



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

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

Beachborough Road
Bromley
BRI 5RL

Diocese: Southwark

Local authority: Lewisham

Dates of inspection: 24 March 2014

Date of last inspection: March 2009

School's unique reference number: 100728

Executive Headteacher: Mr. John Goodey

Inspector's name and number: Gill Walley NS 644

School context

This is a one form entry school with 211 pupils on roll in an area of high deprivation. It has recently been judged by Ofsted to be outstanding. The proportion of pupils speaking English as an additional language or who originate from minority ethnic backgrounds is significantly above average. The number of pupils with special educational needs is average. The Head of School is new to post and the previous Headteacher is now the Executive Headteacher for this and another local Church of England primary school. Approximately half of the pupils' families worship at the parish church or in other local churches.

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

- Pupils understand and can explain the Christian values which underpin the school's work. They behave extremely well.
- Religious Education (RE) has a high priority in the curriculum and pupils make outstanding progress.
- Parents are extremely happy with the school and say it values and supports all families equally well, whether or not they hold Christian beliefs.
- Governors are very closely involved with the school. They monitor and evaluate the school's Christian distinctiveness rigorously.
- Collective worship (CW) develops pupils' thorough understanding of the Christian faith.
- The school works very closely with the parish and the local community.

Areas to improve

Provide pupils with a place where they can be calm and reflect when they wish to.

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

The school uses a two year cycle of Christian values, one of which is used each month for

worship so that pupils fully understand and can explain them. The themes are closely linked to Bible stories. The school environment reflects its Christian character extremely well. There are boards reminding pupils of all the values and particularly the one they are concentrating on for that month. There are also Christian symbols in the classrooms and corridors to remind pupils of the Christian faith. Pupils' moral development is developed well, for example by acknowledging their very good behaviour and attitudes. Pupils make outstanding progress in all curriculum areas because of the school's Christian ethos of enabling all pupils to reach their full potential, and attendance is good. There are displays to celebrate their learning in RE, which has very high priority in the curriculum, and there are books of prayers which pupils have written and can use whenever they choose. The pupils would like a quiet space where they could be calm and reflect when they wish to. They particularly appreciate learning about the diversity of their community and about different faiths. They say this helps them to respect and understand one another, and it prepares them for living in the adult world. Pupils have many opportunities to help others who are less fortunate through fund raising for various charities both locally and further afield. They support the Bishop's Lent Call to support communities in Zimbabwe. Through this pupils begin to develop an understanding of the world wide church by comparing their own lives with those of the people they are helping. All members of staff feel very well supported in knowing how to promote the distinctive Christian character of the school and there is very good induction for new staff when they join the school.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding.

The values used as themes for worship are closely linked to Bible stories. Worship is well planned and relevant, with times for reflection, so that pupils can relate it to their own experiences, such as relationships with friends and families. For example, honesty was explained through a well chosen story which pupils could understand, and then discussed in the context of Judas and Peter betraying Jesus. Pupils develop their spirituality extremely well through prayer, and through a highly engaging curriculum. They can retell Bible stories and explain times in the Church year such as Ash Wednesday, Lent and Holy Week. They understand the liturgical colours and the hierarchy within the Church of England. They understand what it means to "be a shining light" and are uplifted by a backdrop of this school motto during worship. Coming together for Worship is an extremely important part of the school day. Pupils say how much they look forward to it because "they are together like one large family" and it helps them "think what we could do better". They enjoy role play and are uplifted by calm music. Pupils use Christian prayers and prayers they have written. Governors and senior staff monitor and evaluate worship well to ensure that it develops pupils' understanding of the Christian faith extremely well. They seek the views of pupils and parents so that they know worship is always meaningful and meets all pupils' needs well. Worship is led by various members of staff so that pupils experience different styles, and they particularly look forward to the weekly visit by the incumbent. Worship is often held in the neighbouring parish church and pupils and parents enjoy these special times. Pupils help to plan and lead worship themselves, and these occasions are very well attended by parents. Pupils of all faiths and of no faith background thoroughly enjoy worship and feel completely involved. Older pupils understand the concept of the Trinity because a Trinitarian blessing is often used when the school comes together for worship.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding.

All pupils make outstanding progress in RE and their achievement matches their outstanding progress in other subjects. They thoroughly enjoy RE lessons because teachers plan and deliver interesting activities which inspire pupils to learn about the Christian faith and the faiths of others. They link learning in RE to other areas of the curriculum, for example in a literacy exercise which involved writing to Judas Iscariot to ask why he betrayed Jesus. Learning in RE supports pupils' moral and spiritual development well because in most lessons pupils reflect on how they can apply the learning to their own lives and experiences. For example, Year 6 pupils looked at a painting of the Garden of Gethsemane and thought whether they would have

stayed awake while Jesus prayed. Reception pupils talked about how Jesus must have felt when the crowd mocked him and gave him a crown of thorns. Practical activities engage pupils of all abilities very well and they particularly enjoy role play and visits to many of places of worship in their locality. They are highly respectful of the beliefs of people of different faiths. They make comparisons, for example about the differences and similarities between Lent and Ramadan. Teachers have developed a robust system for assessing pupils' achievement in RE lessons accurately so that they can plan appropriate and challenging activities for each group. RE lessons are monitored regularly to ensure that teaching is highly effective and that standards continue to rise. Marking and feedback from teachers helps pupils understand how they can improve their work further. Parents feel that their children are making good progress in RE, and say they often talk at home about their learning. Parents feel this is helping them to learn about Christianity and about the beliefs and values of others. Staff feel very well supported by the RE subject leader so that they are confident to deliver RE and to assess pupils' progress. There are very good resources for lessons and the school invites faith leaders to visit so that pupils can learn more by questioning them.

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

The school has met the recommendations of the last inspection and pupils now make outstanding progress in RE. Governors monitor and evaluate worship regularly to ensure that it is delivered well and has good impact. All staff demonstrate the school's distinctive values and base the school's work on them. As one staff member said "the school is characterised by love and kindness" where "we all think about our relationship with God". They say that the school is a strong community and that its involvement with the parish church is "fantastic", of great importance to everyone and a particular source of strength in difficult times. Staff and pupils say how proud they are on the school's Christian character. The headteacher and staff set an extremely good example for the pupils, and help them to understand what it means to be a Christian and to be part of a Christian community. Pupils say that "we work as one" and treat each other respect in the "way that we like to be treated ourselves". Governors are a very strong presence in the school both at a strategic level and by visiting lessons and acts of worship and talking to pupils. They monitor and evaluate the school's distinctiveness closely through their Faith Group and they work with school leaders to ensure that this continues to improve. For example, the school is very closely involved in the parish and the incumbent plays a very active role in the school. He leads acts of worship in the school and the church and he contributes in RE lessons. He has introduced breakfast meetings for parents which have resulted in them feeling more involved with the church. The school has taken steps to ensure that pupils understand the differences between their own community and those which are further afield by developing partnerships overseas. This has enabled pupils begin to understand the needs of their global community. The school involves pupils and parents in evaluating aspects of its work regularly to be sure it meets the needs of all learners well.

SIAMS report March 2014 St. John the Baptist VA CE Primary School, Bromley BR1 5RL