

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

# St John The Baptist Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Address St John's Way, Ragworth, Stockton On Tees, TS19 0FB

How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?

**Overall grade** **Good**

**The impact of collective worship** **Good**

### School's vision

Our vision sees St John's school at the heart of the community, with God at the centre of what we do with and for each other. Our motto at St John's, 'Everyone different, everyone loved', keeps this central and ensures that everyone feels welcomed, safe and loved – that they belong.

“‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbour as yourself. Matthew 22  
‘If I had such faith that I could move mountains, but didn't love others, I would be nothing’. 1 Corinthians

### Key findings

- Genuine kindness and mutual respect permeate the actions of all members of the school community. Guided by the clear, unambiguous Christian vision, everyone works tirelessly to ensure that each member of the school community grows and flourishes.
- The school is deeply committed to inclusion and the vision of 'everyone different, everyone loved' inspires everyone to go the extra mile to meet the wide-ranging needs of the pupils.
- The inspirational headteacher leads the school with determination and courage. She lives out the vision and consistently encourages other leaders to be loving and aspirational for each other and the pupils.
- Collective worship is the beating heart of the school and a cherished time to 'stop, reflect and think'. However, opportunities for pupils to become involved in planning and evaluation are less developed.
- Religious education (RE) is planned effectively and provides pupils with the opportunities to make links and deepen their understanding of a range of world faiths.

### Areas for development

- Develop a coherent, shared understanding of spiritual development so that there is a consistent approach to the way that it is promoted.
- Consistently involve pupils and adults in shaping collective worship through the planning, monitoring, and evaluation process.
- Extend the development of good practice in all aspects of church school life by consolidating and extending links with partner schools and the Diocese.

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 The Baptist is a school where all staff and governors are deeply committed to providing a warm, welcoming and uniquely nurturing environment. It is cherished by the community it serves and parents value the way that school lives out the vision to go 'above and beyond' for both them and their children. The vision is grounded in a Christian narrative and is lived out and understood by all. It is supplemented by the powerfully articulated way that the whole community consistently speak of, 'everyone different, everyone loved'. The belief in this as a guiding principle leads to all pupils and adults being able to talk confidently about the impact it has on their relationships and aspirations. Underpinned by Christian values such as friendship and forgiveness, the school's commitment to the inclusion of the most vulnerable and marginalised is inspiring.

By living out a model of servant leadership, the humility, passion and determination of the headteacher is recognised by all. Using the vision as a guiding light, she ensures that a consistent culture of acceptance and compassion permeates all actions. This model of inclusion is clearly evidenced in the school's two enhanced mainstream units and additional specialist provision for those pupils who are at risk of permanent exclusion from other settings. The additional provision has been seamlessly integrated into the fabric of St John's, to the extent where pupils talk enthusiastically about it 'making school more special'. The further impact of the vision is clearly seen through the work of the highly effective pastoral team. They provide exceptional support to all staff, pupils and families to ensure that everyone, regardless of their background or ability, can flourish and make progress. They summarise their work as being guided by 'grace and forgiveness.'

The refrain of 'love is at the centre of all we do' is echoed consistently by staff and there is a clear devotion to the flourishing of the community from all. Everyone, regardless of role or background, is treated with equal respect and kindness. Staff and parents refer to school as one big family and the sense of service to the school is palpable. Staff know their pupils and families very well and they recognise the need for consistency in the lives of the families and see everyone's potential as children of God. The governing body work in partnership with the headteacher and staff to prioritise pupils. They can talk confidently about the ways that they support the school to keep God at the centre of all they do. School is outward facing and works closely with colleagues from the local authority and a wide range of outside agencies to ensure that pupils and staff are well supported. The partnership with the diocesan education team is not yet developed enough to encourage effective support and evaluation of St John's as a church school.

