

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

| <b>Rackenford Church of England Primary School</b>   |                                |
|--|--------------------------------|
| Address  | Rackenford, Tiverton, EX16 8DU |
| School vision  |                                |
| <p><b>'Let your light shine.'</b></p> <p>This has been taken from Matthew 5:14-16. As a community school we want to be a beacon for the community, in the same way that a city on a hilltop cannot be hidden. We believe that everyone has a light to shine and that everyone is unique. We want our children to value themselves and others for who they are and have high aspirations. We believe that we all have something to bring to our school, local, and wider communities. We want to celebrate children's achievements in all areas of their lives.</p>   |                                |
| School strengths   |                                |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school's Christian vision drives pupils' learning and extra-curricular activities, allowing all pupils the opportunity to 'let their lights shine' and to help others to do the same.</li> <li>• The school is a beacon of light to the local community in helping to support vulnerable pupils, those with special educational needs and disability (SEND) and their families, allowing them to flourish.</li> <li>• During a challenging year of leadership and staff changes, leaders have worked hard to ensure that the school has continued to grow and develop as a Church school. They have clear plans for areas that need further improvement so that they can continue to be a beacon for the community.</li> <li>• Religious education (RE) is well planned and resourced. Pupils respond to good teaching with calm and purposeful attitudes to learning. Pupils across key stages demonstrate a sound knowledge and understanding of Christianity and a variety of world religions and worldviews.</li> <li>• Collective worship is inclusive and inspired by the school's Christian vision and values. It is well supported by the local church, and the school and community enjoy worshipping together.</li> </ul> |                                |
| Areas for development  |                                |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review and improve assessment practices in RE so that individual pupils understand how well they are doing, and how to improve. This will also give teachers feedback as they plan for the progression of learning within and between key stages.</li> <li>• Provide further opportunities for pupils to explore issues of injustice in the world, and encourage them to respond. This will increase their awareness that they can be agents of change in school, the local community and the wider world.</li> <li>• Embed the existing shared understanding of spirituality amongst staff and pupils. Pupils can then be given further opportunities to develop this area of their lives through the curriculum and extra-curricular activities.</li> </ul>   |                                |
| Inspection findings  |                                |
|  |                                |

Rackenford school has faced a challenging year, with changes in leadership and a staff re-structure. Despite this, school leaders have successfully put in place a renewed Christian vision, inspired by their location and needs of the local community. It is rooted in Christian teaching and drives the work of the school from curriculum to pastoral care. Leaders and governors understand the context of the local community, and have clear plans in place for areas that need to be developed further in their journey as a Church school. They recognise, in line with their vision, that all children are unique, and have different needs. Pupils with SEND and those who are vulnerable are supported individually by the school and they are included in all school activities. In this way, everyone is able to reach towards their potential and flourish. Leaders know their staff and pupils well in this small school and it has a 'family' ethos. Rackenford is part of a federation with Tiverton High School and another local primary school. The federation leadership offers valuable help and guidance to Rackenford, and fully upholds the school's Christian distinctiveness. However, formal monitoring and evaluation of the school as a Church school is not yet fully in place. Staff feel valued and supported by leaders and governors during challenging times, demonstrating that the vision is alive and working for adults as well as pupils.

This small, rural school encourages pupils who could be isolated to 'Let their lights shine', and also to be a beacon of light to others. The school celebrates individual achievements with certificates and recognition during collective worship. Children also enthusiastically encourage and help each other in their endeavours, which allows everyone to grow and flourish. The vision is demonstrated through the seven Christian values of trust, perseverance, respect, friendship, compassion, forgiveness and truthfulness. Each term has a clear focus on one of the values during collective worship and lessons. Staff and pupils use the language of the values in daily interactions and behaviour interventions. As a result, pupils are confident, articulate and very caring towards each other. The project-based school curriculum produces pupils who are curious, enquiring and who flourish in their learning. Leaders and staff have a shared understanding of what spirituality is, and some teachers are beginning to plan opportunities for this into their lessons. Pupils develop well spiritually during collective worship, school visits and in extra-curricular opportunities such as music clubs and outdoor learning. However, this is not fully embedded throughout the formal curriculum.

Collective worship is varied and inclusive. The school's vision and values are a central part of worship. As a result, pupils demonstrate these virtues in their daily actions and close relationships with those around them as they grow in their spiritual lives. During worship, pupils contribute confidently and articulately when invited to do so. Prayer is invitational and led by staff. Singing is joyful. Close links with the local church mean that pupils enjoy encountering Bible characters and stories in 'Messy Church' sessions in school run by volunteers. Consequently, pupils' knowledge and understanding of a wide range of Bible stories is very good. A weekly collective worship is held at the church, led by the vicar. Equally, those who prefer not to attend church are accommodated. Parents and the local community enjoy the chance to worship together with the school at times of celebration such as Harvest and Christmas. In this way, the school 'shines its light' in the local community.

The wellbeing of both pupils and staff is a high priority, allowing everyone to flourish. Relationships in the school are very good because both staff and pupils are treated as valued and unique individuals. The school nurtures its pupils, supports parents, and leaders offer an 'open door' to any staff who have concerns or problems. Pupils value a quiet, well-resourced space where they can be supported if they are upset or need to calm down. As a result, pupils behave well and are able to learn in a calm and focused learning environment, allowing them to flourish. This school is welcoming to all and, in line with their Christian vision, everyone is seen as an important and unique member of the 'family'. Parents of pupils with SEND appreciate that their child is supported in a way that is relevant to their particular personality and needs. Unfortunately, pupil absence is high, although it is improving this academic year. There are now robust strategies in place to monitor absence and to work with parents and pupils to ensure that pupils are successfully in school and learning.



Pupils are aware of issues in the world beyond their village, and are able to discuss these confidently. Resources used in collective worship help them to understand some current affairs. A visit to Exeter mosque and cathedral and a talk at the school by a practising Muslim all help them to understand alternative worldviews to their own. Pupils recently elected to the school council are starting to engage in fund raising activities and thinking about improvements they would like to see around the school. Currently these are largely teacher-led, and pupils do not have a full understanding of how they can be agents of change in their own communities and the world at large.

RE is well taught, and pupils learn well in a calm and purposeful environment. Pupils confidently ask and answer questions, and enjoy exploring challenging texts and concepts in class. The RE curriculum is broad and varied, encompassing Christianity and a variety of world religions and worldviews. Resources are appropriate and of good quality, and planning is detailed. Pupils recall prior learning and use it to inform their work and build on their understanding of key concepts. RE work is showcased in class 'floorbooks' and pupils are proud of their work. However, there is currently no formal assessment of individuals' work in RE, meaning that pupils do not always know what they need to do to improve.

The inspection findings indicate that the school is living up to its foundation as a Church school, and is enabling pupils and adults to flourish.

| Information     |   |                |        |
|-----------------|---|----------------|--------|
| Inspection date | 19 September 2023                       | URN            | 113495 |
| VC/VA/Academy   | Voluntary aided                         | Pupils on roll | 64     |
| Diocese         | Exeter                                  |                |        |
| MAT/Federation  | The Federation of Tiverton Schools      |                |        |
| Headteacher     | Head of School                          |                |        |
| Chair           | Co-Chairs: Andrew Rigamonti & Lucy Bull |                |        |
| Inspector       | Judith Larrington                       | No.            | 948    |