

Diocese of Canterbury



STATUTORY INSPECTION OF ANGLICAN SCHOOLS

**Archbishop Courtenay Church of England (Aided) Primary School,
College Road,
Maidstone,
Kent,
ME15 6YH.**

Diocese: Canterbury
Local Authority: Kent
Date of inspection: 17th June 2010
Date of last inspection: 18th and 19th July 2007
School's Unique Reference Number: 134921
Headteacher: Louise Stubberfield
Chairman of Governors: Mollie Neaves
Inspector's name and number: Judy Bainbridge, NS 328

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Archbishop Courtenay Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School was formed in 2005 following the amalgamation of St Stephen's Infant School and All Saints' Primary School. Provision of a new building on a single site is overdue, and the school continues to operate on two sites over a mile apart. Pupils are drawn predominantly from central Maidstone and from the Tovil district. Both have identified areas of social deprivation. While most of the 145 pupils are from White British backgrounds, the proportion of those from other ethnic groups is increasing, and 23 cultures are currently represented in the school. A small number are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language. Pupil mobility is higher than average. The percentage of those with special educational needs and/or disabilities is also above average.

SUMMARY JUDGEMENT

Archbishop Courtenay Church of England Primary School is a good Church school. **GRADE 2 - GOOD**

ESTABLISHED STRENGTHS

- Pupils' ability to articulate the Christian faith and its impact upon their lives.
- The way in which collective worship unites the school community and nurtures the spirituality of all its members.
- The commitment of the subject leader to raising the profile of RE in the school, resulting in good progress since the last inspection.
- The high level of teamwork displayed by staff, who work as 'one body' to realise a shared Christian vision for the school.

FOCUS FOR DEVELOPMENT

- Raise standards of teaching and learning in RE by further embedding assessment in teachers' planning, enhancing opportunities for creative writing and by increasing emphasis on learning from religion.
- Extend national and global links to deepen pupils' awareness and understanding of other cultures, as identified in the school's own self-evaluation.

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

Clearly stated Christian values, including service, respect and compassion, permeate the life of this school. They are expressed particularly in the high quality of care shown for all pupils and their parents, and in very good relationships at all levels. Pupils are able to articulate these values very clearly. They speak openly about the Christian faith and can describe the way in which it guides their own actions. For example, they are able to identify many ways in which kindness and compassion are expressed in the day-to-day life of the school. They demonstrate awareness of needs in the wider world by raising money for a large number of charities, clearly relating these activities to Christian teaching. They readily identify ways in which their school is 'special' as a Church school, highlighting the place of prayer and worship, as well as the significance of Christian symbols around the school. Pupils' spiritual and moral development is promoted well through worship and RE. Further support for spiritual growth is provided by the popular Kingsquad, a Christian club. Pupils respond enthusiastically to many opportunities to take responsibility and to care for one another and their environment, for example as School Councillors, or membership of the Green Team. Thus they are well prepared for responsible citizenship.

What is the impact of collective worship on the school community? GRADE 2 – GOOD

The Headteacher describes worship as ‘the heart of the community of the school’. It demonstrably celebrates the Christian values which underpin the school’s life, uniting pupils and staff in listening and reflection as well as in praise, prayer and singing. It involves all class teachers as leaders and as participants. Pupils demonstrate their enjoyment of worship through their attentiveness, through whole-hearted engagement with music, and through the enthusiasm with which they respond in practical ways to the Christian teaching they hear. For example, following an act of worship focusing on the value of compassion, Key Stage 2 pupils were quick to suggest further ways in which they could help the victims of the earthquake in Haiti. They say that they particularly value opportunities to plan and lead worship, both in school and in church. The Incumbent and other parish clergy make a very strong contribution to worship. Church services at festival times, and the regular celebration of the Eucharist with KS2 pupils, do much to strengthen the school’s Anglican identity. Following the last inspection, worship in school now draws more widely on the Anglican tradition, and even the youngest pupils are confident in explaining symbols such as the lighted candle. Worship is well-led by the Headteacher, who plans in consultation with a range of stakeholders. Pupil feedback now contributes to evaluation, as recommended in the last inspection report, as does monitoring by governors.

How effective is the Religious Education? GRADE - 2 GOOD

RE is well led and managed by the subject leader. The profile of RE has been raised since the last inspection and planning, monitoring and assessment have all been improved. Pupils show good subject knowledge, but now need more opportunities to learn from religion through a wider range of learning tasks, including writing. Pupils demonstrate a positive attitude towards RE which is evident in the impact it has on children’s knowledge and understanding of religion. In an upper Key Stage 2 class observed, pupils were taught about the promises made at confirmation. The lesson built on previous learning about baptism. Pupils were able to explain why people might want to be confirmed. One pupil suggested, ‘They want people to know that they believe in God and Jesus’. The good foundations established through teaching Bible stories and basic Christian knowledge helps pupils to apply the teaching to their own lives. As one pupil said, ‘Different Bible stories can give you confidence in your life and some stories can give us ways to change our lives’. The subject contributes very well to pupils’ spiritual and moral development and learners have a growing understanding of Christian faith and practice. This is well supported through the use of Godly play which encourages children to relate the Bible stories to their own experience. Focus RE days provide opportunities for enrichment of the subject and standards achieved are broadly satisfactory.

How effective are the leadership and management of the school as a Church school? GRADE 2 - GOOD

The Headteacher leads a strong staff team committed to working as ‘one body’. Together with the supportive governing body, they communicate a vision for the school which is rooted in Christian values. Governors and school leaders have undertaken a thorough self-evaluation of Archbishop Courtenay’s effectiveness as a Church school, and have accurately identified areas for improvement. At the same time, committed subject leadership has ensured that the recommendations in the last inspection report have been addressed, resulting in good progress in RE and worship. The school makes very good use of Diocesan training for both staff and governors, helping leaders at all levels to develop their roles in a Church school context. Relationships with parents are good, and are supported by the work of a highly effective Family Liaison Officer. While few parents have chosen the school for its Christian foundation, they are positive about its distinctive character. ‘Coming to a Church school gives the children a sense of belonging to a community’, said one. The firm partnership with the parish ensures that pupils, staff and parents feel included in the church family. Archbishop Courtenay also benefits from

good links with other groups and organisations within the town, contributing well to community cohesion locally. However, the school recognises that national and global links are less strong, and has identified this as an area for development in its own self-evaluation.