



Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St John the Baptist Church of England Primary School

East Avenue, Leicester. LE2 1TE

How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish

Overall grade **Good**

The impact of collective worship **Good**

The effectiveness of religious education (RE) **Good**

School's vision

Loving Learning, Building Community, Growing in Faith

Our curriculum and environment, deeply rooted in the Jesus' teaching, enables our children to thrive and succeed. In partnership with churches and other faiths, we celebrate being a diverse, inclusive community where everyone is valued and we 'Prepare the way of the Lord'.

Key findings

- The mutually beneficial support amongst the whole school community particularly during the COVID pandemic was an inspirational demonstration of Christian love in action. There are very strong community links especially with the local church.
- RE is well led and as a result provision is strong. The vibrant curriculum ensures pupils have tolerance and a meaningful understanding of Christianity and other faiths.
- There is evidence of some innovative Collective Worship provision using outside spaces.
- The new Christian vision is firmly rooted in the story of St. John the Baptist but is not yet articulated with clarity by parents and pupils.
- Pupils are encouraged to be advocates for change through a diverse provision of leadership groups.

Areas for development

- To raise the profile of the new vision so that the biblical basis is understood by the school community enhancing the Christian character of the school.
- To consolidate a school-wide understanding of spirituality. To provide meaningful opportunities for spiritual development by building on the school's creative approach to collective worship and RE.
- To ensure all governors have greater opportunity to develop their understanding of current church school education to enable them to play an even stronger role in moving the school forwards.

How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?

Inspection findings

The school's remodelled Christian vision is firmly rooted in the teachings of Jesus and linked to the story of St. John the Baptist. Leaders at St John's consulted with the whole school community when creating a new vision statement two years ago. The school's strapline of 'Loving Learning, Building Community, Growing in Faith' was also established. Subsequently, a new logo was created depicting a path in the desert leading to a cross in the sunlight, reflecting St. John the Baptist, 'Preparing the Way.' The contribution made by local church communities to the Christian character of St. Johns is strong. The headteacher has a sound knowledge of church school education and has led with transforming compassion and understanding during unsettled and difficult times. This school has no catchment area and pupils travel from a wide radius. Families choose St. Johns because of its Christian and moral foundation attracting many faith communities.

All leaders articulate this new, deeply Christian vision with passion and relevance to the school's context. The response to 'living out' the vision over the last two years has been life changing for many school families. Parents speak of regular phone calls and staff 'going the extra mile' with kindness. This exemplifies the strapline 'Building Community'. The 'Amazon Wish List' was created by staff so families could purchase items which were then distributed to pupils in need. A staff member's COVID wedding breakfast took place in a year group bubble, demonstrating how the school celebrates everyone being valued and cared for. This collective and empathetic approach has enabled the staff and the wider school community to persevere and experience a semblance of 'normality' during such turbulent times. This school family truly watches over one another in love.

Pupils are recognised as individuals where faith and diversity are celebrated and 47 languages are spoken amongst many different nationalities. This was reiterated by a pupil stating, 'This school takes religion very seriously!' The curriculum provides a rich environment for inquiry allowing for debate and questions which are non-judgemental. Learning in religious education (RE) contributes to pupils' understanding of other faiths. Whilst there is some general understanding of how spirituality develops within learning opportunities, this is not yet clearly defined.

Three social action groups are enabling pupils to view themselves as part of a wider global society. The Ladies Leadership Team is empowering girls to have a voice through leading various enterprises. The Eco Warriors and School Council are very clear on their remit and are passionate about their roles and responsibilities impacting the lives of all pupils. Parents and pupils are clear as to how the values of respect, integrity, creation, humility and hope enable all to thrive and develop but are not sure how they contribute to the overarching vision statement. The school ensures that all pupils, including those with special needs and disabilities, flourish academically.

The school has transparent procedures to deal with any behaviour issues and pupils explain the various stages of their behaviour tiers with clarity and understanding. They speak of situations being quickly resolved and have confidence that matters raised have been dealt with. The school has secure systems in place for the identification of any mental health needs within the school community. These are initially addressed by the inclusion manager or counsellor, before accessing further help. Staff morale is high and they feel well supported by leaders. Their contribution has been recognised in a variety of personal and inventive ways. Such provision has ensured that adults in school are resilient and have felt valued and encouraged. They state that the school is well led and credit much of this to the demonstrable Christian vision of the school.

There is a richness to Collective Worship provision which is inspirational, invitational and inclusive. Regular planning meetings with leaders who are church representatives, ensures a seamless link between church and school. Governors have had to prioritise their efforts during the pandemic and as a result have had few opportunities to upskill their understanding of current thinking in church school education. The SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) committee ensures that church school effectiveness is monitored and evaluated but it is not always aware of the most recent Church of England updates.

Staff speak of the commitment and inspirational support of the RE curriculum and collective worship leader which has led to some exciting classroom teaching. 'She has provided me with a wealth of ideas for teaching RE and can provide a resource for every occasion!' This expertise is shared more widely in diocesan training, national conferences and publications. The school is supported by a variety of different church traditions within the locality, enabling pupils and families to experience a living and meaningful Christian faith in action. The St. John's church community assisted the school during lockdown by providing videos to ensure there were collective worship opportunities during times of remote learning. Key worker children also took part in worship despite school days being so disrupted. Each classroom has a reflection area, although pupils were not able to clearly articulate the value and use of personal prayer and reflection in their own lives.

Parents describe school church services as 'all embracing'. They feel that Christian hymns and songs which their children sing at home, especially during lockdown, have a wider effect on the school family and help them to connect with each other. The Worship Whizz Kids group has been unable to operate because of COVID restrictions, impacting on the involvement of pupils in the leadership of and contribution to worship. The school used the pandemic to create opportunities for inspirational worship outside. 'Wild Worship' is gradually becoming established in woodland areas and the forest school in the grounds. Pupils speak with enthusiasm about this initiative and value the time allowed for stillness and reflection in open spaces. This innovative approach of using the natural world to enhance worship is beginning to develop an awareness of spirituality in both staff and pupils.



The effectiveness of RE is Good

The provision for RE meets statutory requirements. There is a deeply engaging and stimulating RE curriculum led by an inspirational subject leader which impacts the tolerance, understanding and knowledge of pupils. Clear direction, strategic planning, monitoring and provision of resources ensure consistent high-quality teaching across year groups. This leads to good progress made by the majority of pupils, including those with SEND.

Contextual information about the school

Date of inspection	12 November 2021	URN	120230
Date of previous inspection	21 January 2015		
School status	Voluntary Aided Primary	NOR	564
Name of MAT/Federation	N/A		
Diocese / Methodist District	Leicester		
Headteacher	Trudie Colotto		
Pupil profile	The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is below national averages.		
	The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below national averages.		
Additional significant information (if needed)	The headteacher has been in post since September 2019 following a period of instability. The school was rated RI by OFSTED in November 2019. 39% of children do not have English as their first language. Families come from an expansive variety of faiths and world views.		
Inspector's name	Joy Hardy	No.	944