



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

St John's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Laund Nook
Belper
Derbyshire

Diocese: Derby

Local authority: Derbyshire

Dates of inspection: 8 May 2014

Date of last inspection: 17 October 2008

School's unique reference number: 112875

Headteacher: Peter Blunsdon

Inspector's name and number: John Horwood 177

School context

The school is a larger than average primary school with 456 pupils on roll. The very large majority of pupils come from White British backgrounds. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below the national average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. Pupils are drawn from across the town and some from further afield.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St John's Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding

- Christian values are fully embedded within the school's life and the headteacher and deputy lead by example in living them out and celebrating their impact.
- Pupils' outstanding attitudes and behaviour result from the excellent relationships developed in the inclusive, loving and caring environment where the needs of every child is the focus.
- The religious education lessons and collect worship make an outstanding contribution to all aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- As pupils move through the school they gain a good awareness and understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

Areas to improve

- Consolidate the strong links between the school and the church.
- Formalise the regular reviews of the effectiveness of the school as a church school at meetings of the governing body.

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

Pupils are at the heart of everything within the school. Every pupil is given an equal focus and provided with the personal, spiritual and academic support they need. This is an inclusive school where relationships are outstanding and teachers lead by example in valuing and living out Christian values. Mutual care and respect pervade the school and pupils' attitudes and behaviour are outstanding. This allows pupils to make good progress in their work irrespective of their abilities with additional support readily available for those who find learning difficult. Leaders promote respect, awareness and empathy so that pupils understand the feelings of others including those from other faiths. The school provides a 'Dream Room' which is a place where pupils can go to overcome occasional emotional pressures. Pupils are confident in their communications and, as described by the headteacher, are lively and competitive children who 'rise' to any occasion. The school is proud of its Christian character as reflected in school signs, documents, website and the Christian artefacts around the school and the many displays celebrating pupils' work. Pupils' successes are clearly presented through the numerous photographs and recordings. The school community is well aware of and celebrates the school being a church school and its links to St Peter's. Parents comment about the family atmosphere which leaders successfully promote in such a large school. Pupils talk confidently about all aspects of the school and clearly respect their teachers and each other. Pupils' spiritual understanding develops exceptionally well as they move through the school because activities within the classroom and within collective worship are made meaningful and thought provoking to the age group participating. Through their religious education (RE) they develop a growing understanding of Anglican traditions and religious festivals and they learn about Christianity being a multi-cultural world faith through their topic work. Pupils willingly serve their community through such activities as being 'Playground Buddies' or members of the school council. Year 6 pupils related with excitement about being involved in recent staffing interviews. They also enthusiastically support a range of charities.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

The school deliberately has a flexible approach to collective worship to ensure pupils have a wide range of experiences that are relevant to them. All pupils have a period of collective worship during the day but the groupings vary in order to give pupils a variety of settings which provide a rich and meaningful experience of worship. The largest groupings are by Key Stage and take place in the school hall. These are led by staff on a rota basis and all adults attend as far as is practical. Other smaller groupings take place in the classrooms. Pupils organise and deliver collective worship in Year 6 and all pupils are actively involved during collective worship which they really enjoy because it contributes to their sense of personal and spiritual growth. A real strength of the school is its focus on monitoring and recording the delivery and impact of collective worship. The headteacher keeps a book in which the details of the collective worship are entered along with 'post-its' from pupils with their comments about the worship. Both the headteachers' comments and pupils' comments consider the impact on the community and if appropriate suggest improvements. The programme of collective worship is well planned and often based on the 'Values for Life' resource and includes a range of visiting speakers and groups. Pupils can remember many past collective worships and can relate the content of them. They talk confidently about the opportunities they have for prayer throughout the day and can give examples of how prayers help them in a variety of ways and this is evident in the expressive way they say prayers. Around the school there are special places for prayer and pupils take on responsibility for saying prayers within the classroom, for example at the end of the morning. These daily routines ensure that pupils appreciate and learn about Christianity and Christian values and celebrate these values with the whole school community. The older children can talk confidently about their understanding of the Trinity and about how special being at a church school is. The Key Stage 2 collective worship seen during the inspection was led by the 'Open the Book' group who are

regular visitors. Attitudes and behaviour were outstanding throughout. Pupils and adults participated fully in the prayers and singing. This was also the case in the Key Stage 1 collective worship led by the headteacher in which pupils were fascinated by the interactive approach to the theme of forgiveness. Leaders are rightly proud of the quality of singing in which the pupils showed real enjoyment and understanding. In addition to collective worship in school there are now regular visits to St Peter's Church for services and these are well-attended by parents. The content of services helps develop pupils' understanding of Christian traditions and festivals as well as introducing the concept of God as three persons. The impact of collective worship is evident when talking to pupils and the way they confidently talk about the Bible and their understanding of Christian festivals. Pupils' work in their RE books shows a strong link between RE and collective worship and that they understand the importance of Jesus Christ to the Christian faith. The collective worship themes are often linked to workshops carried out by the visiting 'Inspire' group within the RE lessons and this makes a further contribution to the impact of the collective worship. The school's collective worship policy and the effectiveness of collective worship are regularly reviewed by leaders and the governing body. Although this currently takes place there is not a formal system in place to ensure that this will be ongoing with the forthcoming leadership changes.

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

There has been significant improvement in the partnership with the St Peter's Church community since the previous inspection and school leaders, the governing body and the vicar have worked very well to make this an outstanding church school. All the issues from the previous inspection have been addressed. The leadership of RE and collective worship is excellent and leaders continue to ensure that the provision for both exceeds statutory requirements through additional activities and projects throughout the year. This includes the work with PopUK which involves working closely with St Peter's Church and parents for the whole week. Both collective worship and RE regularly appear in the school improvement plan. The vicar and foundation governors are regular visitors who the pupils know and respect. The many photographs within the school confirm that there is a strong focus on working with parents and the whole community. The strong partnership with the church community is demonstrated by the bi-annual 'Pop Connection/iSing Pop' concert in St. Peter's Church. This is a real opportunity for pupils and parents to join together in the parish church and experience a modern celebration of song and prayer. Pupils follow the worldwide mission of the church by supporting children overseas through charity fund raising and jointly with the church contributing to 'Operation Christmas Child'. The curriculum supports pupils' cultural understanding through topics such as 'living in Palestine'. Opportunities are used within RE for pupils to answer questions based around research within the Bible. Displays within the school are linked to the church and vice versa. All stakeholders are involved with producing the school development plan which reflects the Christian ethos of the school and the importance of the partnership with the church. The school has had a stable staff for many years and has actively developed these into potential church school leaders through giving them appropriate responsibilities and training. The headteacher and deputy lead by example and set good role models for the staff and the pupils. Surveys show that parents are all very pleased with the school and the Christian values it promotes. Parents support the school well and are involved in school events and the decision making process. The governing body provides good support to leaders and share a clear Christian vision of the school.

SIAMS report May 2014 St John's Church of England Primary School, Belper, DE56 1GY