



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Rownhams St John's Church of England Primary School

Bakers Drove
Rownhams
Southampton
SO16 8AD

Previous SIAMS grade: Outstanding

Diocese: Winchester

Local authority: Hampshire

Dates of inspection: 05 February 2015

Date of last inspection: 04 February 2010

School's unique reference number: 116311

Headteacher: Gwynne Kynaston

Inspector's name and number: Linda Windsor (747)

School context

Rownhams St John's CE (VC) is a larger than average primary school with fewer pupils than average taking free school meals or being eligible for pupil premium funding. Provision needed for pupils with SEN, both at school action and school action plus, is slightly below average, as are the number of pupils with statements of educational need but all of these are increasing. A number of pupils have complex emotional and learning needs. A significant number of pupils (60% approx.) are from outside the school's catchment area. Attendance is excellent. The headteacher took up post in April 2014 following a turbulent two years when several interim headteachers had been in post. A permanent deputy head has just been appointed.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Rownhams St John's as a Church of England school are good

- The vision, commitment and drive of the headteacher, senior leadership and governors, are providing a stable, secure and stimulating environment where all can flourish.
- A set of redefined Christian values, understood and agreed by all stakeholders, is being embedded into daily life and is already impacting positively across all aspects of school life.
- The development of pupils' spirituality is enabling them to question and explore their personal faith and feelings, deepening their understanding of themselves and others.

Areas to improve

- Build links, locally and nationally, supporting pupils' growing understanding and respect for our diverse society.
- Involve pupils more in the planning, leading and evaluating collective worship.
- Increase opportunities for quiet prayer and reflection throughout the school, including in the outdoor environment.

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

The school has recently spent time carefully redefining its values and vision in consultation with all stakeholders. The result is that awareness and understanding of these has risen hugely and they are now clearly at the heart of all that the school does. Parents and pupils talk about the values articulately and are clear that they are beginning to impact on daily life in school. Staff are living the values, both as excellent role models and within their role in school. This has resulted in all pupils being well supported, both academically and pastorally, leading to attainment and attendance well above the national average. As the new Christian values are being embedded, staff and pupils are beginning to be able to make links between these and both the good academic achievement and the good behaviour of pupils, shown in both learning and social situations. Reflection areas in each classroom, personalised by pupils to suit their particular needs, are well used. Pupils are beginning to feel comfortable in saying and writing prayers, developing their own personal spirituality. Work on developing spirituality, whilst quite recent, has already impacted on pupils who talked about their deepening understanding of themselves, others and the wider world. Pupils enjoy their spacious outdoor area but would like a calm space to give them additional opportunities for quiet thought and prayer. Religious education builds on pupil understanding of Christian values, with pupils being given opportunities to explore and discuss a wide range of issues, broadening their understanding of Christianity and other world faiths. This enables them to be confident in offering their opinions and understanding those of others. Pupil understanding of the diverse world we live in is developing, with the school being clear that there is more work to be done, building on the foundations that have been laid so far. Parents are supportive of the school, speaking enthusiastically of all its strengths. They were clear that the Christian ethos, always the core of the school, has now been significantly strengthened since the appointment of the head teacher. Parents also talked of the Christian ethos being a natural part of the school and permeating into their own lives. One parent said her child, in Reception, now prays at bedtime, with another child insisting on breakfast time prayers! There are a significant number of out of catchment pupils attending this school, selected by parents because they feel its Christian foundations give all pupils, whether of Christian faith or not, an excellent academic and moral education.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

At Rownhams St John's, collective worship is an important part of each school day. It is inclusive, using themes that link to the school's Christian values and illustrated by biblical material, linking well to pupils' moral development. A well-planned worship programme ensures a range of experiences and worship leaders making it varied and interesting to the pupils. The programme also follows the church calendar so that, over time, pupils have a good knowledge of the major Christian festivals. Anglican traditions are well used and pupils are comfortable with the rituals and routines of worship both at school and in the local church. St John's church, although well placed for the school to walk to easily, is too small to accommodate parents and pupils so, whilst being well used as an RE resource, most services are held in the school hall. Creative ways to make more use of the church have been planned but are not yet in operation. The local vicar, however, is involved both in the planning and delivery of collective worship and his input is excellent, helping pupils gain a deeper understanding of the school's Christian values, of the purpose of prayer and in beginning to explore the concept of the Trinity. The worship observed was planned and led by pupils with minimal adult help and was excellent. The singing was joyous. Pupils say that they would like more opportunities to lead worship in this way. Pupils enjoy and engage well in collective worship, speaking enthusiastically about the themes, links to the Bible and to their Christian values. Prayer is valued across the school and a high profile is given to the reflection areas in each class, designed by pupils and thus used more effectively as their own space. The headteacher, vicar and foundation governor have done some evaluation of school worship and this has led to improvements, for example in making worship more interactive and engaging.

The school acknowledges that there is more to be done in increasing pupil involvement, in terms of pupils planning and leading worship and also in helping to evaluate the impact. The school is keen to build on its work developing and deepening pupil understanding of the Trinity, of its Anglican traditions and, with a substantive headteacher now in place, has the capacity for rapid progress. The school meets the statutory requirements for collective worship.

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

Rownhams St John's has a secure Christian vision underpinned by a redefined set of Christian values that are already impacting on all stakeholders in the school. With a comparatively new leadership team, the school is working hard to embed these into its daily life. Following a turbulent period, there is now stability and consistency. The new headteacher, whose Christian commitment influences the ethos of love and care across the school, is very clear about the need for continuous improvement both academically and pastorally. Governors are equally committed to playing an active part in school life, as well as in challenging and supporting as needed. Systems to monitor and evaluate the school as a church school are well established and have been re-energised over the past two terms. As a result, governors have an accurate view of the school, its strengths and areas needing development. The leadership, including governors, display honesty and integrity in their assessment of the school, recognising the influence of the past inconsistency in leadership, the journey thus far with a now stable team and the upward trajectory of the school. The school makes good use of diocesan training, which impacts on the leadership of the school, including governors, giving greater clarity to their roles within a church school. New staff are well inducted, ensuring their understanding of the Christian ethos of the school and are able to plan, deliver and assess religious education effectively. The RE leader has a clear view of attainment across the school, has evaluative data that indicates strengths as well as areas to develop and, consequently, has a well focused action plan to improve provision. There are strong partnerships between the local church and clergy with a number of after school clubs, in school and at church, open to all and well attended. The vicar is well known in the school, regularly leading worship and keeping abreast of developments, especially those focused on ethos. Parents support the school actively. All agree that pastoral care, based on Christian love and responsibility, is a strength of the school. The last word comes from the pupils, one of whom said, "Mrs K (headteacher) has changed the school and our new Christian values are already improving our learning and behaviour." Development points from the previous SIAS have been addressed. The school meets the statutory requirements for religious education.

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