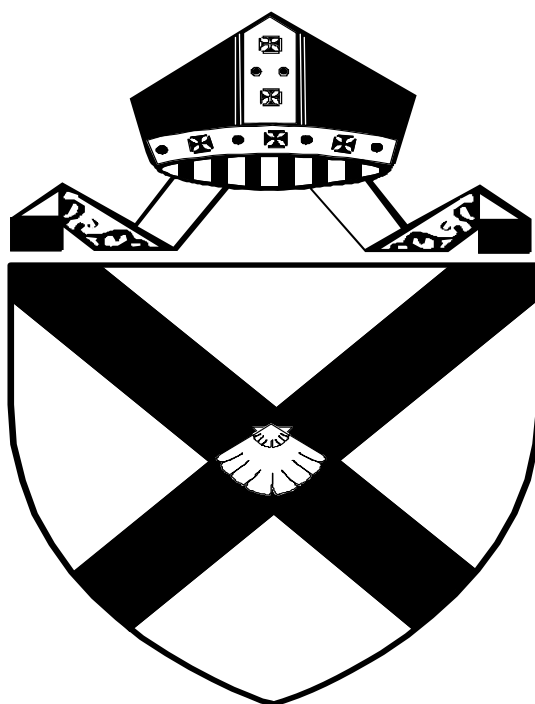


# STATUTORY INSPECTION of ANGLICAN SCHOOLS

## *ROCHESTER DIOCESE*

2011



**St. John's Church of England Primary  
School**

Maple Road, Penge, London SE20 8HU

**Voluntary Aided**

Bromley LA

Unique Reference No: 101650

Head Teacher: Sue King

Chair of Governors: Anton Herzog

Incumbency: Rev. Daron Medway

Inspector: Jan Thompson N.S.92

Inspection: 13<sup>th</sup> September 2011

## Summary judgment

### **How distinctive and effective is the school as a Church of England School?**

Lack of effective development since the last inspection of February 2008 renders St. John's Voluntary Aided Church of England Primary School in Penge a satisfactory Church school, when it was previously good. Significant developments have mostly taken place since the new headteacher took over in January of this year.

**Overall Grade 3: Satisfactory**

### **School Context**

St. John's is a Voluntary Aided Church of England Primary School in Penge, South East London. With a history in the area going back to 1837, the present school building opened in 1978 and has been extended since then. Its 299 pupils come from a variety of backgrounds in the locality, with over two thirds from ethnic minorities, mainly Black African and Black Caribbean. About 40% overall are from active Church families, though mostly not Anglican churches. The school is oversubscribed. It was judged by Ofsted to be satisfactory.

### **Established strengths**

- The all-pervading Christian ethos of the school.
- The strong Christian spiritual and moral development of pupils.
- The very strong relationship with the parish church.
- The Christian leadership of the headteacher, supported by the Vicar.

### **Focus for development**

- The governing body should take responsibility for the self evaluation and improvement of this school as a church school.
- Teachers should use the national level descriptions in Religious Education to set work appropriate to pupils' different abilities. (This was an issue at the last inspection.)

### **How well does the school, through its distinctive Christian character, meet the needs of all its learners? Grade 2: Good**

St. John's is a very caring school where everyone is included. Although larger than average for a Primary School, some parents describe it as 'small' because of its friendly, child-centred approach. The ethos is based on Christian values derived from 'WWJD' – 'What would Jesus do?' This is on display around the school and is referred to by teachers in the course of the day, sometimes to settle disputes. Consequently, relationships are good throughout the school at all levels. Pupils work and play well together. Parents recognise the Christian impact of the school, speaking of the 'love and care, both physical and spiritual' and the 'trust in God and love of each other.' The school is a very prayerful community where pupils respond positively to the active encouragement to pray, making good use of the prayer corners in their classes and the prayer box in the library. Pupils raise money for charities and understand that this is carrying on Jesus' work and is making good use of what God has given us. Their concern for others extends beyond the local community to enthusiastic support for a church school in Uganda. The school environment now makes a better contribution to pupils' spiritual development than at the time of the last inspection, particularly in the hall, where there is a table with Christian symbols for collective worship. The previous headteacher also gave a prayer-well where pupils can sit quietly outside. There is a new school board, with the Diocesan crest and the school's motto: 'Achieving excellence with God as our guide.'

## **What is the impact of collective worship on the school community?**

### **Grade 2: Good**

Pupils respond positively to worship in school and talk about it at home. When asked how they could improve on it, they wanted more of the same. They participate well, enjoy the singing and respond enthusiastically to questions. On Fridays, individual classes lead collective worship, which allows pupils to help in planning and leading worship. Many pupils also feel comfortable to lead others in prayer. They have a good understanding of the divine nature of worship, in terms of learning about Jesus and praising God. They are taught to pray for many different people and situations and understand that prayer can be quiet meditation as well as talking to God. There is now more Anglican influence in the school's worship, which was a focus for development at the last inspection and has progressed particularly this year, with the Vicar's involvement. The headteacher has used worship to develop understanding of the Lord's Prayer and the Grace. There was a cross-curricular week in the Summer to develop the theme of Pentecost, a major Christian festival. The Summer Term also saw the first whole school Eucharist, which is to take place three times a year. Worship has always been important in this school, but planning and record-keeping are now better organised, and pupils are regularly involved in evaluation.

## **How effective is the Religious Education (RE)? Grade 3: Satisfactory**

Standards of attainment in RE are satisfactory and in line with other core subjects. Pupils mainly make average progress, with a dip in Years 3/4, partly due to insufficient work being covered. Despite adopting the new Diocesan RE Syllabus (2009), with its attention to lesson plans, teachers are still not making sufficient use of level descriptions in their planning. This was an issue at the last inspection and is particularly important in mixed age classes, where all pupils need to be challenged appropriately. Assessment is in place but it is not clear if any use was made of these records to improve teaching and learning. Marking is still not being done well enough to help pupils to improve. There continues to be a good balance between studying religious content and relating it to pupils' own lives. The subject therefore has a good impact on pupils' moral and spiritual development. For example, a Year 5/6 class discussed tolerance and judging others in relation to a passage from St John's Gospel. There is an emphasis on Christianity in the Diocesan syllabus, which contributes to pupils' good knowledge and understanding. They also enjoy learning about other religions and recognise that this helps them to get on with people with different beliefs. RE is now given more importance, with a new subject leader who is a member of the senior leadership team and the Vicar as link governor.

## **How effective are the leadership and management of the school as a Church school? Grade 3: Satisfactory**

Christian values continue to be a strong foundation of this school and parents speak of its 'Excellent Christian ethos.' However, little development took place after the last inspection. An attempt by the acting headteacher to identify five specific values failed to involve the governing body, including the Vicar who could have given a theological lead. Despite Diocesan intervention and training in Summer 2010, the governing body failed to take responsibility for the self-evaluation of the school as a church school and to take a lead in this during the transition to a new headteacher. The new head is a committed Christian, who has achieved much in the short time she has been in post. She has a good grasp of the needs of the school as a church school, and is addressing them. The school continues to benefit enormously from its links with St John's Church, in its worship and Christian clubs. Both school and church have a strong Christian influence in the local community, where the school has a good reputation. Parents value the Christian education that their children receive here.