



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 Aided Primary School

Heath Road,  
Sandbach,  
Cheshire  
CW11 2LE

**Previous SIAS grade: Good**

**Current inspection grade: Good**

**Diocese: Chester**

Local authority: Cheshire East

Dates of inspection: 7 June 2016

Date of last inspection: 12 July 2011

School's unique reference number: 111334

Headteacher: Rob Whittle

Inspector's name and number : Robert Boulter 721

#### School context

St John's Church of England Primary School is a smaller than average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or disability, as well as of pupils eligible for free school meals, is below the national average. In 2015 attendance was above the national average.

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

- The balance between encouraging academic excellence and qualities that develop the whole child within a Christian environment.
- The impact of collective worship in enabling children to apply Christian values.
- The impact of understanding in religious education (RE) on the school environment, in particular through children's art is exemplary.
- The co-operative working of senior leaders and governors and their understanding of the impact of Christian values on learners and the whole school.

#### Areas to improve

- Ensure that all members of the school community understand and articulate the impact of Christian values on the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.
- Evaluate the impact of collective worship on the lives of pupils and on the school.
- Broaden the range of worship leaders to enrich the experiences of pupils.
- Ensure assessment procedures are used effectively and consistently to inform teaching and learning and demonstrate children's progress in RE across the whole school.
- Ensure that governors are fully involved in the analysis of the impact on learners of collective worship and RE.

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

'With God, all things are possible.' This text from St Matthew's Gospel greets every visitor to St John's. It permeates everything the school does. In celebration worship each Friday, with parents present, an extensive range of individual achievement is celebrated. This is also celebrated with parents and the wider local community through the weekly news letter on the school web site. This public high praise for rich and varied achievement contributes significantly to raising the self esteem and promoting the academic development of all learners. Children, through the application of Christian values within the school, achieve to the best of their ability, making progress similar to that seen nationally. The school's distinctive Christian faith and values of endurance, forgiveness, friendship, peace, hope, trust and compassion nurture the spiritual, moral, cultural and social development of learners. The children's excellent behaviour arises from the school's behaviour policy which is built on the value of forgiveness. Pupils speak of the trust and respect shown towards one another. They agree that 'staff take time to show they understand us' and 'we are a big family, we all know each other'. Christian values of endurance, hope and compassion effectively promote pupils' academic development. A parent commented that staff are 'dedicated, provide excellent monitoring to pin point what is happening inside a child and respond swiftly'. Written evidence demonstrates that needs are identified and intervention is put in place. Pupils are clear as to what is expected of them, demonstrated by the staff's high expectations of what pupils can achieve. The impact of Christian values on pupil well-being and development is central to the Christian character of the school. This link is not always understood and made explicit by all members of the school community. Children enjoy RE and have good knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith. The contribution of traveller children enriches the experiences of other pupils in RE lessons, enabling them to learn about diversity in Christian belief. This challenges stereotypes and builds community cohesion.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is good**

The impact of collective worship, for pupils and parents, is that they know they are loved and valued as children of God. Collective worship is focussed on the centrality of Jesus Christ within the Christian faith. This core Christian belief is told through Bible stories, which enables children to make personal links with the values taught in the stories. Evidence for teaching on the nature of God, in particular the Trinity, comes from staff and children. They speak of enjoyment and engagement in listening to Vicar Jill on this topic. The impact of her teaching was demonstrated when a Reception class pupil explained that God was Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Through collective worship, children experience what it means to be a member of an inclusive community, built on Christian faith and values. St John's link with a school in Uganda is promoted in collective worship, impacting upon children's sense of responsibility for others and understanding of global differences, especially how they affect life chances of children in other parts of the world. From a solid Christian base, themes for collective worship take pupils on a spiritual journey of exploration and discovery. This enables them, for example, to make links between Christian values and British values. Celebration worship encourages high standards in learning and behaviour. Worship includes the Lord's Prayer, personal prayer and hymns. Pupils participate through discussion and response. Children sometimes organise and lead collective worship, for example an act of worship with a focus on re-cycling. Evidence in planning, recording and reflecting upon the delivery and impact of collective worship is long standing. This evaluation focuses on description of what took place but does not yet fully analyse the impact of worship on learners' lives and on the Christian character of the school. The headteacher leads engaging worship. A wide range of worship leaders and settings are not yet in place to enrich the experiences of learners.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is good**

Pupils' achievement in RE is equivalent to their progress and attainment across all subjects.

Consistently over time a large majority of children work in line with age expected standards. Monitoring carried out by the RE co-ordinator and link governor found that a small percentage of children achieve below the age expected standards. As a result there is targeted teaching, differentiated work, excellent challenging questions and the emphasis on developing children's understanding of RE. This is supported by the co-ordinator for special educational needs. Efficient classroom organization, pace, a variety of tasks and high expectations ensure that RE lessons are engaging and pupils are keen to respond and contribute their ideas. Children demonstrate that they can apply their knowledge and skills to a deeper level as they move through the school. Assessment of pupils' achievement in RE is gained through evaluating 'I can' statements, for example, 'I can describe how and why believers use holy books'. Pupils spoke of how teachers inform them of how well they have achieved and how to develop their work further. However, written assessment evidence and individual targets are not yet fully and consistently recorded in pupils' books. Christianity, through Biblical teaching, is the core of RE, developing the Christian ethos of the school. This impacts upon the behaviour of pupils in their care for one another, evidenced by positive comments made at places visited outside of the school. The leadership of RE is managed well, conscientiously and with high aspiration. The subject leader is currently working towards the school achieving the RE Quality Mark. One colleague is taking the Christian leadership course through the Diocese of Chester, equipping her with further skills to raise the level of achievement in RE.

### **The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is good**

The headteacher's vision for St John's is that all members of the school community are empowered through Christian values. 'He takes faith seriously', said one governor. The central expression of the school's Christian values is through worship. This fundamental expression of deeply held Christian values promotes personal, spiritual and academic development. At St John's, shared leadership finds expression in many ways. Pupils lead on ecology issues such as recycling, safety and energy, fostering a sense of responsibility for God's world. Governor involvement in organising the successful Christian craft club impacts on pupil understanding of Christian belief. School links, promoted by a parent, with a school in Uganda develop children's understanding of 'love thy neighbour as thyself'. The senior management team, including the governors, have high expectations and accurately identify strategies for improvement. Governors are not yet fully involved in the analysis of the impact on learners of collective worship and RE. The school has positive links with the diocese for example with a visit from the bishop. Governors take up training offered to develop their skills in managing a church school. Links between the school and the local church are strong. Children visit the church as part of the RE curriculum. The vicar leads worship in school and in the church. She provides pastoral support for families in school, as well as for staff and governors. This relationship is welcomed by parents.

SIAMS report June 2016, St John's CE VA Primary, Sandbach Heath, Sandbach CW11 2LE