

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

### Rowledge CE Controlled Primary School

School Road, Rowledge, Farnham, Surrey, GU10 4BW	
<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Guildford</b>
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Hampshire
Date/s of inspection	1 March 2017
Date of last inspection	31 January 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	116337
Headteacher	Sarah Oliver
Inspector's name and number	Dr Trevor Walker Quality assurance: Jayne Pavlou 628

#### School context

Rowledge CE Primary is a popular and over-subscribed one-form entry school situated on the Surrey/Hampshire border. The overwhelming majority of pupils are of White British heritage and only a small number speak English as a second language. The number of pupils receiving special educational needs support is just below the national average, although this is not evenly spread through the school and is higher in some years than others. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils eligible for additional funding is well below the national average. The headteacher has been in post less than two years and a new vicar joined the parish in 2016.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Rowledge as a Church of England school are good

- This is an inclusive school where pupils help one another and, in line with the core Christian values, show compassion and care for others.
- The school's Christian character has become more evident in recent times and a strong and distinctive ethos drives learning, personal development and well-being.
- Across the school community, learners and adults recognise the centrality and importance of their collective worship, recognising the impact that it has on them personally.

#### Areas to improve

- Give greater clarity to the school's vision statement so that it drives the school's distinctiveness through its explicitly understood Christian values.
- Ensure that the school's shared definition of spirituality is underpinning the progression of opportunities for pupils' spiritual development across the curriculum.
- Leaders and governors should strengthen the process of monitoring and self-evaluation of the school's Christian character to inform strategic planning.

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

Pupils at Rowledge behave well and establish relationships that are positive and caring. A strong sense of belonging pervades, in a school that rightly prides itself on being welcoming and inclusive. Parents appreciate the school's Christian character and governors say that this distinctiveness has become ever more explicit since the appointment of the current headteacher. Christian values underpin the daily life of the school and this makes a notable difference to the learning experience of each pupil. All three values, their example and influence, are frequently and naturally referenced in conversations with people from all parts of the school community. Children use and apply them as part of their learning across the full range of the curriculum, for example, in an English lesson where pupils considered book illustrations, as well as in religious education (RE). In spite of this, while pupils appreciate the importance of the values for their learning and relationships, they are not yet sufficiently embedded in an understanding of the Christian narrative. Not enough of the pupils can easily link them to biblical stories and teaching in order to recognise them as being distinctively, but not exclusively, Christian.

Drawing upon the values, the school's Christian ethos has a positive influence on behaviour and a positive impact on pupil achievement, personal development and well-being. Pupils help one another, showing care, compassion and responsibility for others. An example is found in the role of 'guardian angels' whereby older children care for younger ones, especially outside of classrooms. The nurture group, catering for needs of vulnerable pupils, is another excellent example of the caring climate across the school. In academic and social learning, pupils demonstrate positive attitudes, concentrate well and listen to each other's views respectfully. Their progress is at least in line with the national average and some is well above. By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 6 their attainment is generally high. Ofsted's recent inspection of the school (January 2017) identified the need to increase some aspects of the progress of the more able and the disadvantaged pupils in Key Stage 1. Leaders are already addressing this matter in order to ensure improvements. Attendance is good.

Teachers successfully focus on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development, ensuring that, over-time, each element is built into lessons. Likewise, RE contributes to pupils' enjoyment of their learning, as well as to their SMSC development. Younger pupils gain a basic awareness of matters concerning right from wrong. As they move through the school, they gain a much deeper understanding, and application, of more complicated moral issues. Nevertheless, while opportunities for personal and class reflection are used extensively through the school, a much clearer and shared definition of spirituality is necessary so that the provision and practice of spirituality grows and deepens as pupils progress through the curriculum. There are on-going, and seemingly productive links, with schools in other parts of the world. This enhances pupils' understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural faith and this increases their respect for diversity, although their understanding of the practices and traditions of the world-wide church is less secure.

