

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

### Rake Church of England Primary School

London Road, Rake, Liss, Hampshire GU33 7JH	
<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Chichester</b>
Previous SIAS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	West Sussex
Date of inspection	6 October 2017
Date of last inspection	1 February 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Controlled 125989
Headteacher	David Bertwistle
Inspector's name and number	Rosemary Appleby 749

#### School context

Rake CE Primary School is smaller than most primary schools with 113 on roll. Since the last inspection the number on roll has significantly risen. In July 2014 a programme of building work added two and a half classrooms. The school is situated in the village of Rake, but attracts pupils from neighbouring villages. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average and most pupils come from a White British heritage. The number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is above national average as is attendance.

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

- The partnership with the local church contributes to the promotion of the school's Christian values.
- The inclusivity of the school encourages, nurtures and challenges all pupils.
- The inclusivity of worship engages all learners.
- The Christian values of the school remain at the core of strategic planning, despite the increasing pressures facing small, rural schools.

#### Areas to improve

- Strengthen the process of self-evaluation as a church school through increased formal monitoring of all aspects of the school's Christian distinctiveness, gathering robust evidence of how the Christian character impacts on all learners.
- Ensure that the school mission statement, golden rules with their linked Bible verses and Christian values are coherently and explicitly linked so that they enable all members of the school community to confidently articulate their impact on their daily lives.
- Ensure that pupils regularly write and read personal prayers to increase reflection in a formal context.
- Ensure that capacity within the school to maintain and develop its Christian character is consistently reviewed, including an exploration of how support from and collaboration with other church schools enhances the sustainability of Christian leadership and succession planning.

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

Rake CE school provides a high level of nurture and care to its school community through a strong and established Christian ethos which underpins the daily life of the school. This is evident in the inclusive and positive caring relationships across the school community and the exemplary behaviour seen around the school. Stakeholders have a growing understanding and ownership of the school's Christian values of love, hope and forgiveness, the school's golden rules and their motto of 'Excite, Engage, Include'. Some pupils are aware of the chosen Bible verses that are appropriately linked to the golden rules. Stakeholders are not yet secure in communicating how the school motto, golden rules and Christian values are explicitly linked and cannot yet consistently and clearly articulate how these affect their daily lives. Some pupils can explain that the school Christian values help them to make choices about their actions and they forgive others because 'God forgives everything if you say sorry to him'. Parents value the Christian values as they support their children to 'feel secure, safe and cared for'. Attainment is improving, especially in Key Stage 1 and Foundation Stage. Where attainment is lower than national expectations the school lives out the 'include' element of its motto. Additional staff support the higher than national average percentage of SEND pupils in Key Stage 2, ensuring that they make good progress. Learners talk with confidence about how the Christian value of kindness is connected to the wide variety of charities that the school supports and 'helps others in need'. The emphasis of the importance of living a life of integrity based on personal faith and belief alongside a style of teaching which encourages deep reflection ensures that religious education (RE) has an effective impact on the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of all learners. However, the school's Christian values and motto are not always explicitly linked to RE and the opportunity to embed secure and consistent understanding of these is missed. Through RE pupils learn about Judaism, Hinduism and Islam and through this work they develop compassion, empathy and respect for other cultures. They know that learning about other religions is important and 'it makes you more understanding'. Pupils have been interviewed by the RE leader and answers illustrate that they enjoy RE and understand that RE is important because they 'understand people's faith more' and it has helped them to be 'more respectful than before'. Pupils explain with clarity how in Africa different regions practise Islam or Christianity or a mixture of both. There are opportunities for the growth of personal spirituality through prayer, reflection, thinking areas in each class and the sensory garden. There is an appropriate action point on the school development plan to develop greater clarity on how Christian values provide a focus to increase spirituality across the curriculum. Rake school values pupils' achievements and this is evident in the high quality of display throughout the indoor environment. Displays around the school such as; the school prayer, Lord's prayer, crosses, Bibles, story of creation, harvest, the parish church of St Luke, make a good contribution to SMSC. They provide an environment which reflects the school's foundation and as a result frame reflection in a Christian context. This has a positive impact on pupils' SMSC development.

