



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

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

### Chawton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary

Chawton  
Alton  
Hampshire  
GU34 1SG

**Previous SIAMS grade: Outstanding**

**Current inspection grade: Good**

**Diocese: Winchester**

Local authority: Hampshire

Dates of inspection: 02 December 2015

Date of last inspection: 06 December 2010

School's unique reference number: 116281

Headteacher: Dawn Tilley

Inspector's name and number: Linda Windsor (747)

#### School context

Chawton CE Primary is a smaller than average primary school serving a widespread catchment on the edge of the South Downs. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Both the proportion of disadvantaged pupils and of those with special education needs are well below average and there are, currently, no pupils with education, health and care plans. Attendance is above average. The school works closely with 12 other schools in the Alton cluster, sharing best practice, moderation and staff training. There are close links with the local church. The headteacher took up post in September 2015.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Chawton as a Church of England school are good

- The whole school team, including governors, pupils and parents, have displayed great enthusiasm in redefining and re-energising the school's Christian vision and values.
- This is a hugely inclusive school where the Christian ethos ensures that all thrive, both academically and socially.
- There are excellent links with the local community, including the local church and clergy.
- The leadership and management share a clear and exciting vision for the school, whilst recognising the need to thoroughly embed it over time.
- The pupils are open and confident and they talk with enthusiasm about their school and of their genuine enjoyment in being there.

#### Areas to improve

- Involve pupils more in the planning, leading and evaluating of collective worship.
- Increase opportunities for quiet prayer and reflection throughout the school, including in the outdoor environment.
- Implement the newly developed plan to monitor and evaluate all aspects of the school as a Church school.

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

Over the first half of this term, the school has spent time redefining its Christian vision and values. This has been done thoroughly and in consultation with all stakeholders. As a result, there is a clarity and understanding of these that shows in all aspects of school life and, whilst still being embedded, the impact is already becoming clear. For example, pupils talk about the need to love and care for each other, saying, "We're a small school and we need to look out for one another." Parents say the school is like a family and that, even outside school, older pupils look out for the younger ones. The school achieves well with good support for all pupils, who are seen as 'unique and special in the eyes of God'. As a result, academic results and attendance are at or above the national average. Behaviour and attitudes are excellent but are improving still further as the values become more fully embedded within the heart of the school. One pupil said, "If someone I don't really like is hurt, I'll go and help. That's courage!". Staff are excellent role models of the chosen values and this influences the pupils positively and supports their development academically, socially and spiritually. The school's curriculum also supports the pupils' spiritual development, giving them the tools to be able to reflect and empathise, deepening their understanding of themselves, others and the wider world. The school's charitable events reflect their love and care for others, an example being their support for a school in Bangladesh that one teacher had visited. Religious education, too, enables pupils to explore and discuss a range of issues, including similarities and differences between Christianity and other world faiths. Pupils are increasingly able to articulate confidently their own views, including their personal stance regarding faith, and are open and eager to hear the views of others. Pupils are sensitive to prayer and understand it as a way of talking to God. As yet, not many feel able to write or articulate their own prayers. The school has plans to focus on this with the creation of a lunchtime prayer club and the development of a central reflection area that can be accessed by both pupils and adults. Parents value the school as the hub in a large, fragmented catchment. It is a place where they can gather and make links. The school actively encourages this through informal coffee mornings and other social activities. One parent said that whilst academic achievement was important, she'd chosen the school as a Church school so that her children would develop a sense of right and wrong. Another agreed, saying that the school's values supported her own and that having these shared values gave her children an excellent moral grounding. A third parent talked of the open culture of the school, where children were not afraid to ask questions and how such openness has led to children becoming more understanding and less wary of other faiths and cultures.

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

At Chawton, collective worship holds a central place in daily school life. It is well planned to engage and interest pupils who respond enthusiastically and appropriately. Worship is linked to the school's Christian values and the associated themes are developed through the use of biblical materials that support the value in focus. All key Christian festivals are celebrated, either at the school or in the local church. Worship is well led by the headteacher, deputy head, local clergy and class teachers. Anglican traditions are an integral part of whole school worship and pupils are comfortable with these routines and rituals both at school and in the church. Parents talked of their children feeling the local church is their church, even if they live much further away. The church is also used as an important resource in RE across the school with the re-enacting the Baptism service for Year 1 pupils as one example. The local rector and the associate priest support the school excellently and help develop theological aspects as needed. They support the children to understand the purpose of prayer, in developing the school's Christian values and in exploring the concepts of the Trinity and the Eucharist. The worship observed, led by the headteacher, was clear and linked well to the Christian value in focus - courage. Whilst pupils participate well, they have, as yet, little opportunity to plan and lead acts of worship and the headteacher has plans to develop this aspect over the coming year. They are keen to be able to do this. Pupils talk enthusiastically about worship, saying it gives them a

better understanding of current issues across the world. They value prayer and understand it as a time to talk to God, to ask for help, to give thanks or to think of others. Reflective spaces in school are beginning to be developed, no easy task in a school that already uses every inch of space! Monitoring and evaluation of worship is in its early stages, as the school honestly acknowledges. Foundation governors understand their role in this and have prepared a clear and comprehensive programme of monitoring that will support and improve the content and delivery of collective worship. The school meets the statutory requirements for collective worship.

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

Chawton has a secure Christian vision at its heart, underpinned by a recently defined set of Christian values that are already impacting on all stakeholders in the school. With a new headteacher in post, the school is working hard to embed these into its daily life. The headteacher, whose Christian commitment influences the ethos of love and care across the school, is very clear about the need for continuous improvement, both academically and pastorally, as well as for the school as a church school. This is clearly reflected in the School Improvement Plan. Governors, too, are committed and, indeed, do play an active part in school life, as well as in challenging and supporting as needed. Systems to monitor and evaluate the school are being put in place and, whilst in their early stages, are beginning to have an impact on school improvement. The leadership team, including governors, are clear about future direction and are open and honest about the school, its strengths and the areas that need development. The school makes good use of diocesan support, with the RE leader engaged in training on the delivery and assessment of the Agreed Syllabus and the headteacher taking part in leadership training and development, as well as in linking with other schools to share resources and ideas. New staff are well inducted, ensuring their understanding of the Christian ethos of the school. Governors were very involved in the new headteacher appointment and had clear expectations about the calibre and commitment the new head would need to display. Community links are excellent, as is the partnership with the local church and clergy. Examples of this are seen in the Chawton Ball, an event open to the wider community and in the excellent links with Chawton House, where pupils have land given for them to garden. The school is exploring with Chawton House, the possibility of developing a spiritual garden, with great enthusiasm for the project shown on both sides. This is a school that knows itself well, and has great integrity. It has a clear and well paced plan for improvement and is working hard to ensure the upward trajectory continues in the future. Development points from the previous inspection have been addressed. The school meets the statutory requirements for religious education.

SIAMS report December 2015 Chawton CE Primary School Chawton Alton Hants GU34 ISG