



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

<p>St John's Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Infant School 4, New Street, Chatham, Kent, ME4 6RH Previous SIAS grade: Outstanding Diocese: Rochester Local authority: Medway Date of inspection: 11th December 2014 Date of last inspection: 1st October 2009 School's unique reference number: 118640 Headteacher: Joanne Collman Inspector's name and number: Pamela Draycott 161</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">School context</p> <p>St John's is a small Church of England voluntary controlled infant school. The percentage of pupils who speak English as an additional language is double the national average. The percentage with special educational needs is below the national average. Those for whom pupil premium funding is received due to social disadvantage is higher than average. A very small number of pupils come from active church-going families. A larger number come from Muslim families who choose the school because of its faith values.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St John's as a Church of England school are good</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The improvements made to attainment levels and progress based on the school's Christian service to its diverse community • The use of the school's newly focused Christian values of faith, love, kindness and respect as a driving force for school development • The clear vision of the acting headteacher for the school as a voluntary controlled church school which is effectively supported by staff and governors
<p style="text-align: center;">Areas to improve</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed the school's Christian values so that all children are able to make links between them and teaching from the Bible • Build on existing and extend links further with the local community in order to broaden pupils' experiences and support their learning

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

St John's, through its Christian values of faith, love, kindness and respect, successfully places all its children and their well-being at the heart of what it does. In September 2014, the number of Christian values focused on in school was reduced. This decision was rightly taken to ensure that there were fewer but key Christian values driving the school's work. This has resulted in the Christian values being more accessible to the school community. Pupils and staff know them very well and refer to them regularly throughout the day. The Christian values are displayed around the school, including in each classroom. They are set to music and sung in worship regularly, including with signing. Pupils are beginning to show an appropriate understanding of these values. As one child said, 'Jesus loves us and we love each other'. However, not all pupils know the link between the school's Christian values and teachings from the Bible. Respectful and supportive relationships, based on the school's Christian values, are inclusive of all 'because all are different and all are special'. As a result of this, pupils are very well behaved, feel valued, work hard and generally enjoy their learning. Consequently, attainment is improving steadily so that pupils now achieve broadly in line with the national average, many from lower than average starting points. There is a good range of opportunities provided by the school and these support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils respond well to these opportunities. They have a good factual recall of their religious education (RE) work and are appropriately challenged and supported to reflect on some of the key issues raised. They are able to link these ideas to their own lives at an appropriate level. As a result, RE makes a good contribution to the school's Christian ethos.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Worship takes place daily around themes linked to the school's Christian values and to the Church's year. It is extended by periodic worship in church. Whilst being explicitly Christian and Anglican, worship is conducted sensitively and is therefore inclusive of those of other faiths and of none. It is very well planned and led which is an indication of the high importance placed on it. Pupils enjoy involvement in worship. They lead prayers, answer questions and sing enthusiastically. Worship contributes very well to helping pupils reflect on the school's Christian values and on Bible stories. Pupils are involved in planning and leading class worship. In the later part of the summer term, Year 2 pupils take on the responsibility of leading whole school worship regularly. Pupils' opinions are listened to which means that they take ownership of worship and recognise its importance to their school. The very good quality of worship has a positive impact on the spiritual and moral development of pupils. Staff participate appropriately enhancing its 'family feel'. Elements of Anglican worship, such as lighting candles and using a response at the beginning and end of worship, are joined in well by pupils. Pupils know the Lord's Prayer and can talk about its meaning at a level appropriate for their ages. Through worship, they have a very basic but developing idea of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Opportunities for participating in prayer and reflecting on spiritual ideas takes place through worship, in the reflection areas in classrooms and in the 'prayer garden', a quiet outdoor space. A prayer is led by pupils in class before lunch and at the end of the school day. Pupils are able to explain that prayer is 'talking to God'. They know that there are 'thanking' and 'asking' prayers. They are less able to say why prayer is important to Christians, to the school or to themselves.

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

The new acting headteacher, well supported by staff, has a clear vision and determination to drive forward school improvement. This includes being an aspirational and inclusive school serving its diverse community, underpinned by its Christian values and ethos. She is aided in this by foundation governors who have improved their oversight since OfSTED said the school 'requires improvement' (February 2013). Foundation governors are committed to the school as an improving Church school. The way in which the governing body is involved with the school has been addressed and has begun to impact on its oversight and understanding of the

school's needs and priorities. They are now involved as links to a class, a subject and a specific area of the school development plan. Effective strategic planning and robust monitoring are in place. These are based on ambitious targets focusing on meeting the needs of all, in keeping with the school's Christian values. The school works well in a local collaboration with other church primary schools in order to extend Christian service in education. Arrangements for worship and RE meet statutory requirements indicating their importance to developing the school's ethos. As part of the school's inclusive nature, it has developed very good relationships with families. It supports its pupils well, especially the most vulnerable. There are good and mutually beneficial links with the parish church. These have been extended by church officers and members during recent months whilst there is no vicar in post. The school makes appropriate links with the local community. For example, pupils visit the local mosque and Year 2 pupils visit a care home to sing Christmas carols. It has rightly identified the need to extend these links to broaden pupils' experiences and to support their learning. The school is committed to the professional development of its staff. Many teachers are new to working in a church school and good support has been provided to them in understanding the school's ethos and values. There are good links with the Diocese of Rochester, whose practical support is valued.

St John's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Infant School, December 2014, 4 New Street, Chatham, Kent, ME4 6RH