



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Richard Coates Church of England Middle School

Thornhill Road, Ponteland. Newcastle upon Tyne.

NE20 9Q

Previous SIAMS grade: outstanding

Current inspection grade: outstanding

Diocese: Newcastle upon Tyne

Local authority: Northumberland County Council

Date of inspection: 5th March 2015

Date of last inspection: 24th February 2010

School's unique reference number: 122370

Headteacher: Heather Cape

Inspector's name and number: Lesley-Anne Craig (738)

School context

One of two very successful middle schools in the heart of Ponteland. It is of average size and serves a wide catchment area including rural communities as well as admitting children from parts of the city of Newcastle. The school population is almost exclusively of white British heritage. Since the last inspection a new headteacher and deputy headteacher have come into post. The school holds many national awards and has very strong links with the local parish church.

The 'distinctiveness and effectiveness' of Richard Coates Church of England Middle School as a Church of England school are outstanding.

Since the last inspection the inspirational leadership of the new headteacher has further developed the school's vibrant Christian community. Staff and students are proud of their school and parents speak highly of the Christian vision and values which they state are the reason for sending their children here. All stakeholders understand the challenge and importance of the biblical foundation of the schools values, vision and ethos and willingly participate in their delivery.

Areas to improve

- Develop further the student leadership of worship so that the high level participation in class worship is reflected in whole school worship.
- Develop further the peer mentoring programme to embrace all year groups across the school.

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

All members of the school community speak at length about the Christian values that are deeply embedded in every aspect of school life. Children talk about the quality of care and

support they receive from teachers and other staff and especially the 'Hub,' and new Learning Mentor. The peer mentoring programme is extremely successful in years 5 and 6 but students would like it to be developed across the whole school. Learners confirm that the infrastructure of support encourages outstanding behaviour, achievement and attendance. The school celebrates achievement at all levels and gifted and talented students spoke with pride and confidence about their higher level skills and how they are given additional support. All members of the school community contribute to a wide variety of displays that celebrate diversity and demonstrate Christian values of tolerance and understanding. Artwork, visitors, and visits to a wide variety of establishments help learners understand the place of Christianity in the modern world. This is complimented by learners at the school demonstrating extremely high levels of excitement for their personal development and a desire to have strong moral values in order to succeed. The work done through the delivery of the RE curriculum underpins all the values of the school and is reflected in the schools approach to current affairs such as the Ebola crisis. A further example of how a child interpret their learning in RE is reflected in the extensive matrix of charitable works undertaken by the whole school. Through these activities the whole school community displays how they give to others.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

This is an area of the school in the words of the staff and students that has, 'under gone a significant transformation.' The headteacher has invested heavily in supporting staff and students to feel empowered to lead worship. A student conference held at Church House and SIAMS training day have both proven successful. Worship is central to the life of the school. The school community understands and engages with worship because it sets the structure for how everyone behaves based on the teachings of Christ. The Local clergy and in particular the parish clergy are welcomed by staff and students. Children speak with genuine warmth about the stories they are told and how they get many messages for life from worship. Central to this is the deep understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The new approach of conducting worship in three ways has enabled greater participation from all students. All forms of worship are enjoyed by the children. However there is capacity for even more student leadership of whole school worship. The commentary offered by children about prayer and reflection shows that there is a clear understanding of its purpose in the life of the school. Children gave numerous examples of how they regularly use reflection time to both consider their own lives and how they may help others. The strong emphasis on music in the school ably supports worship with instrumentalists and choir setting the tone and celebrating talent.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

The leadership of RE and the quality of teaching are both outstanding. The RE leader is a well qualified specialist who ably supports her team to deliver a meaningful and responsive curriculum. This flexibility was commented on by learners and staff when considering the impact of tragedies and world events and the Christian duty to support those in need. There is clear progression at a rapid rate in all year groups because resources and teaching effectively differentiates for all learners needs. The curriculum encourages learners to examine their own beliefs and those of other faiths and impressive strides have been made to enable access to other faiths with trips and visits as well as visiting speakers coming to the school. Staff and children spoke of how they were mesmerised by the delivery of a Holocaust survivor and how this in turn made them consider their own beliefs and values. The RE curriculum impacts the daily life of the school with learners regularly displaying acts of kindness, care and support to one another. Students are clear in their responses to enquiry about why they are kind and supportive of one another stating clearly it is what they are taught in RE.

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

The headteacher has expertly identified the key areas for development in this Christian community. Her team have embraced robust systems to monitor every aspect of the school's

daily life. As a result the school more than complies with requirements related to the delivery of RE and worship. One of the most notable impacts of the headteachers approach is how the principles taught in school are now impacting the community and lives of those outside of the school. For example visits to a local residential home which children described as being fun and inspiring. Additionally parents told of how things children learn about the way they behave and respond to particular situations based on Bible teaching is passed down to siblings and friends outside of the school community. Initiatives such as the '40 Acts of Kindness,' to celebrate Lent and the ICE programme are a reflection of how the school continues to develop ways of living its mission statement of 'Let your light Shine.' The governors of the school are instrumental in maintaining the very strong focus on Christian teaching and high standards. Relationships with the local parish are very strong and these are demonstrated in the use of the parish church for traditional services such as Christmas and Easter as well as the highly praised leavers service. The headteacher is an active member of the Diocesan secondary heads group.

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