

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St John the Baptist Church of England Primary School, Great Amwell	
Address	Hillside Lane, Great Amwell, Ware, SG12 9SE

School vision
<p>‘Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus on whom our faith depends from beginning to end’ Hebrews 12v1-2</p>
School strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The vision is clearly articulated by all members of the school community and there is a secure understanding for why this is the right vision for the community. It has been very well chosen with all stakeholders' involvement.</li> <li>• Collective worship is effectively planned and conveys the aspiration the school has for pupils through its vision. Spiritual opportunities are woven throughout worship; the children benefit immensely.</li> <li>• Pupils understand how to help and improve the lives of others through charitable work. They are developing their understanding of injustice globally.</li> <li>• The school is highly supportive and inclusive of pupils from a range of backgrounds. The community speaks highly of the work the school does to enable all to flourish.</li> <li>• Pupils have a clear understanding of Christianity and other worldfaiths. The curriculum ensures they make good progress as a result in religious education (RE).</li> </ul>
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure leaders continue to ensure staff are sufficiently well developed to teach the planned RE curriculum consistently. As a result pupil progress will be maximised.</li> <li>• As advocates for change, ensure pupils have opportunities to plan and implement initiatives.</li> <li>• To further develop a shared language and understanding of spirituality that can be readily expressed.</li> </ul>
Inspection findings
<p>St John the Baptist is superbly warm and welcoming to all. With the support of senior leaders, the governing body has galvanised the revised vision. This successfully reflects the community and the aspiration the school has for it. The refined Christian vision is fully embedded across the school and permeates all aspects of its work. For example, pupils, staff and parents talk compellingly about the way in which the school has been there for them when they have experienced challenging times in their personal lives. Pupils understand very well the ways in which they ‘run the race’ and how staff support them. They are appreciative of this.</p> <p>The vision is the rope that ties the whole of the school’s offer together. Curriculum aspirations are high as a result. The carefully selected Christian values underpin the vision and infuse all aspects of the school and support bringing the vision to life. Pupils are able to share securely how both the vision and values help them to be good people. They are able to recognise in the stories they know,</p>

where the values and vision come from in the Bible. Staff know each pupil and family well. They offer nurturing opportunities to ensure all pupils flourish.

Collective worship is an exceptional strength of St John the Baptist. It is highly inclusive and pupils are particularly vocal about the importance it plays in all their lives. This demonstrates the highly inclusive nature of worship. Daily reflection and stillness allows pupils to find peace and calm. They cite that silence is important for everyone and can be appreciated by all. Prayer is woven throughout worship, allowing all to engage in the message of the worship. Spiritual development throughout worship is a strength. However, leaders are acutely aware of the ways in which it could be developed further through the development of a shared spiritual understanding, allowing all to express themselves readily. The role of pupil worship leads is very well developed. Those involved support the planning and leading of worship to other pupils in the school. They enjoy this opportunity tremendously and are very aware of the ways in which they choose prayers and stories carefully to convey the vision, values and message they want the children to learn. Practice in this aspect of the school's work is commendable. Classroom spaces have been developed across the school to allow pupils to further engage in spiritual opportunities.

Governors are very engaged in the life of the school. They know the school very well and are acutely aware of the strengths and areas for development. The school's vision is at the heart of their decision making. Consequently they challenge the school appropriately, measuring the impact of initiatives against the vision. Governors take an active interest in the staff, who say they are grateful of the support they receive. The governing body is mindful of wellbeing and promotes the wellbeing of pupils and staff alike enabling all to flourish. As a result, St John the Baptist is a very happy school community and there is a very strong sense of belonging. Working closely with staff, governors have helped to ensure the school is at the heart of the community of Great Amwell and is a school of choice for families in other local towns and villages. This is testament to their ambition, drive and tenacity.

The school has enjoyed some strong relationships across the wider community including the Diocese of St Albans. Their training has been well-attended. The impact of this is evident across the school, ensuring it lives up to its Christian foundation. There is a strong relationship with the local church where families within the wider community attend for key events throughout the year. Pupils and their parents hold the work of the church and their vicar in high regard. 'We admire the relationship between school, the church and the whole community – it makes such a positive difference' parents shared. Pupils have regular opportunities throughout the year to worship at the church including during Anglican festivals such as Easter and Christmas.

Pupils are highly motivated and engaged in fund raising. They have an understanding of the impact funding raising can have on other people's lives. The school runs fund raising opportunities with a variety of charities benefitting. However, pupils not do yet have a sufficient understanding of the impact they can have as agents for change. Pupils' knowledge of injustice across the world is emerging, however. Opportunities for pupils to learn about people across the world and the natural world, is woven throughout the curriculum and worship. Pupils understand the world as God's creation and make strong links to their learning in RE. Leaders are very aware that pupils do not yet fully appreciate how powerful their voice can be in influencing key issues.

RE plans are well developed and embedded across the school. The well sequenced curriculum reflects the school's vision and ensures pupils make good progress. Teachers adapt the curriculum thoughtfully to ensure it meets the needs of all pupils. However, not all lessons are delivered with the same level of precision of the very strongest. Pupils' books demonstrate learning across a range of world religions and worldviews and are enthusiastic about RE. Pupils know the importance it

plays in their understanding of the world. They eagerly share how RE helps them to be inclusive and accepting as individuals. The RE lead knows the subject well and shares the development she has had with the wider staff.

These inspection findings indicate that St John the Baptist Church of England Primary School is living up to its foundation as a Church school and is enabling pupils and adults to flourish.

Information			
Inspection date	19 October 2023	URN	117432
VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary aided	Pupils on roll	173
Diocese	St Albans		
MAT/Federation			
Headteacher	Lydia Hunt		
Chair	Bernard Murphy		
Inspector	Ben Hodson	No.	2231