

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

St Martin's Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School

Horn Street
Folkestone
Kent CT20 3JJ

Diocese: Canterbury

Local authority: Kent

Date of inspection: 28 February 2011

Date of last inspection: 2 and 3 April 2008

School's unique reference number: 118675

Headteacher: Kate Love

Inspector's name and number: Virginia Corbyn 86

School context

St Martin's Church of England Primary School is a one form entry school to the west of Folkestone. The proportion of pupils who leave and join the school is above average, largely because of the mobility of Army personnel garrisoned at the nearby barracks. Around one quarter of pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds, the majority of whom speak English as an additional language. These are mostly from Nepali-speaking Gurkha families. The percentage of pupils with special educational needs is below that found nationally. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average, although it is increasing.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Martin's Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding

This school is shaped by distinctive Christian values, which are understood and supported by all its stakeholders. Collective worship reinforces these values helping pupils to understand how they can be expressed in practical ways in their everyday lives. The leadership team continues to demonstrate a commitment to moving forward as a Church school.

Established strengths

- The development of distinctive Christian values which are clearly articulated and supported by all stakeholders
- Collective worship which encourages pupils to live out what they learn about and what they believe in
- The commitment of those who lead the school to build the most distinctive yet inclusive Christian community possible

Focus for development

- To enable pupils to take a more active role in leading collective worship
- To develop ways of deepening pupils' understanding and experience of the Eucharist

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

The Christian values underpinning the life of this joyful school are proclaimed throughout the school environment. They are based on the Olympic 2012 values but have been developed by the school using clear links with Bible stories and Christian teaching. Pupils are able to list 'our' values and describe their school as a 'Christian school'. Parents choose this school because of its distinctive Christian character which is exemplified by the welcoming and caring attitudes of its staff, especially when there are any concerns to be addressed. Alongside this, parents commented upon the inclusive nature of the school in which those of all faiths and of none are supported and encouraged. This is particularly apparent in a number of the extra-curricular activities which are offered. These include a Breakfast Club for which there is funding to meet specific pupils needs, N'ergise (a Christian Club), and a Prayer Club supported and attended by some Nepalese parents and pupils. Spiritual development is promoted through the Religious Education curriculum. During the inspection, time for

reflection was evident in lessons in Key Stage One and in Key Stage Two. The provision of a prayer room and prayer boxes, and the use of the environment both inside and outside the school, demonstrate the school's commitment to offer time and space for pupils to pray and to reflect. Pupils are enthusiastic about looking after others, especially through money raising for charities and by older pupils acting as buddies for the younger children. In order to deepen cultural understanding, full use is made of the links with the Nepali community, especially by celebrating Hindu festivals drawing on the experiences of both adults and pupils. Community cohesion is promoted through strong links with the Church, the Army barracks, local charities, and with other local schools. Pupils say that they will be able to leave their school as friendly and helpful citizens by living out the Christian values and teachings presented to them. The environment is bright and attractive, rich with important Christian messages for all of the school community.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

In evaluating collective worship using the Pupil Voice forum, collective worship was described as a time, 'To think about how we can be good people and use our school values in our life'. Through these evaluations, which have been introduced in response to a recommendation in the previous report, pupil responses to worship are seen to be generally positive. Parents comment that their children talk about worship times. They enjoy those times when they are able to attend worship, including the festivals such as Harvest held in the church. There are good levels of pupil participation. During the inspection, pupils sang well, used the Lord's prayer confidently and were thoroughly engaged by an interactive Bible story. Older pupils express a desire to be more meaningfully engaged in worship. This is being addressed by the introduction of 'Lighting the Candle' which will train pupils for a leadership role in worship. Collective worship is well led and managed. This includes a commitment to encouraging others to lead worship, a result of which has been the building of staff capacity to successfully fulfil this role. Anglican liturgy is a regular feature of worship. Plans to develop a Eucharist service especially designed for the school community will provide opportunities for pupils' understanding of Anglican belief and practice to be developed further. Pupils have a good knowledge of Christian festivals and of the liturgical year through strong links with the church. Worship led by the Rector or Children's Worker takes place each week in the church. All stakeholders speak of the importance of the strong and vibrant relationship between church and school in ensuring that collective worship is of a consistently high standard.

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

The key Christian values of the school are shared by all stakeholders. These are embedded in school life and shape its policies and practices. The leadership team has ensured that the school community understands how the values will be expressed in practical ways in the life of the school by integrating them into the school environment and by basing themes for collective worship around them. The school self evaluation process involves all stakeholders. Parents contribute through a Church school questionnaire. Religious Education (RE) has been well led and managed. Standards are now more effectively monitored following a recommendation in the last report. Staff confidence in using the level descriptions, and in achieving the right balance between learning about religion and learning from religion, is continuing to increase. In recent years, several staff members have moved on to leadership positions in other Church schools. The headteacher is continuing to build similar levels of confidence in her current staff. The relationship between the church and school continues to thrive. New initiatives such as the development of a school Eucharist demonstrate a continuing desire to find new ways to move forward. There are good links between the school and the Diocese, especially through the headteacher and the Rector, both of whom see this as a priority. There are a number of Nepalese pupils in school whose fathers are in the Gurkha regiment based at the nearby Army barracks. Good relationships have been forged with this community. Visits to the Hindu temple on the Army base are enjoyed by the pupils. This is a school which seeks to live out a clear Christian vision which is both distinctive and inclusive.