



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

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

### **Withycombe Raleigh Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School**

Withycombe Village Road, Exmouth, Devon, EX8 3BA

**Previous SIAS grade: Outstanding**

**Current SIAMS grade: Outstanding**

**Diocese: Exeter**

Local authority: Devon

Date of inspection: 14 October 2015

Date of last inspection: 16 September 2010

School's unique reference number: 113395

Headteacher: Stephen Powley

Inspector's name and number: Daphne Spitzer NS No 37

#### **School context**

Withycombe Raleigh is a very large primary school on the outskirts of the seaside town of Exmouth. It has 570 children on roll arranged in 19 classes. The majority of children are from white British heritage families. The numbers with learning difficulties and/or physical disabilities are above the national average and the numbers of children eligible to be in receipt of Pupil Premium are below the national average. New building work to cater for the increased intake since the last inspection has been extensive and includes a 2 story teaching block and extension to the existing hall.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Withycombe Raleigh VC Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding**

- The school's Christian values, make a significant contribution to the children's academic achievement, personal and spiritual development
- Innovative leadership of collective worship by children has a significant impact on its relevance and meaning at a personal level
- The mutually beneficial partnership between the church and school communities enables all to feel part of the extended church school family

#### **Areas to improve**

- Improve current procedures for monitoring and evaluating of the school's distinctive Christian character by ensuring that the views of the whole school community contribute to the areas for future development

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

Withycombe Raleigh Church of England Primary School is an inclusive, warm and friendly Christian community. Values, underpinned by Christian teaching, are integral to the whole life of the school. These values, which have God's love at their heart, are having a significant impact on the children's high academic achievement as well as their personal and spiritual development. The school meets the needs of children exceptionally well. This is because each child is accepted as special and unique as children of God. A wide range of opportunities and experiences, including spiritual and cultural are provided to develop individual gifts, resulting in self-confident children who enjoy school and value their learning. The excellent way that spiritual development contributes to the curriculum is evident, for example, in the recent Easter Exhibition. This had a profound impact on both the wider church and school communities; seen in a child's remark 'Jesus had conquered death, which is incredible!' Children are able to think deeply about big questions such as what makes someone trustworthy or untrustworthy. They are able to develop and justify their beliefs based on matters of faith in a highly personal way and disagree politely with opposing views. Relationships are outstanding because they are promoted very effectively by Christian values, such as love, friendship and trust. As a result children regard the school as a strong, united, community, evident in a child's comment that 'we're all a team, working together as one'. Children demonstrate the Christian value of compassion and generosity towards others both within and beyond the local community. For example, they have set up their own community larder to support the work of the Salvation Army food bank in the town. Compassion is also evident in the way that children initiate fund raising for charitable causes; such as running for Breast Cancer or participating in the current international school project 'Voices Round the World' to improve the lives of children in a school in Africa. The rich religious education (RE) curriculum includes visits to places of worship for other faiths as well as Christianity. This appreciation and respect for others is also a result of the way that RE promotes spiritual development very well; actively encouraging positive attitudes of acceptance and tolerance towards others, values which underpin British society.

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

Worship is distinctively Christian and of central importance at Withycombe Raleigh. This is because worship is highly effective in promoting Christian values which are recognised as integral to the school's daily life. This is especially evident in the confident way children lead acts of worship. Children led a worship based on the teachings of Jesus which focussed on the value of thankfulness. They ensured that worship was considerably enhanced by skilful, probing questioning which promoted reflective thinking and insightful responses. This is an example of the excellent way that worship promotes spiritual awareness. Prayer and reflection are integral to the school day and have a profound impact. For example, the school prayer, because it is composed with contributions from all ages throughout the school enhances the sense that the school is a Christian community. The quiet areas both in classrooms and outside in the grounds are used well by children for reflection and prayer, very effectively promoting spiritual awareness. Children are developing a good understanding of Anglican practice; noted by the use of simple liturgical responses, blessings said by clergy, as well as reminders of the church's seasons of the year linked to the altar cloths. Worship is enhanced by the lighting of three candles lit during worship which is developing a good understanding of the Trinity. Leadership of worship has progressed significantly since the last inspection and is outstanding. Planning is outstanding; it is detailed, comprehensive and fully supportive of staff ensuring consistency of message. Children lead worship in a variety of ways on a weekly basis. Their planning is thorough and often includes an innovative style and content which meets the needs of children well. Governors seek children's views and issues raised are addressed such as the increase in children's leadership roles. The vicar and Church and Families Worker, who are both governors, are present on a weekly basis thereby enabling them to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of worship. Their enthusiastic support for this process has been crucial. For instance, it is evident in the progress made in raising the quality of class worship during the recent period without a school hall and the increased practice of children's leadership roles.

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

The school's distinctive Christian character is of the highest quality, is deeply embedded and has a significant impact on the whole school community. The headteacher's strong Christian vision shared by the staff team and governors' commitment to this vision are the driving force at the heart of the school's success and ongoing improvement as a church school. The school has ensured that detailed action plans for the improvement of its distinctive Christian character are continuously prioritised and integral to the school's Strategic Development Plan. The school's self-evaluation, with contributions from children as well as staff and governors, is accurate. The process of monitoring and evaluating progress is embedded and very effective as noted from the progress made since the last inspection. However the process is informal and is not part of a structured means of informing governors of progress which limits their ability to challenge. The Church and Families Worker, a member of the church community, plays a key role in promoting the school's distinctive Christian character. Her presence in school on a part time basis has a significant impact. For instance, not only do children value the lunchtime club she runs but parents speak highly of her pastoral role within the church school community. This is an example of the close link between church and school. Parents are very supportive of the school and appreciative of the weekly parents workshops held by a member of the leadership team. As a result, the school's partnership with parents is highly effective and plays a pivotal role in promoting the school's success as a church school. The school's links with the diocese are strong and have mutual benefits. The school supports the diocese by providing leadership and professional development for local church schools as well as ensuring that the training needs of its own staff are met. Religious education is led very enthusiastically and effectively demonstrating its important role in the curriculum. Subject leadership is very well supported by local clergy who offer an effective level of challenge. Their role reflects the cohesive nature of the church and school partnership; as does the contributions of the church community to the life of the school as seen during the Easter Exhibition.

SIAMS report October 2015, Withycombe Raleigh Church of England VC Primary School, Exmouth, Devon, EX8 3BA