

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St John's Church of England Primary School			
Address	Wheatly Avenue, Stoke-on-Trent, ST4 6SB		
Date of inspection	12 March 2020	Status of school	Voluntary aided school
Diocese	Lichfield	URN	124309

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

School context

St John's VA primary school has 303 pupils on roll. A third of the school population are from minority ethnic groups and speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is above the national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with national averages. There have been significant changes to the leadership team since the previous inspection. The current headteacher has been in post for 12 weeks. This is an interim appointment.

The school's Christian vision

As a Church of England school our aim is for an outstanding education that will inspire the children in our care to flourish, develop their hearts and minds and enable them to become happy, healthy, global citizens drawing inspiration from our Christian values.

Let your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness. Colossians 2:7

Key findings

- The school is now moving forward as a result of recent clear and decisive strategic leadership. However, all governors do not yet fully guide school development as current monitoring and evaluation is limited.
- The reviewed Christian vision is being embedded by key staff, so that all can flourish. However, the impact of the vision needs to be evidenced in school documentation in a more consistent manner.
- An effective relationship with the local Christian community enhances biblical knowledge and the collective worship experience which encourage all to thrive spiritually. Whilst the role of pupil worship leaders is growing, their involvement in planning and developing collective worship is currently limited.
- Pupils are nurtured and cared for. They are confident in expressing how a relationship with Jesus can impact on the lives of those who choose to follow him. They show resilience when facing challenges.

Areas for development

- Embed the Christian vision so that it will drive the school's aspirations, decisions and actions.
- Involve the whole school community, and in particular all governors, in monitoring and evaluating Christian distinctiveness throughout all aspects of the curriculum so that all are enabled to be challenging and knowledgeable participants in church school improvement.
- Enable pupils to develop their spiritual confidence by supporting them in their planning, leading and evaluating of collective worship.
- Build upon current developments in the assessment of religious education (RE) with its focus on next steps learning and pupil self-assessment.

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

St John's Primary school is an effective Church school. The interim headteacher, supported by key staff, is providing a fresh impetus in the drive to embed the school's distinctive Christian character. This very recent clear and decisive leadership has energised the capacity for school improvement. This is a school which is moving forward. Christian values, such as dedication, courage and joy, which are rooted in the teachings of Jesus Christ, have an impact upon pupils' lives. These values successfully nourish the pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. Pupils speak well about these values being lived out, helping them to 'flourish like flowers'. However, the vision's biblical underpinning needs to be fully embraced by the whole school so that pupils, staff, parents and the wider community can explicitly know and rejoice in its Christian foundation. Governors are committed to actively supporting the vision and reflect the Christian ethos through their actions. Evaluation processes are now in place for governors to monitor Church school effectiveness. This work does not yet fully guide Church school development. However, issues identified in the previous inspection have been addressed.

Effective curriculum planning, with its emphasis on courageous advocacy, supports pupils to flourish in their personal and academic development. This broad and balanced curriculum enhanced with extra curriculum activities enriches and cherishes pupils' lives so that they make good progress. Consistent with its vision, the school recognises pupils for more than academic success. Personal attributes of individuals are recognised and nurtured so that they can thrive. Pupils benefit from a strong sense of family within this inclusive community. 'Our teachers are a joy' commented one of the pupils. Positive attitudes to learning are reinforced with activities for resilience and perseverance so that pupils are prepared for life. These activities not only allow pupils to gain confidence but also provide valuable spiritual experiences. Early identification of learning and personal needs is effectively addressed. Improvements in behaviour strategies and nurture provision are having a significant impact on pupils' lives.

The vision, rooted in joy, enables pupils and staff to see Christian action as a lifelong commitment. The vision inspires pupils to recognise their ability to make a difference to the lives of others. Fundraising projects are many and include support for local and global charities. Leaders have rightly identified the need to re-establish global partnerships and empower pupils to become more knowledgeable as global citizens. Relationships within and beyond the school are becoming rooted in Christian values. Relationships development is now a top priority. As a result, morale has improved, and staff are motivated. Work with partner schools provides staff with the skills needed to fulfil their roles in a Church school. Assistance from the diocese is effectively supporting Church school improvement. This enables succession planning, ensuring that future Church school leaders are identified and empowered. Improvements in communication have strengthened relationships with parents, building their confidence in school leaders.

Underpinned by the Christian vision, pupils are treated with dignity and respect as unique individuals to be nurtured and challenged. There is a real sense of community in this happy school where pupils feel valued, safe and have a sense of belonging. As a result, pupils of all faiths, backgrounds and abilities feel welcomed through the expressions of love and acceptance which spring from their chosen values. School Council and Worship Council initiatives provide space to effectively explore different points of view. Standards of behaviour have improved due to the development of a behaviour management and a reward system underpinned by Christian values. Pupils with specific behaviour challenges are given a second chance to improve. 'We are forgiven just as Jesus forgives', stated one pupil.

Collective worship is an important part of the school day. Well planned worship follows the church calendar combined with threads of Christian values and beliefs using biblical material. It makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual development. Pupils have a strong understanding of the teachings of Jesus Christ and of the Trinity. They have good knowledge of the Bible which enables them to articulate how the stories link to its Christian vision. Pupils are positive towards worship and enjoy participating whenever possible. They recognise that this is where they 'pour out their feelings to God'. Class prayers and the Lord's Prayer are supplemented by some written by pupils. They understand that prayer has a purpose and meaning which is important in the life

of a worshipping community. Links with the parish church are strong and supportive. Regular Communion services celebrated in school support pupils' understanding of Anglican rituals. Christian festivals, such as Easter and Christmas are celebrated in St John's Church. These services are well attended by parents. Pupils make frequent use of reflection and Christian focus areas. This makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual development. Formal evaluation and monitoring of the impact of collective worship is limited.

Pupils enjoy RE. It makes a sound contribution to pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and to Christian distinctiveness. Art displays on biblical themes throughout the school environment serve as reminders of the high profile RE has in the school. The use of the Understanding Christianity and Discovery RE resources inspires thoughtful and deep responses to life's 'big questions.' Pupils' knowledge of the parables Jesus told and how they link to the school values is good. They have a developing understanding and awareness of the concepts at the heart of the faiths studied, such as Christianity and Islam. Specific activities such as 'Faith and Understanding Week' encourage pupils to celebrate diversity and to be globally and culturally aware of their responsibilities.

St John's school is a community that aspires to empower all to flourish spiritually and academically through the strength of Christ. In line with the text that underpins the value of joy: *Be Truly glad. There is wonderful joy ahead.* Peter 1:6



The effectiveness of RE is Good

High-quality leadership enables effective teaching. The RE lead and, more recently, the foundation link governor monitor RE. This ensures that the quality of RE provision is of a good standard and consistent throughout the school, ensuring every child can flourish. Pupils' deeper thinking is developed through thoughtfully planned lessons enabling pupils to grapple with demanding and challenging aspects of their lives and world. Assessment processes in RE are currently being built upon.

Headteacher	Maxine Rizk
Inspector's name and number	Mary Gale 337