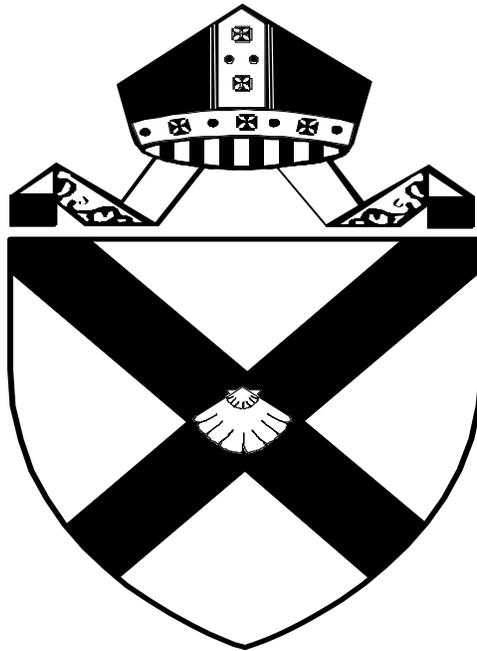


STATUTORY INSPECTION of ANGLICAN SCHOOLS

ROCHESTER DIOCESE

2010



**Brenchley and Matfield
Church of England Primary
School**

Voluntary Aided

Kent CC

Unique Reference No: 118714

Advisory Headteacher: Mr Edward Cottle

Chair of Governors: Mr Andrew Cunningham

Incumbents: Brenchley: Rev. Campbell Paget

Matfield: Rev. Mandy Carr

Inspector: Ms Jan Thompson (NS no 92)

Inspection: 19th March 2010

SUMMARY JUDGEMENT

How distinctive and effective is the school as a Church of England school?

Brenchley and Matfield Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School is a satisfactory and rapidly improving church school. A number of things have been put in place recently by the advisory headteacher, who is experienced in leading church schools. These now need to become embedded for maximum impact.

Grade 3: Satisfactory

School Context

Brenchley and Matfield Church of England Primary School is a Voluntary Aided school, supported by the parishes of Brenchley and Matfield in Kent. Most of its 218 pupils come from nearby villages, the largest of which is Paddock Wood. A majority of the pupils come from church going families and the only other religion represented in the school is Judaism. There have been nine headteachers in the past ten years and the present advisory headteacher has been in post for just under a year. This unsettled period has had a detrimental effect on standards and relationships, with the result that the recent Ofsted inspection judged the school to be inadequate. Standards of attainment are average, but pupils should be making better progress.

Established Strengths

- The support given by the two parish churches
- The role of the chaplain in the school
- Pupils' positive response to opportunities for spiritual development

Focus for Development

- Develop systems for monitoring and evaluating Religious Education (RE). (This was a Focus for Development in the last report.)
- Produce clear, accurate and up-to-date policy statements for RE and Collective Worship.
- Develop the on-going self-evaluation process for the school as a church school.

How well does the school, through its distinctive Christian character, meet the needs of all learners? Grade 3: Satisfactory

A recent 'Spiritual Development' working party has identified the Christian values of grace, compassion, forgiveness, integrity and humility as underlying the ethos of this school. These are displayed in the classrooms, and teachers are beginning to refer to them to reinforce good behaviour and relationships. Pupils are generally kind to each other and work well together in class. They like to support charities and understand the need to look after others less fortunate than themselves. Both RE and Collective Worship make good contributions to pupils' spiritual development. For example, pupils like the prayer-time in their classes at the end of the day, when they can use their own prayers. They say it is a time to be calm and to think. Pupils speak openly about the Christian faith and their own religious practices. Much has been done recently, and more is planned, to improve the use of the school environment for spiritual development. For example, interactive prayer stations are being set up in each classroom and pupils are responding with interest.

What is the impact of collective worship on the school community? Grade 2: Good

The last report recommended that pupils should be involved in evaluating Collective Worship, which has just been started and has already resulted in some improvements. Pupils are very responsive to worship, particularly enjoying the singing and the 'fun' ways in which the chaplain puts his message across. They like to participate, and more opportunities for this are being introduced. For example, in the act of worship during the inspection, a class sang a 'Thank you' prayer that they had made up. Pupils appreciate time for prayer, including use of set prayers such as the Lord's Prayer. The Anglican influence on school worship is good, with a tradition of using liturgical expressions and responses. Both vicars and the chaplain take turns in leading Collective Worship on Wednesdays. Four festivals are celebrated in All Saints, Brenchley each year, but these do not include the important Christian festival of Pentecost. The school has not attended the Diocesan Church Schools Festival for some years, and consequently Year 6 pupils have missed out on taking part in a Eucharist in the cathedral. The chaplain's role has been more clearly defined in the last six months and he has improved the planning of Collective Worship, which was recommended in the last report. The weekly themes are now clearly Christian and biblical and the different acts of worship throughout the week are all genuine acts of worship. The policy statement for collective worship is being revised but does not yet give an accurate picture of what is happening and why.

How effective is Religious Education? Grade 3: Satisfactory

The introduction of the new Diocesan syllabus in September 2009 has given teachers clear lesson plans, based on the national level descriptions, and interesting ideas for lesson activities. This has raised the standard of teaching and learning in RE, and the subject is very popular with the pupils. RE makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development. Pupils say they like learning about 'God and Jesus' and they also like applying ideas to their own lives. They have a good knowledge and understanding of Christianity, use religious vocabulary well, and reflect on some deep religious concepts, such as spiritual food. There has been less of a focus on non-Christian religions, however, and pupils do not readily identify the importance of RE in helping them to understand multi-faith Britain. Standards of attainment are broadly average, with some inconsistencies in progress across the school. In a number of classes, insufficient work has been recorded by pupils in their books, indicating that teachers may not have given it the 5% allocated time. The policy statement, which was praised at the last inspection, has not yet been submitted to the governing body. Nor has systematic monitoring of the subject taken place, as recommended in the last inspection. It appears, therefore, that the status of RE in the school deteriorated after the last inspection and it has only just begun to be treated again as a core subject.

How effective are the leadership and management of the school as a church school? Grade 3: Satisfactory

Since the arrival of the current headteacher, leaders and managers have taken a number of effective steps to re-focus on the distinctive Christian character of the school. They have made use of Diocesan advice and have been well supported by their two vicars and numerous strong Church members on the governing body. They have established a group to take forward the self-evaluation process of the school as a church school, but have not yet involved staff and parents in this. The school has always benefited from the strong support of its two parish churches: St Luke's Matfield and All Saints Brenchley. Of particular note is the provision of the employed youth worker from All Saints to act as chaplain in the school for one day a week. Parents are appreciative of the church nature of the school.

