

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### St John's Church of England Infant and Nursery School

Gills Hill Lane  
Radlett  
Hertfordshire  
WD 7 8DD

#### Diocese: St Albans

Local authority:	Hertfordshire
Date of inspection:	12 February 2013
Date of last inspection:	11 March 2008
School's unique reference number:	117383
Headteacher:	Mrs Susan England
Inspector's name and number:	Mrs Judith Ruff 528

#### School context

St John's Infant and Nursery School is a voluntary controlled school, adjacent to St John's Church and approximately fifteen minutes walk from Christ Church, Radlett. At the time of the inspection there were 223 pupils on roll. Pupils are from the village of Radlett, but also from the surrounding areas, particularly when parents seek out a church school. Within the school pupils from other faith backgrounds are welcomed and celebrated.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St John's Infant and Nursery as a Church of England school are good.

Over the past two years, both staff and governors have worked hard to produce a vision for the school which is encapsulated in eleven selected Christian values. Parents are supportive of these and believe they complement and strengthen their own family moral code. Some values require further explanation as to why they have been chosen. Pupils are now beginning to use the 'values language' both within the home and during their school day to aid their learning and attitudes to work.

#### Established strengths

- High quality learning environments, which celebrate and stimulate pupils' work
- Loving and nurturing relationships within the school community based on Christian care and respect, coupled with high expectations and aspirations for each child
- The climate of inclusiveness which successfully recognises each person as a unique individual

#### Focus for development

- Ensure that issues related to the distinctiveness of the school as an Anglican church school are more prominently recorded and discussed as a key part of securing improvements
- Strengthen reporting systems to governors, enabling them to accurately understand the impact of the school as a church school
- Ensure collective worship evaluation systems are embedded and developmental and show impact over time of the quality of worship continuing to improve

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

At this school all learners are made to feel special and valued. Behaviour across the school is good. Staff understand the impact of using positive language with children. This climate of confidence is tangible, with pupils being very well supported through a carefully constructed code of rules and behaviours of which they have ownership. The half termly values work strengthens children's awareness of an appropriate moral code. For example, one child was able to discuss how the current value of 'honesty' applied to Peter's denial of Christ. Parents are enthusiastic about the values work and speak of their children discussing the current value within their home. The school is committed to embedding this approach and looking to share ideas and practice with other church schools to learn more. Relationships within the school are caring and nurturing. Links with the local church are good, despite an interregnum. Outreach initiatives such as 'Messy Church' and the involvement in school of the Children's Worker successfully engage the children and support them in learning more about the Christian faith. The school's support for each child's spiritual development is good, with Religious Education and Collective Worship contributing strongly to this. However, an audit of cross-curricular opportunities for spiritual development is not yet in place. RE is taught well and enthusiastically by staff. This is reflected in the children's attitudes to RE, which are overwhelmingly positive, often giving pupils from other faith background an opportunity to celebrate and share their faith. Creative work on the Chinese New Year had stimulated children's imagination and there was a real sense of pride in their finished artefacts. Levels of charitable giving are good, with a range of local, national and international giving taking place across the year.

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

Collective worship is regarded as an important part of the school day. It is well planned, with good levels of support for staff leading on themes from the collective worship leader. Staff attend collective worship and support the children to engage with songs and prayers. Children sing well and with great enthusiasm, a point remarked upon by parents, who spoke of their children regularly singing songs and even the Lord's Prayer at home. Children are encouraged to write prayers, particularly for end of term services and for 'grace' before lunchtime. Children interviewed understood the importance of prayer to bring comfort and to say 'thank you' for gifts. Children's prayer outcomes are not consistently celebrated in ways such as the making up of whole school prayer collections. However, the 'prayer tree' in the school hall offers children good opportunities to write their own prayers. The school has worked successfully at ensuring that worship is inter-active. Selected children enjoyed tossing pancakes as part of Shrove Tuesday and preparing for Lent. 'Talking Partners' were used well to aid opportunities for discussion as to how Lent might impact upon each child. Opportunities for pupils to be part of planning and delivering collective worship are less well developed. Evaluations systems are in place for collective worship, but these are mostly celebratory and lack identification of how to move practice on to improve provision further. The school has worked hard to improve the quality of collective worship in school. Visitors from other faith traditions and visits to other faith buildings are very positively received by the children and enhance their awareness of respect for other faith belief systems and teach them similarities and differences to Christianity.

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

Both the leadership of the present headteacher and RE and collective worship leader are good. They have positive attitudes towards the growth of the school as a church school. Links with the Diocese are good and training and networking opportunities are well disseminated to staff. Governors interviewed were both very passionate about the school's Christian foundation. The governor with responsibility for RE and collective worship is new to this role, but is already working alongside the school leader in these areas to begin to monitor provision and report back to governors. The Governing Body as a whole values the church school status as seen from minutes which record 'it is critical to governors to maintain the Church of England ethos'. However, the recording of discussions and formulating of planning to develop this ethos is less clear as it does not appear prominently enough in the school's strategic planning documentation. Ways in which senior leaders report back to governors on the impact of the school's work as a church school are currently not robust enough to enable governors to have a secure view on improvements. There have been recent changes to the governing body and parents interviewed commented that they did not know many of the current governors. Succession planning opportunities for aspirant church school leaders within the school are highlighted and professional development opportunities are well signposted for staff.