

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St. John the Baptist Church of England Primary School

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Portsmouth
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Hampshire
Date of inspection	14 June 2018
Date of last inspection	18 June 2013
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary 116314
Headteacher	Kay Bowen
Inspector's name and number	Sally Jenkins 913

School context

St. John the Baptist Church of England (VC) Primary School is a slightly larger than average primary school. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The number of pupils with learning needs and/or disabilities is below average as is the number of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding. Pupils' attendance is above the national average. The headteacher joined the school in September 2016. The deputy headteacher, along with the Key Stage 1 leader, joined the school in September 2017 and the chair of governors and RE leader are also new to their positions since the last inspection.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St John the Baptist CE Primary School as a Church of England school are good

- Strong leadership by the headteacher, supported by staff and governors, ensures that the Christian ethos is lived by all members of the school community.
- Christian values and learning attitudes play an important part in the school and these lead to strong relationships and good pupil behaviour.
- The opportunities available to pupils, through elected pupil groups, to be part of some leadership decisions help to positively shape the work within the school.
- The strengthening partnership between the school and the local churches makes a positive contribution to the lives of pupils.

Areas to improve

- Further develop spiritual reflection spaces to enable pupils to take a leading role in the spiritual development of the school.
- Deepen adults' and pupils' understanding of the positive impact of collective worship on all aspects of school life, through involving an increasingly wide range of the school community in the planning and delivery.
- Develop pupils' understanding of Christianity within global communities.

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

St. John the Baptist Primary School has been through a turbulent time since the last inspection and through working together as a united team the leadership and all staff have established the Christian character of the school so that it provides a supportive, yet challenging environment for the pupils. The newly agreed values are solidly embedded so that they are at the very heart of all that is undertaken. Pupils and adults articulate clearly how respect, friendship and trust are at the centre of the school's ethos, which they understand is based on Christian teaching. From the moment you enter the school, the air of friendship and welcome pervades. It is clear that the values are part of everyday conversation, being used to discuss behaviours, relationships, learning situations and expectations from both pupils and adults. A key aspect of this is that house points are awarded to pupils for displaying one of the values throughout the day, rather than for completing a piece of work. Key Stage 1 pupils express their opinion that the school is "a caring and lovely place and the values help to make it that way." Attainment data shows that pupils achieve at or above the expected national levels and that progress is good. The staff work effectively in supporting all pupils and it is clear that the school's Christian character shapes the approach to this support and to attendance. Their care for each pupil results in the more vulnerable being given targeted support, both academic and social, which results in their increased confidence and progress. The school rightly regard the pastoral care and support for every child as a strength of the school. Pupils show a good attitude towards their learning and this is supported by the pupil Learning Council who promote REACH, the school's learning attitudes, alongside the school's Christian values. The school's Spirit Team are helping to develop opportunities for spirituality throughout the school. The pupils from this team are instrumental in providing areas within the school building for pupils to pray and reflect. Most adults within the school understand the school's definition of spirituality and are able to help pupils explore this within school. Pupils from Year R are given many opportunities throughout the week to develop their SMSC learning from Forest School activities to caring for the guinea pigs and using their reflection pebbles. Religious education lessons are a key opportunity for pupils to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This aspect of learning plays a significant part of the RE day each half term. Pupils are given opportunities to debate their ideas with their peers, expressing and questioning ideas within a safe and respectful environment. Pupils show some understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural faith. Key Stage 2 pupils speak thoughtfully about the various religions they are taught during their time at the school displaying a mature respect for people's beliefs and ideas.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is often held toward the end of the school day to bring the school together and celebrate the day they have had. Pupils speak positively about this part of the day, especially when the worship is held in the school hall. Some Key Stage 2 pupils feel less engaged with worship held in the classroom and this is an issue the leadership team are aware they need to address. Pupils enter the hall for worship with respect and are generally ready and eager to participate. They are aware of the liturgical colours and the order of the Christian year. Worship starts with a greeting, which pupils readily respond to, and the lighting of three trinity candles. Pupils from all year groups are able to discuss their understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit at an age appropriate level. Pupils enjoy participating in, or watching others being part of, drama activities. This often involves acting out Bible stories. Links are made between the school's Christian values and Bible stories and this enables pupils to see the relevance to their own lives. The headteacher is an accredited Godly Play practitioner and is keen to use this approach to explore the Bible and enhance the pupils' spiritual development. Within worship there is a focus on the life and work of Jesus and pupils from across the school are able to speak with some understanding of his importance to Christians. Within worship, time is given to prayer and reflection. Prayers are often written by pupils and left in the prayer cross in the school hall. These prayers, alongside those that reflect the worship theme, are then read, either by pupils or the headteacher. Pupils have a good understanding of the purpose of prayer and they are keen to write prayers for worship and for their class prayer areas. The members of the Spirit Team are responsible for keeping these class areas tidy, as well as the school prayer areas. It is not clear how often these are used by pupils, although they speak about them with pride. The school would like to develop quiet reflection areas within the school grounds. The school have welcomed visits from a prayer van on two occasions, which pupils have enjoyed. This gave them opportunities to think and respond to prayer in different ways. Since the last inspection pupils take a greater role in the delivery and planning of worship, although the school is keen to improve this still further by including more pupils, more regularly. One of the local clergy or a Methodist minister leads a whole school weekly worship. Pupils enjoy opportunities throughout the year to worship in the local church. A regular pattern of monitoring worship has

