

Diocese of Canterbury



STATUTORY INSPECTION OF ANGLICAN SCHOOLS

St Nicholas Church of England Primary School
Fairfield Road New Romney, Kent TN28 8BP

Voluntary Controlled
Diocese of Canterbury
Kent LEA
Inspected on 8 December 2010
Last inspected: 1 April 2008
School Number:132829
Headteacher: Frances Nash
Inspector: Mrs Jane Garrett
Inspector number: 618

SCHOOL CONTEXT

St Nicholas Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School is a larger than average school that serves New Romney and the surrounding rural community. It is a two form entry school; there are 350 pupils on roll. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. A larger than average proportion of pupils is eligible for free school meals. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties/disabilities is above average. The Headteacher has been in post since September 2009.

SUMMARY JUDGEMENT:

St Nicholas Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School is a good Church school. **GRADE 2: good**

ESTABLISHED STRENGTHS

- Pupils' good relationships both with one another and with staff, who provide a secure, happy and safe school environment.
- The inspirational leadership and clear Christian vision of the Headteacher.

FOCUS FOR DEVELOPMENT

- Clarify the values of the school and ensure that they are underpinned by Christian principles.
- Ensure Christian values are explicit in key policies in order to underpin all aspects of the school's life and work.
- Assess the training needs of staff as these relate to working in a Church school, and ensure that they are given opportunities for appropriate professional development.

How well does the school, through its distinctive Christian character, meet the needs of all learners? GRADE 2: good

Relationships at all levels are good, and as a result pupils feel happy, safe, secure and valued by staff. Pupils speak highly of the staff, who are committed to their welfare. Any problems are dealt with sensitively and swiftly by staff. Responsible citizenship is fostered in a variety of ways, for example through pupils looking after one another. One child stated, "It is up to all of us to take care of one another". Pupils also support charities such as Water Aid, the Haiti appeal and Children in Need, and can explain how they help people who are less fortunate than themselves. They relate these to the teachings of Jesus and his care for the poor and needy. Pupils talk about the Christian displays around the school and their visits to church and understand that these are what make them special as a Church school. Pupils talk about RE lessons and their study of other faiths with enjoyment and they are able to explain the understanding they gain about their own faith and others. A major factor contributing to the improved attitude to RE is that it is now being taught in a cross-curricular way. RE and worship do impact on pupils' personal development. For example pupils in Year 3 explored how the crowd in Bethlehem might have felt when looking for rooms. They were then able to relate this to their own feelings. Parents explain how their children excitedly talk about aspects of worship and RE, and are able to retell the stories to them. They appreciate the school's strong sense of community and its inclusiveness. They are well supported by the Family Liaison Officer, who encourages parents to attend church services and help in school. The school's values are not yet linked to specific Christian principles and are not yet consistently embedded across the whole curriculum. Staff and governor training to address this issue is planned. There are a few children from other faiths. Their beliefs and customs are affirmed through opportunities to share their knowledge and bring artefacts into school.

What is the impact of Collective Worship on, the school community?

GRADE 2: good

Since the last inspection, collective worship has been a high priority for development. The Headteacher has worked with the staff to bring about changes both through the physical environment and also by carefully planning worship in order that pupils have greater intimacy when participating. Pupils recognise that worship is a special time. They enjoy taking part through the medium of drama. There is a prayer table in each classroom and one of them is used in collective worship. Pupils made a cloth for their table by printing their hands on it.

One child explained that this reminded them to care for others as Jesus used His hands to help and care for others. Through worship pupils are encouraged to think about Christian beliefs and values by relating their feelings to those of Bible characters, using drama as a means of exploring these feelings. During KS1 collective worship based on a Christmas Wish, links were made to what children wanted for Christmas and developed into what the Nativity characters may have wished for. Pupils articulate what they have learnt through this and how it reinforces the values of the school. The Headteacher intends to give pupils greater responsibility for the planning of worship. The parish clergy come into school to lead worship and pupils attend church at the end of each term. The school choir participates in occasional services on a Sunday. Parental attendance at these services is excellent. The school is drawing on some Anglican traditions and resources. For example, the lighting of a candle and responses are used and their relevance explained to pupils. The collective worship leader is the Headteacher, who has been proactive in moving this forward and engaging all staff, parents, governors and pupils in the process of implementing change, such as greater involvement by the pupils through the medium of art, music and drama. Worship is planned using the themes from the diocesan guidelines. There is a rota for collective worship and all teachers participate, gaining confidence from the support of the Headteacher. Governors have a formal programme of visits to monitor this. It is intended that staff will be included in this.

**How effective are the leadership and management of the school as a Church school?
GRADE 2: good**

The Headteacher's vision is rooted in Christian values. By working closely with members of the church, she has brought about considerable progress since her appointment. This vision is shared by church leaders, some staff, governors and parents. Its impact is noticeable in the way that pupils are becoming confident in articulating what they have learnt through worship and RE and how Christian teaching impacts on their lives, and parents comment on this. RE benefits from the effective leadership and enthusiasm of a core group of staff. It is now taught in a more cross-curricular way and this has really engaged both staff and pupils. Staff are becoming more confident in the delivery of RE. Through diocesan training sessions, staff are growing in their understanding of what leadership means in a Church school. However, there is not yet a clear programme in place for the professional development of staff. The school has been robust in its self-evaluation. The SIAS toolkit has been completed by the staff and governors and church leaders. Areas for future development have been clearly identified, and these have been incorporated into the school development plan. Parents are not yet formally included in the self assessment process. They are supportive of the school and the Christian ethos, even those who do not profess faith. The school is involved in numerous local events, both through participating and through raising funds. For example, pupils attend Age Concern and talk to the elderly. They hold a Giving Tree Service, bringing gifts which are then given to the needy within the community. There are good links with the local Romney Marsh Community Church; its leaders take some of the collective worship and some pupils attend a Friday evening club organised by the church. The school therefore contributes to the local community well. Its contribution to national and international community cohesion is not yet as well developed. The partnership between the church, staff, governors and parents is one of care and support. For example, parents and staff seek support from church leaders for personal problems. Foundation governors form part of a RE/Worship working party and the governors regularly monitor worship. Since the last inspection, the areas for development have been addressed; the school environment has been developed with a mural of Noah's Ark as a focal point for worship, prayer tables and cloths from each class are also used in collective worship and there is a stable role play area in reception class. The toolkit is established as a tool for self evaluation and most stakeholders are involved in this process.