



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

St Nicholas New Romney Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Fairfield Road, New Romney, Kent TN28 8BP

Previous SIAMS grade: good

Current inspection grade: satisfactory

Diocese: Canterbury

Local authority: Kent

Dates of inspection: 29 February 2016

Date of last inspection: 8 December 2010

School's unique reference number: 132829

Headteacher: Christopher Dale

Inspector's name and number: Virginia Corbyn 86

School context

St Nicholas Church of England Primary School is larger than the average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is above that found in most schools. Most pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below average. The school has been through a period of turbulence over the last 2 years. The headteacher took up post in September 2015. Most of the teachers have been appointed in the period since 2014. The school was judged by OfSTED as having serious weaknesses following an inspection in November 2015. An Interim Executive Board (IEB) has been put in place.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Nicholas as a Church of England school are satisfactory

- Mutually beneficial relationships which encourage and support the pupils and their families lie at the heart of all that is done in the school.
- Implicit Christian values, which are modelled clearly in the school, have led to improvements in behaviour and attendance.
- Effective partnerships with local churches, the diocese and other schools are supporting the school in improving the progress made by pupils.

Areas to improve

- Develop a set of explicit Christian values so that there is a clear, shared articulation of the school's distinctive character by all stakeholders.
- Increase opportunities for pupils to lead collective worship.
- Improve the levels of enjoyment and challenge for all pupils in religious education (RE).
- Consult all stakeholders about an explicit Christian vision and set of Christian values to underpin improvements in the achievement and attainment of pupils.

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

The new headteacher has a vision for this school that is both ambitious and aspirational. This vision is rooted in the implicit Christian values of care, support and a belief that all pupils will fulfil their potential. These values are not explicit but they are understood as distinctively Christian. Parents are able to articulate this by saying that the support and encouragement given to their children is based upon a clear Christian moral framework. Standards at the school have been well below the national average for some time. The new headteacher has asked pupils to consider 'What would Jesus do?' as he has established high expectations of behaviour and attendance. These expectations have contributed to improved rates of progress for pupils, including those in vulnerable groups and the more able. Pupils are beginning to articulate some of the implicit Christian values which inform their everyday lives, such as kindness. Strong, supportive relationships at every level are demonstrated by all members of the school community. These are seen as the core component of recent improvements in the school by parents, by members of the IEB and by school leaders. The last school year has seen increased opportunities for prayer in classrooms. Pupils understand the importance of being thankful for God's blessings. A prayer week is planned before Easter in order to extend the pupils' understanding of Christian prayer. Parents are impressed by the ways in which their children are encouraged to address the needs of others, for example through the Giving Tree project at Christmas and by collecting for Harvest hampers. Pupils talk about the ways in which they must treat each other well and be aware of those who need their help both inside and outside school. Pupils can articulate the importance of RE in helping them 'to know about the different beliefs of people we might meet in our lives'. Their knowledge of Christianity is increasing in the light of improved interaction with the local churches in recent months. Not all pupils enjoy or are challenged by RE. Assessment in RE is not in place to track the progress of pupils across the school.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is satisfactory

Worship is well planned in line with the Canterbury diocesan framework. This means that it is Christian, includes elements of Anglican liturgy and allows time for pupils to respond through prayer and reflection. Worship is experienced in classes, in key stages and as a whole school. Planning is adapted accordingly. The weekly theme is set by school leaders and followed by staff, as well as by visitors from local churches and from local Christian groups. Most pupils can articulate the ways in which they can put the moral messages from their worship into action in their lives. Parents say that their children talk about their worship times as interesting and enjoyable. Worship themes do not presently focus upon explicit Christian values. The celebration of Christian festivals in church and special occasions with the community is appreciated by pupils and parents as an important part of belonging to a church school. Each year group is invited to church for a special time of worship once a term. Families are invited to worship together for Messy Church once a month. This has helped the relationship with the church community to flourish since the appointment of the new headteacher. Pupils describe various ways in which they are able to participate in worship, including through talking partners and by helping with drama and with prayers. However, they are given few opportunities for leadership roles. Formal monitoring and evaluation of worship is not in place for this aspect of the life of the school.

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

An IEB is in place and is committed to promoting the distinctive Christian character of the school. They support the current senior leaders of the school well whilst also holding them to account for the on-going progress that is required. The recommendations raised by the previous report have not been fully addressed as the current headteacher has not been in post for long enough to do so. However, all school leaders are committed to ensuring that pupils reach their full potential. They know their school well but have not consulted all stakeholders about a shared vision and values. They have high expectations of all members of the school community which is resulting in improved achievement across the school. Despite there being no designated RE subject leader at present,

work in RE books is improving. Developmental marking is beginning to be used effectively. However, RE does not have a sufficiently high profile and formal assessment systems are not in place to track pupil progress across the school. Links with the local community are well established and continuing to grow. The school works closely with the diocese. This is set to continue as the school becomes an academy and joins the Aquila multi-academy trust in due course. Collaboration with other church schools is beginning to help to build staff capacity and confidence. The school works well with families. They appreciate that the school is open and approachable following a period when this has not been the case. Good links with the local church have been re-established in recent months. Church members support the school as reading volunteers. The local vicar works alongside the family liaison officer to provide practical help to pupils and their families. This is a school with the capacity to improve rapidly as a church school.

SIAMS report February 2016 St Nicholas CE Primary School New Romney Kent TN28 8BP