

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St John The Baptist Church of England VA Primary School, Hoxton	
Address	Cron dall Street, Hoxton, London, N1 6JG
School vision	
<p>‘Love your neighbour as yourself.’ We Achieve We Believe.</p>	
School strengths	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school’s Christian vision is lived out and fully embedded across the school. It influences all that the school achieves to serve its local community, enabling pupils and adults to thrive. • Through 'loving your neighbour', the school builds a culture where all are valued and given worth. In a respectful and dignifying way, the school enables pupils and adults to overcome barriers to learning. Thus they live life to its fullest. • Religious education (RE) is seen as central to the school’s Christian distinctiveness. All recognise the inherent importance of the subject. Pupils learn well and make very good progress, developing strong religious literacy and relating this to their lives. • Both the local advisory board and the governors understand the school well. They work discretely and collaboratively within the federation to enhance the high-quality education offer. This is alongside maintaining, developing and treasuring the Christian foundation and identity of the school. • The physical proximity of the church and school is matched in the united way they live out together the Christian vision in Hoxton. The mutually beneficial partnership between the two supports the spiritual flourishing of pupils and adults. 	
Areas for development	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed the school’s shared understanding of spirituality. This is so opportunities for its development are promoted around the school and intrinsically within the curriculum. • Broaden occasions for all pupils in challenging injustice, becoming greater agents of change. 	
Inspection findings	
<p>St John the Baptist is a school strongly underpinned by its Christian foundation and vision. Jesus’ commandment to ‘love your neighbour as yourself’ is evident in all the school fulfils from strategic leadership to individual actions. Belief in achievement for each one is at the centre of nurturing this diverse community. Pupils and families experience disadvantage well above national average. Pupils are valued as individuals and relentlessly championed to provide an education that overcomes barriers to learning. This is understood from the biblical root of the Christian vision. Alongside this, five values: determination, co-operation, respect, celebration and honesty, explicitly support its outworking. As part of a federation of Church and community schools, opportunities for collaborative activities arise giving an outward-looking perspective to pupils. Concurrently, the</p>	

federation allows St John the Baptist to retain and develop its own identity. Each values the other. Both governors and the local advisory board clearly appreciate the school's Christian foundation. Leaders continuously evaluate effectiveness, looking for further opportunities to improve life chances for all. The diocese knows St John the Baptist well, supporting astutely and bringing development in Christian distinctiveness.

The school thoroughly understands its context. It has developed the bespoke 'Rise Up!' curriculum based on aspiration, identity and society. Inspired by the locality and valuing pupils' backgrounds, meaningful topics are taught through experiential learning. This brings affirming relevance to pupils' education. Curriculum and extra-curricular activities are rich in child-centred experiences. These range from singing in the Royal Albert Hall to connecting with nature whilst camping. These, otherwise inaccessible opportunities, equip pupils holistically for their future. The Christian vision shapes the content of what is taught. It brings into practice what adults feel 'we would want for our younger selves'. This enables pupils to understand their place and responsibility in the world. The school uses its vision to inform spending, for example, funding an artist in residence. This priority brings positive impact by widening learning, developing artistic skills and fostering appreciation of the world. The number of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is well above national average. Each pupil is known well and supported in accordance with their needs. This enables pupils to achieve their potential. The school's understanding of spirituality is at an early stage. Planned opportunities for spirituality are not yet intrinsically woven throughout the curriculum.

Collective worship is a living expression of the vision. Worship is inclusive. This was evident in a teaching assistant supporting a pupil whilst singing a worship song. Together they engaged in the spiritual experience being offered. Singing in worship conveys spiritual flourishing of pupils and adults through passionate emotion expressed. A variety of worship content, including reflection and prayer, evokes thoughtful personal responses. Whilst Anglican in tradition, worship is invitational, enabling all to participate comfortably. Values driven and liturgically based, the programme challenges pupils and adults in how they live in and beyond the school. The 'SJB disciples', a pupil leadership group, take a special role in supporting the school's spiritual life. This includes reading and discussing the Bible together as well as reflecting on how this can shape the school. In this way they promote Christian distinctiveness, ensuring the vision remains at the forefront of the school day. The school benefits from a close relationship with the parish church. The vicar offers pastoral and spiritual support. Regular use of the church building enhances the sanctity of worship. It also provides an area for other activities, such as a quiet space for refuge in difficult times. Religious faith is seen as giving strength in life's events, often supporting people experiencing trauma.

The vision serves as a constant reminder of the value of each person. Parents feel the school is non-judgemental, so they are accepted. They recognise the school goes to great lengths to advocate for its community. This support has direct benefits on wellbeing. The pastoral lead is an example of how, through building trusting relationships, the school cares deeply for pupils and families. An unlimited concern for each one was demonstrated through the pandemic. Multiple acts of kindness enable pupils and adults to feel dignified and valued. Adults link their roles in the school to the vision, recognising their part in making it a lived reality. This ensures that no one is left behind in their learning or wellbeing. The school is a 'Rights Respecting School', promoting non-discrimination. Consequently, pupils gain a strong understanding of equality. This helps build an inclusive culture. An affirmation station in each classroom fosters self-worth. There are also many school-wide opportunities for appreciating each other. These encourage pupils to believe they have gifts to offer the world. The wellbeing ambassadors, a pupil led team, promote positive mental health. This trained group prioritises support for pupils when struggling. Similarly, the mental health of adults is nurtured by various initiatives, leading to adults feeling the school is their 'work family'. This compassion helps people cope through challenging times.

‘Love your neighbour as yourself’ motivates the concept of service at St John the Baptist. An understanding of responsibility is built up, through studying historical inspirational, often undervalued, people. This instigates pupil leadership opportunities, such as music ambassadors. The school has mutually beneficial community partnerships. These include ‘It takes a Village’, a local food bank supporting families through the cost of living crisis. This is encouraging the school to build its own facility to make healthy food available at reasonable cost. In this way pupils are equipped to understand injustice and take action. The school promotes opportunities for questioning inequalities. This was demonstrated when pupils met Hackney mayoral candidates to champion ideas about life in the borough. Opportunities to make a difference in the world are of a local nature at present.

The provision of RE meets expectations for a Church school. Through following the diocesan RE syllabus, and good or better teaching, pupils develop a strong awareness of world faiths and worldviews. This is evidenced in assessment. Outcomes are used to shape teaching and learning to meet the needs of pupils. Therefore, pupils make very good progress. Leaders and governors give RE high priority. Regular monitoring and evaluation ensure effective practice continually develops within teaching. Diocesan training has enhanced the role of the RE leader. This has enabled the school to develop the knowledge and skills of teachers within the school and federation. As a result, pupils are deepening their understanding and enjoyment of RE. For example, pupils used role-play to understand the work of a Christian leader. As reflective learners, they fully understand the value of the subject for their lives, now and in the future.

The inspection findings indicate that St John the Baptist Church of England VA Primary School is living up to its foundation as a Church school.

Information			
Inspection date	15 March 2024	URN	100266
VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary aided	Pupils on roll	269
Diocese	London		
MAT/Federation	Primary Advantage		
Headteacher	Toni Mason		
Chair	John Clark	Local Advisory Body Chair: Rob Adediran	
Inspector	Shaun Burns	No.	808