school community has recently worked together to choose four appropriate Christian values for the school. Children talk enthusiastically about them and show excellent understanding of how they apply them to their everyday lives. The school now needs to share the Christian values with parents further so that they too can be more involved in discussing them with their children. Parents appreciate the positive impact of the school's Christian ethos on their children's education and personal development. They also appreciate links with the local church. There are many mutually supportive links between the church and the school. For example, a book of Bible stories is presented to each child starting school, at a special welcome service, given jointly from the church and school. The parish priest, who recently moved to another diocese, is greatly missed. Apart from regularly leading worship, he also joined the children for worship on other occasions and offered pastoral support throughout the school. The school enjoys visitors from a number of local churches, who come to lead worship, so giving children opportunities to get to know local Christians. Statutory requirements for RE and collective worship are met and both are central to the life of the school. The enthusiasm and commitment by the school's leadership and management ensure that children have every opportunity to grow and develop into mature, knowledgeable and caring young people.