



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Rode Methodist Voluntary Controlled First School

High Street

Rode

Frome

BA11 6NZ

Bristol District – Somerset Mendip Circuit 2501

Local authority: Somerset

Dates of inspection: 3rd July 2014

Date of last inspection: 6th March 2009

School's unique reference number: 123823

Headteacher: Carolyn Tommey

Inspector's name and number: Muriel Griffiths NS268

School context

Rode is a small village school with 94 pupils on roll, who come mainly from villages in the surrounding area. The majority of children are White British. The proportion of pupils supported at school action is below average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus and through a statement of special educational needs is just below average. The proportion of pupils who are eligible for the pupil premium is well below average. The Executive Headteacher leads both Rode and another small local school.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Rode First School as a Methodist school are outstanding

- The inspirational leadership of the headteacher develops the school's a distinctively Christian character for the school which strongly reflects Methodism.
- The school's Christian values impact on children's academic, personal and spiritual development.
- The value placed on each child, whose talents are given every opportunity to flourish, strongly reflects the school's Christian ethos.

Areas to improve

Implement strategies for parents to have more active involvement with their children in respect to the school's Christian values.

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

Rode Methodist First school is a friendly, welcoming Christian community where the school's chosen Christian values are recognised, celebrated and strongly underpin the daily life of the school. These values are covered in depth through collective worship, religious education (RE) and as an integral part of the school's creative curriculum. They are strongly supported by the example set by all adults in the school. These values have an outstanding impact on children's excellent attendance because they enjoy coming to school. The school's Christian character, through its values, contributes well to excellent academic attainment and all children achieve well. The school shows very good awareness of inclusion provision through the effort it makes with vulnerable groups by close tracking of each individual and early intervention, which results in their excellent achievement. Children talk about the school's Christian values and their effect on their daily lives. One child explained the current value, 'excellence', as 'when your work is so good that your teacher is amazed'. They know that Christianity 'shapes our values' and 'our values are how Jesus told us to live our lives'. The values promote a strong sense of belonging within the school community and the way that they are promoted enhances spiritual development with many opportunities through the curriculum to pause and reflect, and children are confident to express their thoughts and opinions through poetry and creative writing. The school has introduced a number of initiatives to develop children's spiritual awareness in response to a focus for development from the previous inspection. 'Windows Mirrors and Doors' is one such initiative. Children become more reflective and think more deeply. An example of this was evident in a book containing children's thoughts on 'What Warms our Hearts' when one child wrote 'my family love me and my friends care for me'. This helped children to consider John Wesley's words, 'I felt my heart strangely warmed'. Parents know about the school's Christian values because they say that their children talk about them at home and explain what they mean and are able to give their parents instances of what each value means. They know that children can become 'Rode Heroes' during Friday celebration worship, which means that they receive rewards for instances in school when they have displayed the current value. Parents feel that these values have an excellent impact on children's behaviour and achievement and like the links with the church. The school would like to involve parents more actively in the school's values to promote greater understanding of them. Children have a strong voice in school through the school council and feel highly valued as members of the school community. Younger children are well cared for by older members of the school, especially during playtimes, which is much appreciated by parents. This level of care is an integral part of the school. The strong Christian ethos, collective worship and RE are excellent in supporting the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all children. The input through RE was evident on the day of the inspection when younger children were being helped to consider good moral choices in relation to

caring for our world, after hearing the story of Creation in the Bible. There is a strong commitment to the development of the whole child within the context and commitment of a supportive school community. Behaviour amongst all groups of children is excellent and can be attributed to the way in which everyone understands the Christian values and wishes to live by them and so reflecting the Methodist principles of understanding right and wrong. The school's imaginative curriculum enables children to explore diverse communities and fosters respect for differing cultures. Children can explain that Christianity is a multi-cultural faith and show respect for diversity and difference. Children explain that the tree on their school logo is the tree under which John Wesley preached over 200 years ago in Rode.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

The school is proud of its Methodist heritage and sees worship as central to its distinctive provision. Worship plays a key role in promoting the school's Christian values through Biblical teaching. Children explain that it is a special time because they are helped to understand the importance of the school's values and they say that 'we learn to live our lives through them'. For their age, children have an excellent understanding of the effect that the values have on their behaviour and care for one another. Worship meets the needs of all children because it is varied in style with a number of visitors coming to lead. Children engage well in different aspects of worship. They enjoy opportunities to plan and lead worship as this helps them to be actively involved. The school celebrates major Christian festivals and this gives children a good understanding of the Christian calendar and parents value invitations to join their children. Prayer and reflection are important and children know that prayer is speaking to God and they are pleased to have opportunities to write their own prayers such as thank you prayers for God's beautiful world. Visitors from the Methodist chapel, the local Parish Church and the chaplain of a school in Bath founded by John and Charles Wesley come to lead worship regularly which gives children opportunities to get to know local Christians. The headteacher co-ordinates worship and is committed to the prominent role that worship plays in promoting the school's Christian ethos. Children know that praying, reflection, listening to Bible stories and worshipping through music are all important elements that contribute to daily worship. Children are familiar with the words of John Wesley 'Do all the good you can' as they sing these words. Children are beginning to show an understanding of God as the Father, Son and Holy Spirit through considering it during collective worship and discussing Christianity. One of the areas for development in the previous inspection related to involving children in implementing a system to evaluate collective worship. The school has introduced Reflection Diaries, use of discussion with the headteacher and Big Books as a way of regularly discussing collective worship with the children. This has resulted in more interactive worship with children more engaged and reflective.

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

At Rode Methodist First School, a community has been created where Christian

values are not only expressed, but are lived out and are at the heart of the school. The headteacher and governors uphold a vision for the school which is firmly founded on the Methodist principle of inclusion, in that all are equal in the sight of God. The quality of leadership by the headteacher and governors, strongly supported by staff, contributes significantly to the success of this Methodist school. The RE co-ordinators show excellent leadership and enthusiasm for their subject and as a result teaching and learning are excellent and children achieve well. The headteacher's spiritual leadership is strong, creative and effective and ensures a permeating Christian ethos which is an outstanding feature of the school. In the previous inspection, an area for development was 'to develop the processes that monitor and evaluate the Christian character of the school'. The school has addressed this by fully involving the whole school community. Staff meetings have been used to specifically determine the school's Christian characteristics and values. Children have rewritten the Golden Rules related to the school's Christian values. The governing body is actively involved in monitoring and evaluation of the school's distinctiveness as a Methodist school and ensures that it is evident in both policy and practice. Consequently, Rode is a school that does not stand still. The school has an accurate view of its strengths and areas for further development. The school has excellent relationships with the local Anglican and Methodist churches and the local community and all work together to enhance the Christian aspects of school life and to provide mutually supportive links. For example the school has the use of the Methodist chapel whenever necessary. Parents like the links with local churches and appreciate the importance placed on the Christian values, which they feel helps children's personal development. The commitment by the school ensures that children of Rode First School have every opportunity to grow and develop into mature, caring and knowledgeable young people. The school lives out its Mission Statement, 'to instil a love for learning within a creative environment where every individual is valued for their unique contributions'. The Methodist philosophy that no-one is beyond the reach of God's love, is clearly evident in all aspects of the life of the school.

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