



Southwark Diocesan Board
of Education

**STATUTORY
INSPECTION OF
ANGLICAN SCHOOLS**



The National Society

Name and address of school : **St. John's CE Primary School**

Spring Park Road
Croydon
Surrey
CRO 5EL

Type of school: Voluntary aided

Diocese: Southwark

School's Unique reference number: 101788

Date of inspection: 21 and 22 October 2010

Date of last inspection: January 2008

Headteacher: Martina Martin

Chair of Governors: Heather East

Inspector's name with National Society inspector's number : Daphne Gibbs 210

School context

St. John's is of average size and situated next to its foundation church in the Shirley area of Croydon. Over three quarters of the pupils are from Christian families. The school has taken an additional Reception class this year in response to local need. Building work is taking place at the moment. Five new full-time teachers joined the school in September. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The number with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average.

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

The vision of St. John's is seamlessly lived out within the school community. The caring Christian ethos respects the individual and enables pupils to grow in confidence and flourish. Collective Worship binds everybody together creating a family feel. The leadership team is always looking for creative and ambitious ways to improve St. John's as a church school for the benefit of the pupils and the wider community.

Established strengths

- the strong vision which is promoted and put into practice and which proudly proclaims that St John's is a Church school
- the caring distinctive Christian ethos which values individuality and enables all members of the school community to flourish

- Collective Worship which strongly binds the school together and promotes Christian values
- creative leadership and management that works together to continually improve St. John's as a Church school for the benefit of the children and the wider community

Focus for development

- disseminate new strategies for assessment and evidence gathering, already trialled, to new members of staff so these initiatives can inform the future teaching and learning of Religious Education (RE)
- ensure that the teaching of RE is of a uniform standard – that new members of staff reach the high standards of the more experienced teachers

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

The seamless Christian ethos of St. John's 'hits you in the face' says one of the governors. 'It is not a case of now here's the Christian bit'. Strong Christian values impact on all learners and enable them to flourish. 'Teachers like them and celebrate their individuality' reports another governor. The children talk of a 'friendly buzz', of 'smiley staff' who know your name and are supportive. The Christian character of St. John's is excellent in encouraging the moral, social and cultural development of all learners whether they are Christian, of other faiths or of none. The school has only one golden rule 'love one another'. Whatever they believe, pupils confirm the importance of this message. They say they get on well together - 'as God has said we love one another'. Every child really does matter at St. John's. As one governor put it, the pupils are 'released by the ethos and become rounded personalities' who are able to express themselves with confidence in preparation to play their part in an ever-changing world and become responsible citizens. All members of the school community are motivated by Christian values. Teacher questionnaires speak of the very strong ethos that is 'evident in relationships'. New members of staff talk of colleagues as being 'real role models'. The bright, well cared-for school environment proclaims St. John's distinctiveness and encourages spiritual development. Lively, colourful, interactive displays, banners and prayer points emphasise Christian values and the child as an individual. A recently purchased picture was displayed in memory of two parents who had recently died. A place of sanctuary has been created for members of staff.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective Worship strongly binds the school community of St. John's together as one family. The importance of Collective Worship is illustrated in the fact that a possible expansion to two forms of entry was not being considered unless the architects were able to identify a space for the whole school to gather together to worship and reflect. All members of staff attend Collective Worship and expected behaviour is modelled by them. Collective Worship always takes place at the beginning of the day. The children think this is important as it becomes a 'good feeling' which 'becomes a good day' and gives them strength to face the challenges to come. Their behaviour is impeccable and they enter and exit with respect and in silence. They enjoy 'audience participation' and feel 'the message is clear and relevant'. They appreciate that their teachers have thought 'a lot about presentation'. They come to Collective Worship with a 'sense of expectancy', as the incumbent put it, as many different groups and local Christian churches are invited to take the lead. The children never quite know what is going to happen. The whole community derives inspiration, spiritual growth and affirmation from Collective Worship. A new member of staff commented 'it can change my way of thinking and indicate which child I should be thinking about'. A parent said they always witnessed something 'beautiful'. Pupils are called to Collective Worship by a bell and a candle is lit indicating the special significance of what is about to happen. The two sessions of Collective Worship observed - one led by the headteacher and the other by Year 4 - were of a high standard. The creative attention to detail indicated to the pupils the importance of the message and the high esteem in which they were held. Anglican tradition and practice is reflected in the form of Collective Worship. It opens and ends in a clear liturgical way. The peace is often shared, biblical references made and Christian songs sung.

Relevant church festivals are celebrated in St. John's church and a form of Eucharist has been introduced. The pupils have a good understanding of the events behind these festivals.

Religious Education is good

Standards in RE are good. They are on a par with other core subjects which are good. Teaching and learning is good with speaking and listening a particular strength. Lessons observed were of differing standards. Outstanding lessons showed effective progression in questioning and confidence in subject matter. They were simple, rounded and relevant. Stimulating resources were used. There was an attitude of mutual sharing and learning. The children were integrated, interested and wanting to learn more. Teaching is not of uniformly high quality because lessons by newly appointed teachers, of which there are a significant number, do not yet match the high quality of more experienced teachers. The last report drew attention to the need to 'establish a manageable system that records the progress of learners in RE and informs teaching and learning' and the need to 'establish a more coherent scheme of work' and to challenge the more able. Assessment in RE, using 'I Can' statements, was introduced in the Summer term of 2010 but it is not possible to analyse progress at this early stage. A new scheme of work has been established based mainly on that of the Southwark Diocese with adaptations made as appropriate to St. John's. This has resulted in a more creative, varied and clearly set out curriculum. The children - learners of all faiths and of none - have particularly enjoyed the opportunity to study other beliefs. They say they understand people better - 'the similarities and differences'. They feel 'what you say is respected - what you say is neither right nor wrong'. RE is now seen as helping them to be 'better in other subjects'. The more able are being stimulated by the challenging new scheme of work and other strategies being put in place under the new Teaching and Learning policy. RE at St. John's promotes Christian values and reflects the religious diversity of the local area thus encouraging community cohesion. The school has worked hard to encourage all members of the school community to realise the importance of teaching different faiths.

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

The vision of St. John's is enthusiastically proclaimed by the whole school community. Documentation makes it very clear that St. John's is proud to be a Church school. Senior managers and governors are effective role models of the vision. The head and deputy are caring, warm and generous and 'quite Christ like' say the governors but flexible with 'a real belief in what they do'. They 'give one hundred and forty per cent dedication'. The headteacher expects high standards of Christian behaviour from her staff. Newly appointed teachers are inducted into the St. John's way. They say the school's golden rule - love one another - 'shines through from the top'. The vision is taken out to the whole school community and difficulties met with openness in order to encourage understanding and engagement. A faith group has been set up to involve parents/carers in the Christian life of the school. Future leadership of church schools is taken very seriously. Induction of new staff is a high priority. All staff are nurtured. The atmosphere of striving for excellence raises their expectations of what they can achieve. Traditions have been laid down and governors believe that this consistency will stand them in good stead when change occurs. The partnership between St. John's church and the school is strong but inclusive. It encourages foundation governors from other local churches. Pupils feel at home in St. John's church and talk of it being a 'privilege to go there'. The school has just completed a strategy for change - 'What's the Big Idea' - setting out creative and ambitious plans for the future. The Chair of Governors commented that the school has recently 'leaped into a different stratosphere and bloomed and blossomed in an organic way'. This is clearly apparent and so strongly indicates that St. John's has the capacity to improve, develop and grow even more as a Church School.

October 2010 SIAS report, St. John's CE Primary School, Spring Park Road, Croydon, Surrey CRO 5EL