



## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### St John's CE School

Green Lane  
Stanmore  
HA7 3AD

#### Diocese of London

Local authority: London Borough of Harrow

School's unique reference number: 134929

Head teacher: Tony Clarke (Acting)

Dates of inspection: 19 April 2007

Date of last inspection: n/a

Inspector's name & number: Hilary Ferries 276

### School context

St John's is a two form entry, oversubscribed school, created in 2005 from the amalgamation of the former St John's CE's first and middle schools. Many learners travel long distances to attend. A large percentage of the school population is Christian and worship at a wide range of churches. A minority of children are from other world faiths.

The deputy head of the former middle school is currently acting head and a substantive head will start in September 2007. The amalgamation has entailed much building work.

### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St John's CE School as a Church of England school are good.**

St John's is a good Church school that reflects its Christian ethos very well. Christian values and attitudes lie at the heart of all the school does and are strongly promoted by staff and governors. Learners are very aware of the Christian nature of the school and consider it to be one of the main strengths of their school. Parents and governors are supportive and involved in the life of the school.

### Established strengths

- The strong Christian ethos, where everyone is valued and learners have very positive attitudes
- The Christian leadership of the head teacher and senior management team that has enabled the school to continue to develop in challenging times
- Listening and responding to stakeholders

### Focus for development

- Introduce assessment in RE based on the levels of attainment
- Build the areas for development identified in self evaluation into the School Improvement Plan
- Formalise the governors' role in monitoring and evaluating areas of Church school life
- Develop resources to deliver the new scheme of work in interesting and lively ways

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

The school mission states the importance of Christian beliefs and values and these are considered to be a vital part of the school. Learners interviewed talk about 'being part of a family'. They believe adults in school care about them and they enjoy coming to school. They

value the after school clubs and other opportunities for responsibility in their classes and wider whole school responsibilities for Year 7. They feel safe at school, able to talk about their worries and fears. These views are supported by questionnaires undertaken by the leadership team (SLT) earlier this year.

The school makes good provision to meet the needs of all its learners. Learners interviewed feel that their teachers make their lessons interesting. The school identifies the needs of learners well and addresses them effectively. Recently the school has been focusing on the achievement of Black Minority Ethnic pupils and this project is making a positive difference to a group of pupils that has been underachieving.

All learners interviewed were aware that they attended a Church of England school and could talk about why this is important to them. The majority of pupils at the school are Christian, but all pupils interviewed felt that their views are respected. All pupils talk about the importance of understanding and respect for others views and faiths.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development opportunities are good. Recently members of the school were winners in an art competition sponsored by a local church on the theme of The Good Shepherd. A Fair Trade fortnight raised many questions and offered opportunities to reflect on themes such as justice and several learners mentioned the impact of the project on the abolition of slavery. There is a school code of behaviour displayed in each classroom and this was discussed in the worship observed during the inspection. Learners could talk about this code of conduct and why they feel it is important. There are many opportunities for achievement to be recognised: house points, reward assemblies. The school is involved in projects such as Operation Christmas Child and the NSPCC and New Hope Trust.

Relationships throughout the school are very strong and there is a very real sense of a school family. In Key Stage One, parent volunteers and the very able learning support assistants lead afternoon workshops on activities such as sewing, cooking and art which are enjoyed by the learners.

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

Worship is considered by all to be important to the life of the school and contributes well to the strong Christian ethos. In a recent questionnaire, one learner wrote 'it makes me feel I belong to the school'. There is a well organised and clear weekly pattern with a set of themes planned by the head teacher (who is the worship coordinator). Feedback from pupils has been sought and their views acted upon. The feedback and interviews showed learners were very positive about the different styles of worship from the different staff and feel that worship 'helps you know what to do that is right in life', and is important because 'It is good to learn more about Jesus.'

Acts of worship are held in the two school buildings each day. Members of the senior leadership team and clergy all lead worship in both departments to promote the sense of a whole school and to ensure they get to know all the children. Clergy from the local churches lead worship on a weekly basis and are frequent visitors at school. Learners speak positively of all these different styles of worship, including the 'Sharing Meal Assembly' in the lower school and 'Year Group Eucharist' in the upper school.

The worship observed was a class assembly. Photos of the class members scrolled through on the IWB as parents came in, making a positive start to the worship. Learners entered quietly and calmly and there was a strong sense of a school family. There was a clear beginning to the worship with the lighting of candles which contributed to the feeling of a special time. Learners told and acted out the story of the boy who called wolf and related it to the school code. They also talked about some of the work they had been doing in the previous term. A large number of parents attended and they and the pupils were engaged throughout the assembly.

Prayer is considered to be important and the school questionnaire shows that some learners suggest prayer as an answer to a problem and a comfort. There is a parent prayer group and a staff prayer group. Learners can write their prayer needs prayers in a prayer box by

reception.

There are no withdrawals from school based worship and learners talked about the importance of learning about all faiths so they can all 'get on well' together.

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

The leadership team has demonstrated their belief in the importance of Religious Education (RE) by making it the first subject to be reviewed as a 'whole school'. After seeking advice from the Diocese the school has adopted the Solihull scheme of work from reception to Year 6 and the locally agreed syllabus for RE for Year 7. These meet all legal requirements and teach major monotheistic world faiths. The school is adapting some of the units of work to study other religions practised by members of the local community. Interviews showed very positive attitudes amongst learners for the subject. They enjoy the opportunities to discuss issues and ideas openly and RE contributes well to their spiritual development. Learners said they like the fact that it is all right to talk about different beliefs and find out what others think.

RE is taught well across the school. Lessons observed were good and a series of observations by members of the SLT and the RE coordinator suggests that this is the case across the school.

Interviews showed that standards and achievement are good compared to the QCA non statutory guidance levels. Learners were able to talk about their work in RE with understanding but this was not evident from the written work in some year groups. The current assessment systems do not use levels of attainment so teachers cannot assess and plan to ensure maximum progress.

Lessons observed had relevant activities to deliver the learning objectives. The school has recently introduced interactive whiteboards and the learners enjoy learning from these in their lessons. They enjoy the way that RE is linked with other areas of the curriculum, group discussions and using drama and ICT in RE. Several mentioned how much they had learned from visiting places of worship. These activities were observed during the inspection, but are not consistent throughout the school to make RE lively and interesting for all learners.

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

It has been an unsettled time for the school, but the senior leadership team, with the supportive governors and staff, has ensured that the clear Christian vision devised at the amalgamation has been developed. Their Christian leadership promotes a strong school family where pupils are proud of their school and all it achieves. There is a sense of a united staff team who are working together.

The leadership team has used RE as a model for whole school policy review and this demonstrates the importance of the subject to the school. They have carried out regular observations of teaching and learning. Leadership from the RE subject leader is good. She has consulted staff on the new syllabus, provided resources and supported with planning and is monitoring the first year of the introduction of the new syllabus.

There have been a series of questionnaires with parents and learners and these are taken seriously and acted upon. However, the development of the school as a church school is not planned into the School Improvement Plan. Governors' formal monitoring and evaluation procedures are in the early stages, although the chair and vice chair are frequent visitors, know what is going on in the school and offer support and challenge.

Parent questionnaires show that 95% of parents believe that children enjoy school and that it promotes worthwhile values and attitudes.

There are strong links with the local church. The clergy team are regular visitors, both pastorally and to lead worship. The school is remembered in prayers in both churches.

