

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St John the Baptist Church of England Primary School			
Address	Church Road, Ruyton XI Towns, Shrewsbury SY4 1LA		
Date of inspection	8 July 2019	Status of school	VC primary
Diocese	Lichfield	URN	123498

Overall Judgement	How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?	Grade	Excellent
Additional Judgements	The impact of collective worship	Grade	Good

School context

St John the Baptist is a primary school with 105 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language. 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 above national averages. In November 2015, the school federated with Bomere Heath Church of England Primary School. The federation is led by one governing body and an executive headteacher. Several staff work in both schools.

The school's Christian vision

Our school nurtures all pupils and those in our school community to flourish as individuals; educationally, spiritually and morally, promoting Christian values through the experience we offer to all. Our core Christian values are Hope, Love and Respect. 'With God all things are possible.' Matthew 19:26

Key findings

- A tangible outworking of the deeply Christian vision and values means that 'all is possible' and, therefore, seen as achievable. Inclusion and aspiration for all ages characterise the school.
- Highly innovative work on mental health and wellbeing supports those presenting with early signs of a problem. The school and federation are beacons of excellent practice on this within the Diocese.
- A vibrant and exciting curriculum has a profound impact on encouraging pupils. All is indeed possible, whether in religious education (RE), music, the arts, other academic subjects or sports.
- The school is the heart of the community. Exceptionally strong partnerships with parents, the parish church and village community are seen through creative projects which enrich the lives of residents as well as those within the school.
- Leadership is outstanding. The headteacher is a truly inspirational role model, championing pupils with both zeal and compassion.

Areas for development

- Refer to the Christian vision more explicitly in all policies and so support leaders' monitoring of its effectiveness.
- Extend pupil leadership of aspects of worship, beyond those currently in the worship council, to deepen further pupil engagement, and so increase spiritual growth for all ages.

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

St John's is a school built on faith, hope and love, preparing, as its patron saint did, for a future rich in possibilities. The Christian vision, core values and those expressed as the RUYTON acronym, are so well known that even the younger children talk of them with affection. 'This is who we are,' said one, of the value of respect. Leaders at all levels are unswerving in their commitment that all pupils receive the best possible educational experience. Consequently, progress for almost all children is strong, and in many cases, exceeds that in similar schools nationally. Results in national assessments confirm what pupils and teachers already know: that wisdom comes with knowledge and the practical application of skills. Learning goes far beyond knowledge and facts. Music, sports and the arts are constant features and give pupils ways to develop their talents and interests. Many do so into the future, and the school is rightly proud of its former pupils who have gone on to be, for example, professional sportsmen. A pupil said of the value of hope, 'It helps me know that if I get it wrong, I can do it with a different strategy next time.'

This culture of aspiration is within the context of a number of pupils presenting with additional needs, some of which are complex. Care for these is woven seamlessly into the daily life of the school. At St John's, all are valued as children of God. Such care extends to families. Parents are fulsome in their praise for the gentle sympathy and generous support they receive in dark times. As one commented, 'Anyone can use kind words, it is another matter to show it.' The culture of aspiration, of energy and enjoyment in learning is palpable. Pupils bubble with enthusiasm and delight when talking of particular subjects and projects. For example, how the innovative homework on the parables ignited pupils' interest in the teachings of Jesus. They articulate how his words inspire them, for example to show practical compassion and inclusion, like the Good Samaritan. In this school all ages live well together, enveloped by love. All ages learn together through a vibrant curriculum, enriched with special events, like the residential to Liverpool. At the cathedral, a member of the clergy commented, 'The children brought light into the cathedral.'

Acts of kindness are taken further, as pupils are dedicated agents of change. This is best exemplified in their imaginative campaign to lower the speed limit (20 is plenty), after a classmate was hurt in a cycling accident. Parish councillors and members of the community affirm that pupil voice was instrumental in making the village roads safer. In living out the vision of endless possibilities, pupils demonstrate perseverance and skill beyond their years. Pupil leadership is a significant strength of the school. As well as groups serving on the worship, fun and games and eco councils, pupils work with governors. They share their views on teaching and learning and as 'healthy helpers' on matters of health and safety. This demonstrates the powerful voice pupils have at St John's. After feedback from the worship council, favourite songs are linked to actions. As a result, pupils are more actively engaged in offering their voices in praise. Pupils also support a range of charities. Fundraising is coordinated by the fun and games council and includes support for a children's hospice and a tree-planting project with villagers. Therefore, a practical as well as reflective spirituality is seen as pupils consider what they can do to improve the lives of others.

Amongst the school and federation, great care is taken to safeguard mental health and wellbeing of adults and pupils. Staff have a high level of expertise and consider each child's wellbeing regularly, noticing any changes in behaviour or health. Exceptional practice is demonstrated in relaying any concerns to the secondary school at transition meetings. A valuable link is established with the local medical practice, which is keen to work with the school to promote good mental health. The Diocese regards St John's as a beacon of good practice in this area.

Parents say that, 'The school is a gate to the church, but a gate that opens both ways.' This view captures the very warm and nurturing relationship between school and church. The vicar provides prayerful support to all. Worship in school and church is enriched by both organisations as an extended family. In school, care is taken to make worship engaging and inclusive. It is carefully planned so that pupils learn of the Bible, life and teaching of Jesus in a way that is relevant and accessible to them. For example, understanding that both Joseph with his new coat, and Noah had hope and faith that God would keep his promises. Key to worship is the contribution of the vicar and 'Open the Book' team. These are much-loved friends of the school. Worship is steeped in faith, while enabling all those who wish it, to come closer to God. Pupils relish the time to pray and reflect together. They enjoy contributing to worship and express the wish to extend leadership of acts of worship beyond the worship council. The main Christian festivals are celebrated in church and are highlights of the year. Music often makes worship

inspirational and uplifting. Singing is a joyful response to the themes explored. Through worship, pupils are developing their awareness of diversity within Christianity.

Within the rich curriculum, RE makes a significant contribution to learning. Pupils talk of RE as, 'packed with excitement'. They value how the subject is a window onto the wider world, other faiths and cultures. They particularly enjoy when activities are practical and offer them the chance to express their thoughts, for example through music and art. RE, therefore, supports spiritual awareness and development.

At the heart of the wonderful learning experiences and family feel at St John's, are the dedicated headteacher, senior staff and governors. Many of these serve across the federation. They embody the vision in their daily interactions and strategic decisions. While governors know the school well, the vision is not yet consistently referenced in all policies, and so its impact is less readily evaluated. The broader Christian character is, however, prominent in strategic decisions and development plans, for example on providing wellbeing support for staff. Leaders live out an authentic and deeply held Christian vision that, with God's aid, 'all is possible'.

Executive headteacher	Julie Ball
Inspector's name and number	Allyson Taylor 768