



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

### Rowsley CE (VC) Primary School

Woodhouse Road,  
Rowsley  
Matlock  
DE4 2ED

**Previous SIAMS grade:** Good

**Current inspection grade:** Good

**Diocese:** Derby

Local authority: Derbyshire

Dates of inspection: 23 June 2016

Date of last inspection: 4 May 2011

School's unique reference number: 112820

Headteacher: Iain Wilson

Inspector's name and number: David Wood

Quality assurance assessor: Allyson Taylor 768

#### School context

Rowsley Church of England Primary School is a small village school currently with 65 children on roll across 3 classes. Almost all the children are of white, British heritage. The proportion eligible for free school meals is significantly lower than the national average. The number of learners with special needs or disabilities is significantly above national average. Over recent years, the school has gained Eco-Schools accreditation. The headteacher has been in post since September 2014. Since the previous inspection three quarters of the teaching staff is new.

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

- The impact of the Christian character of the school leads to very good relationships across all age groups and adults alike.
- All members of the school community clearly articulate and demonstrate through their actions the importance which they place on respect and inclusivity.
- The way in which collective worship has been re-energised through 'Team Time' and 'Seeing Anew' has led to the increased engagement of all members of the school.
- The local church is having a growing impact on the lives of children and adults within the whole school community.

#### Areas to improve

- To relate the school's Christian values more explicitly to examples from the Bible, so that all ages understand they are Christian in origin and are able to articulate this.
- To develop more effective and robust systems for recording evidence of non-written learning in religious education (RE) in order to more fully gauge levels of attainment and achievement.
- To establish formal systems for monitoring and evaluating RE, collective worship and distinctive Christian values to inform school improvement planning as a church school.

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

The headteacher is respected and supported by all members of the school community and as a result the school is at the heart of this small community. Since his arrival, the headteacher has led by example, ensuring that a determination to achieve excellence sits comfortably alongside the care and well-being of children. This has contributed to improved standards. The school is a welcoming community built around the relatively recently introduced motto 'Achieving excellence together'. There is an increasing understanding of the school's distinctively Christian values of respect, honesty and trust. Members of the school community recognise the distinctive characteristics of the school's values and are able to say how they affect their daily lives and achievements. There is a developing understanding that these characteristics and values are distinctively Christian, however, learners are not yet able to fully articulate how these values can be demonstrated through Biblical references. Parents confirm that the school's Christian character and values play an important part in contributing to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of their children. One parent said, 'The children talk together about their beliefs. Everyone here is seen as equal and all value each other.' Children have some understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith and they demonstrate the utmost respect for diversity and difference within other faith communities. One child said, 'Everyone has the right to their own opinion, it's important.' Another said, 'Teachers say that you can believe what you want, no one can force you.' This is a school of happy, caring, respectful and hardworking children who enjoy coming to school and behave very well. This can be seen when older children within school readily 'buddy up' with the younger children, helping and encouraging them at playtimes, whilst also modelling high standards of behaviour. The school's approach to attendance for all children means that levels of attendance continue to be above national expectations which demonstrates the commitment to ensuring learners are safe and able to learn. Children enjoy RE and recognise the importance of the subject. It is also helping to make a positive contribution to learners' SMSC development and reflects the Christian character. When asked about RE, one child said, 'Each religion has its' own beliefs and that we should all be treated equally.' Discussions around a definition of spirituality are at an early stage. However, spirituality is nurtured through the curriculum and with the use of prayer baskets where learners write messages and prayers to ask for God's help.

