



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Reculver Church of England Primary School

Hillborough
Herne Bay
Kent
CT6 6TA

Previous SIAMS grade: satisfactory

Current inspection grade: good

Diocese: Canterbury

Local authority: Kent

Dates of inspection: 21 January 2015

Date of last inspection: 6 September 2010

School's unique reference number: 118656

Headteacher: Jon Fox

Inspector's name and number: John Ross 476

School context

This school is much larger than the average-sized primary school. It provides specialist provision for visually impaired pupils. The majority of pupils are White British. Few speak English as an additional language. Most do not have an existing church connection on entry. The headteacher joined the school in January 2013. At the same time the governing body was replaced by an interim executive board. A new incumbent of the local church arrived in March 2014. The school is currently in the process of becoming an Academy. An Ofsted inspection in July 2014 judged the school as 'Requires Improvement'.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Reculver Church of England Primary School as a Church of England school are good

- The school's Christian values, which are evident everywhere, underpin every aspect of the school's daily life, in which Christianity is lived out
- Outstanding collective worship has a major impact on lives and behaviour within the school community, through engagement, participation, prayer and reflection
- Religious Education (RE) makes a strong contribution to church school distinctiveness
- Visionary, inspiring leadership of the headteacher, senior leaders and interim executive board has driven massive and rapid improvement in church school distinctiveness

Areas to improve

- Provide regular opportunities for pupils to plan and lead collective worship
- Refine assessment in RE so that pupils can identify how they can improve their work
- Create an outdoor reflection area which pupils and adults can use for prayer, reflection and spiritual development

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

The school has made significant progress since the last inspection to define and live out values which make it a distinctively Christian school. These five values, Love, Compassion, Forgiveness, Endurance and Hope, are clearly evident, both in displays around the school and in school documentation. More importantly, they are recognised and understood by everyone and so strongly influence relationships, decisions and behaviour. There is much outstanding practice. For example, the care for the vulnerable and disadvantaged, which mirrors the school Bible verse: 'We show love and compassion for others by truly helping them and not merely talking about it.' [1 John 3:18] This can be seen in many ways, such as support for visually impaired pupils and those with Downs Syndrome, a willingness to give fresh starts to those who have been in trouble, and the work of the wellbeing team to support children and families. While there has been significant raising of pupil attainment over the last two years, not all groups of pupils are yet reaching their full potential. For this reason the school is not yet outstanding at meeting the needs of all learners. Nevertheless, the school is an inclusive and harmonious community. Most pupils are outstandingly positive about their school experience and recognise its Christian character and its many strengths. The school environment makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual development. There are reflection areas in every classroom, and the school's Christian values and Christian symbols are prominently displayed inside the building. However, there is no dedicated space outside for pupils and adults to use for quiet reflection and spiritual development. Religious Education makes a strong contribution to the Christian character of the school. Pupils enjoy their RE lessons. An adviser commented: 'There is a tangible excitement for learning.' All staff now follow clear procedures to assess, analyse and monitor pupil progress. However, in RE, pupils do not always have a clear idea of what they need to do to progress further. The school supports many different charities. Some are close to home, such as the local hospice and Foodbank. Others are worldwide, such as an orphanage in Burma and a school in Liberia. Through their active support of these charities pupils demonstrate gospel values in caring for the vulnerable, living out the school values and Bible verse. Also, through international links pupils are growing in their understanding of Christianity as a multicultural world faith.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is central to the life of the school and its Christian ethos. The act of worship observed during the inspection was outstanding. This act of worship focused on the Miracle at the Wedding at Cana, where Jesus turned water into wine. Pupils and staff were fully and actively engaged, participated, prayed and reflected. There was a very strong focus on the person of Jesus Christ and biblical teaching, making the worship unquestionably Christian. At the same time it was inclusive, for example through the sensitivity used to introduce the prayers. Pupils and staff enjoy collective worship, which makes a strong contribution to their spiritual development. It strengthens the school both socially and as a Christian community. Leadership of collective worship is outstanding. Worship is meticulously planned. The Christian distinctiveness leader provides training, resources and where necessary individual support to all who lead worship. Staff have responded extremely positively. Practice reflects a revised and updated collective worship policy, a successful response to the previous inspection. The vicar leads worship weekly, providing a close link with the local church and the Anglican tradition. Special services, sometimes held in church, mark key events in the Christian calendar. Consequently, pupils are knowledgeable about many Christian festivals. Some pupils have extensive knowledge of the gospels and can relate the parables told by Jesus to their own lives. Pupils enjoy helping adult worship leaders and readily volunteer to take on roles and responsibilities. Prayer and reflection is always an important activity in collective worship, in all its settings including the classroom. Pupils are confident in coming forward to lead prayer spontaneously. However other opportunities for pupils to plan and lead whole school worship have so far been limited.

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

The school has made very significant progress since the last inspection, when leadership and management of the school as a church school were judged inadequate. Over the last two years a new headteacher, senior leadership team and interim executive board (replacing the previous governing body) have driven rapid improvement, to ensure that the distinctive Christian character of the school is having a positive impact across its community. School leaders are committed and passionate in their promotion of their Christian vision for the school. Where difficult decisions have had to be made, reference is made to the school's Christian values. Where necessary, leaders have provided active support and encouragement for staff to develop and improve their skills, which in turn has enabled pupils to flourish. The role of the RE leader has been strengthened to support all staff in the delivery of RE, a successful response to a recommendation in the last inspection. This is a happy school and staff report that they like working there and are well supported. There are numerous development opportunities for staff, through training, working closely with school leaders and visiting other schools. This has ensured the school is taking active measures to prepare for future leaders of church schools. There are excellent links with the parish church, the deanery and Christian leaders of other denominations, who regularly visit the school. The new vicar has quickly established a strong presence in the school and visits frequently. Most pupils arrive at the school without any previous church connection. Nevertheless, through experiencing Christian worship at school some families have become worshipping members of the church. The diocese has provided strong and active support for the school, resulting in rapid improvement in church school distinctiveness and leadership, a successful response to the last inspection. Communication with parents is strong and parents are supportive of the school. There are good links with the local community, for example through visits to a local care home. Arrangements for collective worship and RE meet statutory requirements. All issues for development from the last inspection have been fully and successfully addressed. Self-evaluation as a church school is thorough, accurate and a model of excellent practice. Development planning is realistic and rigorous. It now includes all areas which fall into the remit of church school distinctiveness, a successful response to the previous inspection. This, together with the rapid yet sustainable improvement already shown, suggests capacity for further improvement remains strong.

SIAMS report January 2015 Reculver Church of England Primary School, Herne Bay CT6 6TA