been effectively established. Parents speak of their children feeling part of the school community and feel that worship supports this. They also refer to the collective worship themes being written on the weekly newsletter alongside a Bible quote, both of which they find helpful.

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

The headteacher, who has been in post just under two years, has had a profound effect on the school, steadying the concerns of parents and staff and leading the school forward at a good pace. She is passionate about the school and ensures that it provides a safe, stimulating, Christian environment where the pupils can enjoy learning and achieve well. The headteacher is very well supported by her leadership team and dedicated, hardworking governors who all live and promote the school's Christian values and vision. The staff feel valued and appreciated, which enables everyone to work together as a cohesive team providing a good education for the pupils. The governors have a strong understanding of the school and its present position and have clear ideas as to the next steps. They ensure that the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship are fully met. The development points from the last inspection have been addressed and although positive outcomes have been established, the headteacher and governors are determined that they can continue to improve these aspects still further. The RE leader has been in post just under a year and is therefore still learning her role. She is working hard, alongside a foundation governor and the headteacher, to ensure that RE teaching and learning within the school is of a good standard. She has attended courses for leading the subject to ensure she has a good foundation from which to work. This, alongside her obvious enthusiasm and understanding of RE, and the training other staff will continue to receive, will enable RE to improve still further. Teachers and other staff are encouraged to attend training courses, including those involving future leadership skills. The link between the school and the local churches has improved greatly within the last few years. The clergy are regularly in school and welcome the pupils to the church. The headteacher and members of the Spirit Team have taken part in some church services. Pupils speak with excitement about these occasions. There has recently been a resurgence in the relationship with the school and the church congregation, brought about by the 'chasuble project'. Members of the school choir sing at the local nursing home and the school supports local foodbank and present appeals. Pupils are excited to be elected to the various pupil groups, taking their responsibilities very seriously. One of these pupil groups decides on the local and national charities they wish to support. Throughout their practice and their discussions about their roles, the Christian ethos of the school shines out. The school are hoping to develop a relationship with a village in Ghana and this will go some way to helping the pupils have an understanding of global communities. The school leaders are aware that this is an aspect they have not yet sufficiently explored. Parents feel welcomed within the school and know that they can now speak to members of staff and be listened to, as well as being valued as helpers within school. They speak of a greater Christian influence in the school and improved relationships, with the Christian value of trust being paramount.

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