Behaviour and attitudes to learning are good and positive relationships form the beating heart of the school. Pupils have the opportunity to learn new strategies when things go wrong, and the wider curriculum promotes resilience as a key life skill. This contributes to the flourishing of pupils across the school. The vision encourages mutual respect, empathy and a sense of determination in staff and pupils and this is enhanced by a detailed understanding of the school's local context. Describing their approach as being, 'rooted in love', staff support each other in ways which promote their wellbeing and recognise the importance of continuing professional development for all.

Shaped by the Christian vision, the school has a broad and balanced curriculum which prepares pupils for life in an ever-changing world. It is underpinned by courageous decisions, such as the inclusion of weekly Pony Therapy sessions and the passionate drive to become a 'School of Sanctuary' for refugee children in the local area. Staff prioritise pupils' access to rich life experiences in every class and these 'promises' represent cherished memories for the children. They regularly plan trips to the local beach, the farm and the theatre to ensure that pupils are able to enjoy the many gifts of childhood. Literature has been carefully curated across the school and as such, children develop an understanding of difference and are able to challenge stereotypes. Pupils are also provided with opportunities which allow them to learn how to disagree well. The curriculum is enhanced by extra-curricular activities, clubs and well-planned outdoor activities which provide opportunities for pupils to experience life in all its fullness. Reflective time is built into the daily life of school, with yoga, mindfulness and opportunities to consider the majesty of the natural world being key features of the pupils' experience. However, opportunities for spiritual development across the whole curriculum are not consistently identified and there is not yet a shared school understanding of spirituality.

Pupils are committed to their local context. They enthusiastically engage in community work, including support for the local foodbank and care home. This is enabling them to begin to understand that they can be a voice for change and understand the difference their actions make. Pupils are given a range of opportunities and responsibilities in school,

with children talking confidently about their roles as RE leaders, reading champions and play leaders. The love encapsulated in the vision extends to new pupils in school. Everyone is welcomed and valued. Key policies, such as behaviour, are informed by the vision and as a result, everyone is treated with dignity and respect.

Collective worship is central to the life of the school and an uplifting, shared experience for all. Staff and pupils value the opportunity to ‘stop and think’ and ‘just be’. Thanks to the close relationship with the local church community, pupils experience and learn about different styles of Christian worship. Collective worship is inclusive and inspiring. Using resources curated and developed by the headteacher, staff are supported in the delivery of varied and rich worship which provides opportunities to explore big questions and ideas. Whilst pupils’ and adults’ participation in planning, evaluating and monitoring of worship is not consistent, they talk enthusiastically about the opportunities that they are given to lead.

RE makes a positive contribution to the curriculum and provides regular experiences and opportunities for pupils to express the vision of the school. Leaders are committed to the development of a programme of support and training and as a result, staff and pupils feel confident and share the RE leaders’ enthusiasm for the subject. Children enjoy learning about the core beliefs of a wide range of different world religions and can talk with confidence about Christianity as a global, living faith. Staff encourage pupils to think about big questions and engage in activities such as godly play in order to enhance and enliven their learning experience. Carefully chosen visits enhance pupils’ understanding of living faith and what it means to belong to a faith community.

St John’s is a highly effective Church school where every pupil is known and cherished. The love of God is evident throughout the school. It is a place where the vision inspires and encourages all to be the best that they can be.

### Contextual information about the school

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|---|--|--------|--------|
| Date of inspection  | 14 June 2022   | URN    | 111668 |
| Date of previous inspection                                 | 18 June 2015   |        |        |
| School status   | Voluntary controlled primary school  | NOR    | 261    |
| Name of MAT/Federation                                      | n/a  |        |        |
| Diocese   | Durham   |        |        |
| Headteacher   | Kerry Coe  |        |        |
| Pupil profile   | The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is above national averages.  |        |        |
|   | The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above national averages.  |        |        |
| Additional significant information max 50 words (if needed) | St John’s is an Enhanced Mainstream school for the local authority for two types of provision: Cognition & Learning and Physical & Medical. They are also a Pathway Development Centre (for two pupils either at risk of or who have been permanently excluded) and also have three partnership places with the Virtual School for Children in Care. |        |        |
| Inspector’s name  | Lee Talbot   | Number | 1815   |