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

Collective worship is a daily occurrence and it has been central to the growing Christian character of the school and the nurture of the learners within. It has been re-energised by the headteacher and curate working closely together to plan new and modern ways of delivering Christian messages to the school community. Teachers now also plan and deliver collective worship in pairs under the recently introduced 'Team Time' banner and through the use of 'Seeing Anew' guidance from the diocese. It is because of these changes that worship's impact is increasing. Themes are relevant and impact on the children's spiritual and moral development. A group of children spoke about the 'Fruit of the Spirit'. They referenced kindness, peace, love, patience and self-control. The impact of this was demonstrated when a child said, 'When it is all rush, rush, rush 'Peace' taught me to sit and reflect and realise what is good about life'. All members of the school community talk with excitement about collective worship and that they enjoy coming together as a team. One parent said, 'My daughter talks a lot about Team Time.' Learners participate willingly and there is clear evidence to demonstrate that collective worship is having a positive effect on school life. Learners speak about 'service' as an important value. This can again be demonstrated when older children happily support the younger members in school with the family dining at lunch times. A number of children spoke separately about one of the termly themes, perseverance, and how they think about this when they are faced with a challenging task. Collective worship often references the Bible and Jesus Christ, and children are beginning to make links between this and their own lives. Children experience a number of Christian traditions within worship and are able to talk about the different colours used during the Church year and why the candle they use is significant. Prayer makes a

good contribution to the daily lives of the school community so that learners have an increasing sense of being close to God. The year 6 children are excited that they will soon be writing the new school prayer which will be their legacy to the school. The current school prayer is known by children and adults within school, and it is central to the act of daily collective worship. Children have some understanding of the Holy Trinity. The school is also aware that this is an aspect that they need to develop further and have plans in place to do so. A group of children called Team Time buddies work alongside the collective worship coordinator to provide feedback on collective worship. They are also beginning to play a more active role in delivering some acts of collective worship.

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

This year the dynamic and committed headteacher has led the whole school community in collaboratively reshaping its vision as a church school. Whilst Christianity is implicitly mentioned within it, leaders are aware that this needs to be built on to make more explicit references to its' Christian distinctiveness. School leaders, including governors, clearly describe the impact of Christian values on the whole life of the school. They rightly say that children are caring towards each other, that they are valued and nurtured, and children of all ages, abilities and faiths are fully integrated in to school life. This was further evidenced in discussions with a group of parents who said that if a child sits on a particular bench on the playground, then other children will come over and check to see if they are alright. The leaders of the school have a good understanding of the school's performance and distinctiveness. Within their church school self-evaluation, the leaders are aware of what has already been achieved, and where further improvements are needed. Due to this, achievement and distinctiveness are improving, demonstrated with the internal tracking of children's academic performance. Procedures for formally recording, monitoring and evaluating the impact of collective worship, RE, in particular non-written learning, and the distinctive Christian character, are not yet in place. Establishing formal systems of monitoring will help to ensure that subject leaders and governors have a wider evidence base from which to evaluate standards in RE and how they support the distinctively Christian character of the school. Collective worship, RE and other areas of the curriculum are informed by distinctive Christian values of trust, respect and honesty. Inclusivity and respect are clearly central to the school's distinctiveness. Children and adults alike clearly demonstrate these values in their actions and words. For example, Jehovah Witnesses within the school are included wherever possible in collective worship, and the RE curriculum is also inclusive of their faith. Parents talk extremely positively about this aspect of the school. The school has a broadening curriculum, with children given further opportunities to achieve in areas such as: competitive sport, music and outdoor learning through access to local woodland. There are clear benefits to the children from the positive links the school has with parents, St. Katherine's church, the diocese and the wider community. The children now use part of the Haddon Hall Estate woodland to enhance learning and well-being, further contributing to an enriched, enjoyable and broadening curriculum. One child said, 'I like going to the woods. I can learn and have fun at the same time.' In addition to this, the children play an active part in the annual village well dressings and also host an annual carol singing event on the school grounds for the local community to attend. As a result, there are strong and mutually beneficial relationships with the school and local community. Diocesan training for collective worship has also clearly benefitted the children spiritually, as has the fact that the headteacher and another member of staff work together as joint coordinators of collective worship. As such, leaders are mindful of the need to prepare future leaders of church schools.

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