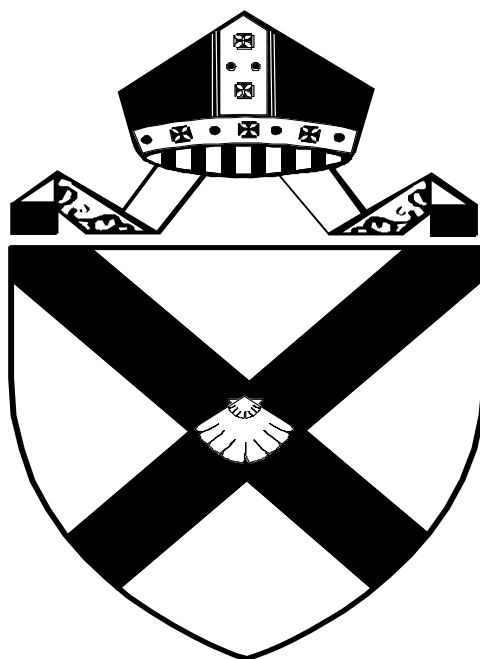


STATUTORY INSPECTION of ANGLICAN SCHOOLS

ROCHESTER DIOCESE

2010



**Ditton Church of England
Junior School**

Voluntary Aided

New Road, Ditton, Aylesford, Kent ME20 6AE
Kent LA

Unique Reference No: 118854

Head Teacher: Mr. Robert Holder

Chair of Governors: Mr. Graeme Proud

Incumbent: Revd. Ross Terranova

Inspector: Ms Jan Thompson (NS 92)

Inspection: 18th November 2010

SUMMARY JUDGEMENT

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

Grade 2: GOOD

Ditton Church of England Junior School is a good Church school.

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Ditton is a Voluntary Aided Church of England Junior School which serves the village of Ditton in Kent. Its 215 pupils are mostly White British and come from a range of social and economic backgrounds. Most pupils transfer to the school from the neighbouring infant school, which is not a Church school, although many of them attended the church-run pre-school. About twelve percent of pupils are from Church families. The school was judged by Ofsted to be satisfactory, with good features that included spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

ESTABLISHED STRENGTHS

- The close link between the school and the parish church.
- The Christian leadership of the head teacher, particularly in connection with Collective Worship.
- Excellent singing in Collective Worship.

FOCUS FOR DEVELOPMENT

- Monitor Collective Worship more systematically in order to improve it further.
- Make more use of interactive prayer areas to help and encourage pupils to pray. (This was a recommendation at the last inspection.)

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

Ditton is a friendly school, where pupils and adults are polite, welcoming and helpful. Relationships are good at all levels and behaviour is good. Pupils say that adults in the school are good role models for them of Christian behaviour. They are encouraged to be generous in their care for the needy and to love their neighbour. This was demonstrated at the time of the inspection with a collection of 122 Christmas boxes for the Christian charity 'Samaritan's Purse', which helps disadvantaged children abroad. This was organised by the parish church and some pupils also attended the church service where they provided further boxes. Both Religious Education (RE) and Collective Worship make good contributions to pupils' spiritual and moral development because the themes are always related to the pupils' own lives. For example, a Year 3 RE class drew out the importance of forgiveness from Jesus' Parable of the Prodigal Son. They learnt that God forgives us and therefore we should forgive others. There are significant areas of the school given over to Christian displays, and all classrooms now have quiet areas for prayer and reflection, which is an improvement since the last inspection. Few of these, however, are interactive, which was recommended.

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

Grade 2: Good

Pupils behave respectfully in Collective Worship, gathering and leaving in silence and responding well to the variety of activities. They participate exceptionally well in singing the religious songs, accompanied by a pianist. They say that they enjoy visitors, particularly the Family Trust, a Christian organisation that dramatises Bible stories and puts across its message with humour. Pupils have a good understanding of the divine nature of worship, saying for example that it is 'to connect with God', 'to learn more about Jesus', and 'to help you trust in God.' They appreciate the opportunities for prayer and quiet reflection that are given in Collective Worship. Pupils become familiar with Anglican traditions and practice in a variety of ways. They like the opening greeting when the candle is lit with the words 'The Lord is here', to which they respond, 'His Spirit is with us.' They also like celebrating special festivals in the church because they say 'It feels more holy.' This year included a celebration of Pentecost as one of the major festivals of the Church. Year 6 pupils usually attend the Church Schools Festival at Rochester Cathedral, where they always make a good contribution to the Eucharist service. The Rector or his curate regularly take an act of worship each week. Worship is regarded as important in the life of the school and is organised by the headteacher, who enjoys leading acts of worship. The quality of worship is good and is enhanced by the new projection equipment in the school hall, which was recommended at the last inspection.

How effective is the Religious Education? Grade 2: Good

Pupils make good progress in RE across the school and many attain above average standards. Teachers make lessons interesting, with a variety of activities, so that pupils are engaged and work hard. The assessment of pupils' abilities against the national level descriptions is well organised in all classes, so that pupils are aware of their progress and how to improve. The governing body has chosen to follow the Kent local agreed syllabus for RE, for continuity across infant, junior and secondary phases of education. The school is using the Canterbury Diocesan scheme of work to deliver this syllabus, which teachers find helpful. It ensures a good balance in lessons between the study of religions and applying the ideas to pupils' own lives. Pupils are encouraged to discuss their ideas and to know their own mind. Pupils value their growing knowledge and understanding of Christianity. They also recognise the importance of studying other religions in order to understand and respect people who have different beliefs and cultures. The new RE subject leader taught a very good lesson during the inspection but has not yet had time to monitor the subject.

How effective are the leadership and management of the school as a church school? Grade 2: Good

The headteacher is a committed Christian leader of the school and he is well supported in this by the governing body. They have made good headway in tackling the recommendations in the last report, which was only just over two years ago. This has been achieved by the setting up a small group to oversee the development of the distinctive Christian aspects of the school. This group meets regularly and reports back to the governing body. Its self-evaluation judgements are accurate. They have conducted some questionnaires with pupils, but not yet with parents, and they have not yet acted upon their findings. Parents value the school's links with the parish church of St. Peter's, which continues to be strong. The church supports the school well, through the involvement of the clergy and through financial support. The church's gift of Bibles to Year 6 pupils is now made at a special service at the beginning of the school year so that pupils get used to using their own copy of the Bible. They are also given Scripture Union books at the end of the year to help them move on to secondary school.