



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

### St John's CE Primary School, Highbury Vale

Conewood Street,  
Islington,  
London,  
N5 1DL

**Diocese: London**

Local authority: Islington

Dates of inspection: 27 June 2014

Date of last inspection: 24 March 2009

School's unique reference number: 100440

Headteacher: Troy Sharpe

Inspector's name and number: John Viner NSI44

#### School context

St John's is a popular one-form entry primary school housed in substantial Victorian buildings and serving the three local parishes of St Augustine's, St Thomas's and Christ Church, Highbury. The pupil intake reflects the rich diversity of the area but, although many pupils speak English as an additional language, few are at the early stages of learning it. There are average proportions of pupils with special needs and who are eligible for free school meals. Over a third of pupils attend church. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are higher than the national average. Ofsted recently judged the school to be outstanding.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St John's Highbury Vale as a Church of England school are outstanding.

- Christian values underpin the school, define its work and are evident in every aspect of its operation.
- Leaders and governors share an ambitious Christian vision for the school that is resulting in high standards of pupils' spiritual, personal and academic development.
- All members of the school community are enriched and affirmed by the collective worship that lies at the heart of school life.
- Through the carefully planned and well-taught programme of Religious Education (RE) pupils develop an excellent understanding of Christianity and other world faiths.
- The contribution made to the school and its families by the three parish churches is outstanding.

#### Areas to improve

- Highlight the importance of Pentecost in order to improve pupils' understanding of the Holy Trinity

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

The school's vision statement, 'every child, every opportunity, every day' is linked to the words of St Paul that, 'I can do all things through Christ that strengthens me'. It is this clear commitment to Christian values that underpins the school and is evident in every aspect of its work. It shapes school policy, drives its pursuit of excellence and is visible in the positive relationships between and among all members of the school community. It is seen in the high standards which pupils achieve, and in their outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is a cohesive community, which pupils and their parents recognise as having something special, because it is centred on Christian love and compassion. Since the last inspection excellent use has been made of displays around the school that celebrate its Christian distinctiveness and reinforce the values that it promotes. Pupils behave well, work hard and cooperate in a mature spirit of mutual tolerance and respect, which affirms all, regardless of their faith or belief. They develop a confidence in spiritual understanding and learn to express themselves in the language of faith. They quickly learn to celebrate and appreciate diversity, both in the school and the wider community. As a result they begin to develop their own values that will provide a foundation for their lives. They are well-prepared for the next steps in their education and for the multicultural society to which they will contribute.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding**

The daily act of collective worship plays a pivotal part in the life of the school. Specific Christian values, grounded in Biblical teaching, providing a weekly focus so that pupils develop their understanding of the Christian life and the centrality of Jesus. Although worship does not explicitly include a celebration of Pentecost, pupils develop an understanding that God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Worship takes place in several formats, being led by a range of leaders, including representatives from the three parish churches. Pupils have many excellent opportunities to take part; through leading prayers, reading and role-playing. Care is taken to ensure that all assemblies, including those focused on or celebration, include a Christian Act of Worship, which provides opportunity for personal prayer and quiet reflection. A remarkable strength is that pupils who feel they have something to contribute can offer to lead an act of worship themselves. Pupils are affirmed by worship, regardless of faith. They are enthusiastic participants, singing well and demonstrating reverent, prayerful responses. Through worship and the prayers that are said during the day, pupils develop a mature understanding of the nature and purpose of prayer. A prayer tree provides good opportunities to reflect and make a personal response. Written prayers added to the tree are sometimes used in worship. Since the last inspection, governors have worked with other stakeholders to evaluate worship so that it maintains a freshness and reality.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding**

RE has a very high priority in the school and the curriculum is rich and varied. Each class has a weekly lesson that is long enough for pupils to engage in deep learning. As a result they make excellent progress and attain standards that are higher than national expectations. From their earliest starting points, pupils quickly build up their knowledge about Christianity and other world faiths. They are impressive in how securely they understand the inter-relationship of faiths, ask deep questions and think for themselves. As a result pupils relate their learning to their own lives and develop excellent attitudes towards faith and belief. Good use is made of the three parish churches and, since the last inspection, the curriculum has been improved by visits to other places of worship. RE is well taught by specialist teachers; one pupil commented that it was, 'my favourite subject because it is such fun'. This good teaching ensures that all pupils, regardless of their starting points or their beliefs, are enriched spiritually, morally,

socially and culturally. Assessment is highly effective so that teachers are aware of the progress their pupils are making and can plan for their next steps. The success of RE is due to the skill, vision and expertise of the RE coordinator. It is rigorously monitored and strategic plans are focused on further improvement.

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

The headteacher, key staff and governors share and articulate an ambitious Christian vision for the school. Their focus on the achievement of pupils is balanced by a commitment to secure the wellbeing of the whole school community through the application of Christian values that inform strategic decisions and school policy. Leaders and governors have successfully addressed the improvements suggested at the last inspection. There are excellent systems that keep the school's Christian and Anglican distinctiveness under review and ensure that prayer, worship and religious education continue to underpin the school's work. As a result, leaders and governors know the school well and accurately plan to meet its future leadership needs and the needs of all pupils. The arrangements for involving the three parish churches and their clergy in the life of the school are highly effective and so add considerable capacity to worship, RE and the pastoral support of the pupils and their families. The school benefits from successful partnerships with Diocesan officers and from the local church schools network and this is helping to further strengthen the effectiveness of the school's leadership. Parents are actively involved in school life and speak warmly of its role as the meeting point of the local Anglican faith communities.

SIAMS report June 2014 St John's Highbury Vale N5 IDL





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### SIAMS Judgement Recording Form (JRF)

This form is to be attached to the main SIAMS report and returned to the diocese in which the school is situated and to the National Society.

School Name	St John's CE Primary School, Highbury Vale
School Address	Conewood Road, Islington, London N5 1DL
School URN	100440
Date of Inspection	27 June 2014
NS Inspector's Number	144
Type of Church School	VA
Number of Pupils	210
Phase of Education	Primary
Name of Critical Reader	Jayne Pavlou
Has Diocesan Quality Assurance been obtained for this Report? Yes	

	Rating 1-4
How distinctive and effective is the school as a Church School?	1
How well does the school, through its distinctive Christian character, meet the needs of all learners?	1
What is the impact of collective worship on the school community?	1
How effective is the religious education?	1
How effective are the leadership and management of the school, as a church school?	1
The school meets the statutory requirements for collective acts of worship	Y
The school meets the statutory requirement for religious education	Y