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

Across the school, children and adults recognise the value of collective worship. The acts of worship have a positive impact on children and adults alike. Pupils spoke about how much they value the opportunity for everyone to worship together. Leaders recognise the desirability of all children and adults coming together and they have focused on ensuring that this happens. As a consequence, both adults and children can articulate the importance of collective worship for them personally. One teaching assistant said, 'it makes me think in a different way'. Collective worship successfully focuses on increasing pupils' understanding of Christianity and other world faiths. Their understanding is at a generally good level: for example, one pupil said that the story of the Good Samaritan was about how we treat those who others may regard as being outcasts. These are some gaps in their knowledge, although older pupils talked with a reasonable measure of understanding about Pentecost and the Trinity.

Leaders plan the worship in such a way as to enable other teachers and clergy to take their respective turns at leading. Church leaders are also involved through planning festivals and other special occasions in church. Members of the pupils' worship committee show enormous and commendable enthusiasm and the impact of their input is also gaining strength. Acts of worship feature an appropriate range of attributes, of which the music and singing are notable features. Good use is made of biblical material and pupils listen attentively, drawing comparisons from the school values. During the inspection, the vicar led an inspirational act of worship that drew on the range of desirable elements that are presented in the worship policy: namely, to celebrate, share, reflect, experience and explore. The use of guided reflection led into both corporate prayer and individuals shared their own prayers, a practice in which

the pupils demonstrated impressive confidence. Acts of collective worship focus on the ideas and beliefs of those of different faiths, while still providing an opportunity to experience the heritage of Anglican worship. Christian symbolism and other religious artefacts are attractively and respectfully displayed in classrooms and around the school. Opportunities for developing personal prayer are promoted through prayer spaces, although these are still at an early stage of development. Here again the pupils' worship committee have been instrumental in helping the headteacher establish these special places for reflection. An example of this can be found in the internal courtyard through the use of symbolic stones. Informal monitoring of collective worship takes place, although the process of reporting and evaluating needs strengthening to ensure that analysis is more effectively linked to continued improvement.

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

Leaders and governors present an unambiguous message regarding the distinctive Christian character of the school. However, the school's vision statement needs more clarity in order to communicate and draw inspiration from the distinguishing elements of the school's specific Christian foundation. Nevertheless, leaders and governors recognise, reasonably so, the necessity to serve their local community through representing the needs of those of all faiths and none. The headteacher is passionate about values-based learning in promoting the school's ethos, and this enthusiasm resonates through the school community. A good example of this is found in the exacting approach to maintaining and improving attendance. Leaders ensure that collective worship and RE are approached through the meaningful application of the values. Teachers, who are new to the school, say that they have been thoughtfully inducted into the particular Christian features of the school. Staff members consider themselves to be part of a team that is based on a common purpose and shaped by the school's Christian ethos.

Governors demonstrate their strong commitment to Rowledge as a church school. Self-evaluation that focuses on the broader aspects of effectiveness is generally comprehensive and thorough. But this is not always the case when it comes to evaluating the school's Christian distinctiveness. Governors have carried out recent monitoring that is clearly focused on elements of these specific characteristics. Nonetheless, the process needs to be more formalised and systematic in order to have maximum impact and therefore determine the next steps for improvement.

A new vicar was recently inducted into the parish and the Church-school partnership is currently strengthening. Chaplaincy and governance are the main beneficiaries, and the possibilities and potential of each is being explored. Regular meetings take place with the headteacher and the vicar has become a familiar face to the children. The school has established links with other churches in the area, including the local Methodist Church. Partnerships with local schools, and support from the diocese, have proved effective in increasing self-awareness of the school's distinctive Christian character. As being relatively new to post, the headteacher sensibly continues to draw upon the resources and experience of other church school leaders and the diocese. The school has also accessed professional learning offered by the local authority to enliven and enrich the RE curriculum and its teaching. Links with other schools, for example in Tanzania and France, along with themed days and special events, help to increase pupils' understanding of global issues. Parents are whole-heartedly positive about the school. They are very supportive of the distinctive Christian values and enter into a close and productive partnership, enhanced through good communication. They say that the values are central to this, and that they underpin everything else that goes on in the school. They report that their children are keen to come to school and excited to tell them about their day.

The school meets statutory requirements regarding RE and collective worship.

SIAMS report, March 2017, Rowledge CE Controlled Primary, GUI0 4BW