



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

St. John the Baptist Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Poplar Street
Heaton Mersey
SK4 3DG

Previous SIAMS grade: Outstanding

Current inspection grade: Outstanding

Diocese: Manchester

Local authority: Stockport

Dates of inspection: 8 July 2016

Date of last inspection: December 2010

School's unique reference number: 106105

Headteacher: Patrick Rayner

Inspector's name and number: Jean Forward (625)

School context

St. John the Baptist is a smaller than average-sized primary school. The majority of children are of White British heritage. The proportion of children with special educational needs is in line with the national average. The number of children known eligible for the pupil premium is below the national average. A higher proportion of children than usual enter school after the Reception year.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St. John the Baptist as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The extremely strong Christian leadership of the headteacher and his vision for the development of the school ensure that the Christian ethos is at the heart of daily life.
- The school is extremely successful in creating a loving, caring and inclusive Christian environment which has a positive influence on children's well-being and successful learning.
- The commitment of the governing body provides highly effective support and challenge for the work of the senior leadership team. Governors make an outstanding contribution to the self-evaluation and development of the school's distinctive Christian ethos.

Areas to improve

- Involve pupils in planning and leading worship in order to deepen their spiritual awareness and their understanding of the key elements of the school's liturgy.
- Make explicit reference to the Trinity in worship so that children have a deeper understanding of the qualities of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- Review the evaluation of collective worship to involve all members of the school community so as to inform planning for the enrichment of children's worship experiences.

needs of all learners

The school meets the needs of every child through a strong commitment to explicit Christian values. Encouragement and high expectations are rooted in the Christian life of the school. Service, sacrifice and forgiveness are lived out daily by all members of the community. The ethos of trust and respect is clearly evident. Children talk confidently about the importance of the school's core Christian values. One child said, 'Christian values help us all to be friends.' They understand that Jesus shows them how to live through these values. As a result, the positive relationships across the community are rooted in a Christ-centred approach. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development is excellent as a result of the focused Christian ethos and emphasis on nurturing and meeting the needs of every individual. Consequently, children demonstrate high levels of self-esteem and awareness of others. They feel safe and their behaviour is excellent. Children are extremely courteous, friendly and responsible. They enjoy being members of the school council and being buddies for younger children. They see this involvement as a way of contributing to the Christian life of the school community. Children are able to share concerns with their teachers knowing that these will be addressed in a sensitive and caring way. Parents comment on the fact that staff know every child. They affirm that their children are happy and enthusiastic about learning and school life. They also say that the school and church work closely together for the children and their families, providing opportunities for worship and a range of community activities. The school has a strong commitment to Christian stewardship, supporting a range of charities. Children speak of the importance of showing generosity and compassion for those in need. Displays and Christian symbols emphasise the school's distinctiveness and support the children's spiritual development extremely well. Reflection areas are a feature of every classroom and children value the opportunity to write prayers, knowing that these will be offered to God. The school provides highly effective teaching about faiths other than Christianity through religious education (RE) and focus days. This contributes well to children's cultural knowledge and positive attitudes towards the diverse nature of their school community and society. Children say that RE is always interesting and exciting. Attainment and progress at Level 4 and above in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2 were above the national average in 2015. The school's Christian ethos shapes children's positive attitudes, attendance and behaviour in order to give them the very best start in life.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

The act of collective worship is central to the daily life of the school. Planning incorporates themes based on the school's core Christian values, the Bible and some Christian festivals. As a result, children are reminded of the ways in which they can lead a life rooted in gospel values. They are also able to explore their own faith and spirituality. One child said, 'We light the candle to show that God is with us'. The children enjoy worship and engage well with questions which explore values and beliefs. Children respond reverently to times of silence and reflection which are an important part of the school's approach to prayer. They value the classroom reflection areas and say these help them to think and pray. Children become familiar with Anglican practice through the use of traditional prayers and a clear liturgical framework for worship. As a result, they understand that worship and prayer play a key part in the life of faith fostered by the school and the church. The parish priest plays an important role in the worship of the school. He leads worship which explores Bible stories in an engaging and interactive way. The school worships in the parish church for major festivals including harvest, Christmas and Easter. This enables children and their families to feel part of the wider worshipping community. The children are involved in these special acts of worship through prayers, reading and drama. Children have a limited understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The school has some systems in place to monitor and evaluate worship. Although children are involved in worship, they do not yet have opportunities to plan and lead worship in an independent way.

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

The headteacher and senior leadership team have a clear and strong vision for the school based on Christian principles and values. They take every opportunity to promote the school's distinctive Christian character which guides the school community, enabling everyone to do their very best. Staff and governors are committed to fostering all aspects of children's development and well-being through Christian care and love. In doing so, they recognise the importance of the school's Christian character in creating an ethos which supports effective learning and the promotion of equal opportunities. The headteacher rightly attributes children's successful learning and personal development to the Christ-centred qualities of the school which permeate all aspects of school life. The school knows its children and their families extremely well and meets individual needs through a culture of Christian nurturing and support. Parents recognise the distinctive Christian qualities of the school and speak highly of the respect with which they and their children are treated. Foundation governors are knowledgeable and experienced. They have a clear understanding of their strategic role. As a result, they support the school in a variety of ways and provide a high level of challenge. Action plans for RE and worship are included in the school's development planning and discussed by the governing body. This ensures that aspects of church school distinctiveness continue to contribute to the development of the school's Christian foundation. The school's Christian ethos is seen as a thread which draws together every aspect of leadership and management. The areas for development from the previous inspection have been addressed. The RE co-ordinator ensures that the subject is taught to a high standard and she is developing clear processes to monitor and evaluate the school's provision. The school is outward looking and works with other schools in matters of teaching, learning and school improvement. These initiatives strengthen the school's resolve to provide the very best education for its children and opportunities for all staff to develop their expertise. A strong partnership with the diocese through discussion and training has resulted in highly effective development of all aspects of church school distinctiveness. Leaders prepare for future leadership in church schools through in-service training. The school facilitates strong links with the parish church and wider community. This enables children to develop a strong sense of friendship and love, rooted in Christian service.

SIAMS report July 2016 St. John the Baptist C of E Primary School, Heaton Mersey SK4 3DG