



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Ryecroft CE (C) Middle School

Denstone Road

Rocester

Staffordshire ST14 5JR

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Current inspection grade: Good

Diocese:

Local authority: Staffordshire

Dates of inspection: 15th October 2015

Date of last inspection: 8th December 2010

School's unique reference number: 124450

Headteacher: Mr Stephen Bardon

Inspector's name and number: Mr Mark Cooper 425

School context

Ryecroft is situated on the outskirts of the rural village of Rocester. The school has 205 pupils aged from 9 years to 13 years. The school serves a large rural catchment area. Almost all the children are of white British heritage. Since the last inspection there is a new vicar at St. Michaels. The present school will move into brand new premises from September 2016 affording it the opportunity to further enhance itself as a church school.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Ryecroft (C) Middle as a Church of England school are good

- The leadership of the headteacher and governors and their Christian vision for the school
- The Christian values, their use in worship and the positive impact these are having on pupils
- The vertical tutoring system that is clearly having a positive effect on pupil behaviour and how pupils support and care for one another

Areas to improve

- To pull together all aspects of the Christian vision so that all of the school community have responsibility and ownership of it
- To improve the quality and experience of form worship for pupils
- To further develop the evaluative procedures that monitor the impact of the school as a church school

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

The school has a good feeling of *koinonia* across all members of the community, supporting the school's motto, "*Big enough to inspire, small enough to care.*" Relationships between pupils and teachers are very good. Pupils commented on how approachable their teachers are and how they are willing to help them and give them guidance to sort out problems. Pupils feel safe and secure and they enjoy coming to this school. They believe they learn well in a supportive and caring atmosphere. As a result progress is improving. There is an excellent 'nurture programme' in place for those more vulnerable pupils. In addition to this a School Counsellor visits every week to meet specific pupils and offer a 'drop-in' session to all pupils. Together these initiatives are having a positive effect on pupil learning, progress and social interaction with peers. This clearly illustrates the inclusive, caring Christian nature of this school. Behaviour around the school is very good and there is a calm working atmosphere. A significant contributing factor for this is the vertical tutoring system and an emphasis on Christian forgiveness. This has resulted in a cohesively caring, supportive and well-mannered pupil community. There is a close working relationship between the headteacher and local vicar at St. Michaels. Together they have identified Christian values to be introduced and embedded across the school. Pupils are able to talk about the current value of courage with some clarity. One pupil, after hearing the courageous story of Daniel in the lion's den, said, "*I know now that I can do things that I thought I couldn't.*" Appropriate displays across the school further enhance the Christian values. The school has conducted an audit of spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) opportunities across all curriculum areas, so that pupils' development can be enhanced. An example of this was in a science lesson that led pupils to explore the morality of the selling of organs for donation. The teaching of religious education (RE) helps pupils to understand the importance of the life and teaching of Jesus and the beliefs and values of other faiths. Pupils are able to talk about these with good understanding. In particular they could talk about Jesus as the '*light of the world*' and '*good shepherd*' who as one pupil put, "*guides us on the right path.*" Pupils are involved in a good range of charities, both locally and nationally, which encourages them to consider the importance of helping those who are less fortunate than themselves. A 'Shine' drop in group has recently been introduced so there is an opportunity for interested pupils to explore the Christian faith further. The school needs to consider how to broaden pupils understanding of cultural diversity and strengthen and embed its work on Christian values.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Pupils enjoy worship at this school and look forward to it. They talk about worship positively and recognise the value that it has on their lives. They enjoy the opportunity to be quiet, be peaceful and reflect. In fact they would like more of this. Pupils commented on how they felt that worship helped them to calm down at the end of a hectic school day and, "*think about things.*" They enjoy the bible stories and the links that are made to the school's Christian values. One pupil felt that the stories helped him to picture himself as that biblical character and the right and wrong choices he would have to make. They like taking part in the singing, reading the bible and praying. One pupil commented that prayer helped her to feel better and deal with the difficult issues of loss and illness, and another equated prayer to the two minutes silence at Remembrance Sunday by saying, "*just as our soldiers deserve two minutes silence so does God.*" Pupils do have an opportunity to celebrate Christmas and Easter at St. Michaels which they all talked about with some enthusiasm. Parents commented positively about worship believing that it empowered their children to show empathy, tolerance and respect. Pupils talked about the local vicar very positively. They liked the fact that he was approachable, "*jolly*" and made worship fun. Pupils showed a good understanding of the life and teachings of Jesus which is enhanced through the teaching of RE by a very committed team of RE teachers. However pupils understanding of the Trinity was less assured. They also commented that they would like to be more involved in the planning and delivery of worship, and although they talked positively about collective worship their experience of the quality of form worship was mixed. The school needs to consider how to involve pupils in the planning of worship and further improve the pupil

experience of form worship.

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

The strength of this school is in a committed headteacher and governing body. Both the headteacher and governors work in partnership to seek the very best for the pupils, both academically and spiritually. There is a strong working relationship between the headteacher and vicar of St. Michaels. Both are working tirelessly to establish the Christian vision and values across the school. The headteacher is well respected in the school and wider community. Pupils speak very highly of him. They say he very kind, easy to talk to and approachable. As one pupil said, *“he is always there for you”* and, *“he knows everybody by name.”* This is confirmed by the parents who strongly believe he is taking the school in the right direction and is working tirelessly to achieve this. They value that he is genuinely interested in their children as individuals and only wants the best for them. As one parent said, *“he only wants our children to do well and succeed.”* Parents also recognise that the school as a church school is instilling good morals and values into their children, *“our children feel that they know the difference between right and wrong.”* They also commended the school on being good at helping their children to understand the importance of tolerance, acceptance and respect towards others. Governors also speak very highly of the leadership and commitment the headteacher has for the school as a church school. The respect the headteacher has achieved has put him in a strong position to continue to move the school forward in its Christian vision. Some evaluative work concerning the school as a church school has been done, but this now needs further enhancement and development. Additionally, as part of the schools continuing professional development (CPD) programme, work needs to be done to pull together all aspects of the Christian vision so that all of the school community have responsibility and ownership of it.

SIAMS report October 2015 Ryecroft CE (C) Middle School, Denstone Road, Staffordshire, ST14 5JR