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

Collective worship is a special and distinct time in the school day when Christian values, linked to biblical references, are effectively reinforced. This ensures that the vision and values of the school remain central to the life of the school community. Leaders consistently explain that during this time their school is like a church and pupils reiterate this when they say that 'we are like a church in school'. This enhances the impact of the effective setting for worship and reinforces Anglican traditions such as the stunning wooden cross which is the focal point of worship and the use of altar cloths reflecting the colours of the church year. Aspects of Anglican worship such as the structure of gather, engage, respond and send, lighting a candle are established and impact on pupils' understanding of Christian traditions. Pupils know that a candle is lit to represent the light of God and that the first book in the Bible is Genesis from the Old Testament and that this is the story of creation. They are able to reflect upon right and wrong and 'listen' to God's voice to help them make positive decisions that help them in their lives. Pupils are engaged and respectful through participation in all elements of worship such as singing, reflection time and praying. This includes the younger pupils, who have recently commenced school, reflecting the school's high expectations that all learners are engaged and included during worship. Some pupils are beginning to lead worship and one pupil who was 'headteacher' for the day valued the opportunity to plan the worship on his own. The collective worship leader has interviewed pupils regarding worship and the recent scaffolding of questions is helping them to be more evaluative. Learners enjoy Bible stories and can talk about how worship helps them 'focus on God' and helps you realise 'what God is trying to do to help us all'. Parents told me that their children confidently talk about Bible stories, such as Ruth, at home and sing prayers. This illustrates that worship is inspiring pupils to talk about their experiences outside of school. The person of Jesus Christ is evident in collective worship and pupils have opportunities to develop their understanding of the Trinity and can name God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit as being important. Worship is enriched through contributions from church leaders from Africa and India which is organised by the church and increases learners' understanding of a range of Christian traditions. Prayer is valued by pupils and they understand that prayer enables them 'to talk to God' and 'pray for those in need'. The purpose of the recently introduced prayer box is clearly understood by pupils and they are excited about writing their own prayers for this

box and can explain that it is taken by the rector to church where the prayers are blessed. Pupils are confident when saying their school prayer. Members of the local church praise the pupils' confidence and accuracy when reciting the Lord's Prayer at church services. Pupils value the time at lunchtime for private prayer and reflection which was introduced at the request of a pupil. Pupils write their own thoughtful prayers for inclusion at church services such as harvest. However, pupils do not yet write and read prayers regularly for school daily worship. Pupils are aware of biblical material and are beginning to relate this to their own lives. One pupil interviewed said that the story of the good Samaritan was about being kind to someone even if they were your enemy. The Christmas, Easter, Harvest, Mother's Day and leavers' services at St Luke's Church effectively reinforce Anglican tradition and are well attended by parents. Collective worship is well planned by the collective worship leader. Pupils have the opportunity to evaluate worship through participation in pupil interviews and through the school council. However, the school has correctly identified that increasing the formal monitoring and evaluating of worship is an area for development.

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

There is a clear sense of commitment to the Christian foundation from leaders at all levels who articulate their aspirations for the school as a church school. Leaders share a vision for the school where the school motto is linked to both Christian values and the golden rules and explicitly underpin the life of the school. Leadership is driven by the school's mission statement of 'Engage, Excite, Include' which is underpinned by the school's three key gospel values of hope, love and forgiveness. The enthusiastic and committed RE leader took up leadership of the subject in 2016. She has been supported in her role through a detailed handover from the previous RE and collective worship leader and has benefited from working with the diocese school improvement partner. She has led staff development, carried out work scrutinies and monitored the teaching of RE to ensure that it reflects the Christian ethos of the school. She has interviewed pupils about their attitudes to collective worship and RE and used information gathered to inform her action plans. Her reports to governors ensure that they are fully informed about the progress of her action plans. However, the RE / collective worship leader works part time therefore some progress against these plans rolls over from one year to the next which slows down the speed of progress. The school have been proactive in addressing the key issues from the previous inspection. As a result, they have established their three Christian values of hope, love and forgiveness and adopted the 'Values for Life' themes for collective worship. This has strengthened the understanding of Christian values across the school and how they can impact on individual lives. Governors are committed to the Christian ethos of the school and support the school well. They make visits to monitor worship and undertake learning walks enabling them to know their school. Although recording of these visits is mostly informal, they are discussed at main governors' meetings. Since the last inspection governors have established the Christian ethos working party and this group have 'fit for purpose' action plans that develop the Christian distinctiveness of the school. They have been part of the decision making process in choosing the Bible verses that link to the school golden rules. The school has a focused and appropriate plan for the future development of the school's Christian character included in the school development plan. During interviews candidates are questioned about their commitment to the school's Christian distinctiveness to ensure that the school appoints staff committed to promoting a Christian ethos. Partnerships with the local church community are strong and mutually enriching, and are effective in bringing a greater understanding of Anglican life. Clergy from St Luke's lead worship and give valued pastoral support. Members of the church community listen to pupils read in school and pupils enjoy worship when the church organist plays the piano. The church administers two financial funds which have been used to benefit the school provision such as the building works to extend the school and Bibles for school leavers. Pupils' art work is displayed in church and enjoyed by the community. Parents and pupils value the monthly 'Messy Church' sessions held by the church and this is attended by many families from the school. This strengthens family experiences of Anglican tradition that they might not gain at any other time. Staff and governors have been unable to access recent diocesan training due to financial constraints. However they aspire to investigate creative ways to access funds for future training for staff and governors as they recognise that this would strengthen their evaluating and monitoring skills with regards to Christian distinctiveness. The headteacher is a valued and active member within the local group of schools and he mentors new church school headteachers. Through this outreach work he has been able to support other leaders within the school to enhance their practice and grow as effective church school leaders. Parents speak warmly of the school and the caring inclusive environment in which pupils view it as 'a badge of honour' to look after each other. The arrangements for RE and collective worship meet statutory requirements.