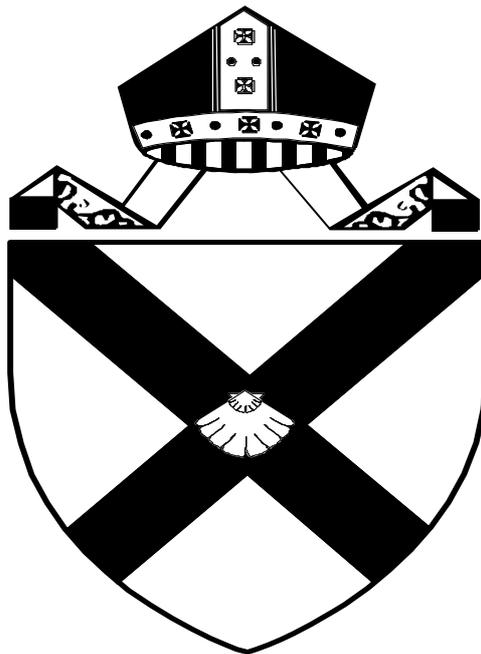


STATUTORY INSPECTION of ANGLICAN SCHOOLS

ROCHESTER DIOCESE

2010



**Ide Hill Church of England
Primary School
Voluntary Aided**

Ide Hill, Sevenoaks, Kent TN14 6JT

Unique Reference No: 118722

Kent LA

Head Teacher: Mrs. Irene Elsey

Chair of Governors: Mrs. Elizabeth Denbigh

Rector: Rev. David Attwood

Inspector: Ms Jan Thompson (NS 92)

Inspection: 16th September 2010

SUMMARY JUDGEMENT

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

Overall Grade 2: GOOD

Ide Hill Voluntary Aided Church of England Primary School is, on balance, a good Church school with good potential for improvement.

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Ide Hill Church of England Primary School is a small Voluntary Aided school of 83 pupils. It is situated in the small Kent village of Ide Hill, near to St.Mary's Church which is set on the village green. Its original Victorian buildings have recently been sympathetically extended to provide a very attractive learning environment. The school serves the local community and surrounding villages, and about thirty per cent are from active church families. The current school population has above average levels of special needs. The headteacher has been in post for 18 months, following an unsettled period of leadership in the school. Despite the upheaval of the building works, she has focused on raising standards so that the school was judged to be good by Ofsted, with pupils making good progress to attain standards that are average or above.

ESTABLISHED STRENGTHS

- The caring Christian ethos in a family atmosphere.
- Pupils' positive attitude to the church aspects of school life.
- The drive of the new headteacher to strengthen the church aspects of the school, well supported by the Rector and Chair of governors.

FOCUS FOR DEVELOPMENT

- Ensure that the distinctive nature of the school as a church school is clearly expressed in all documentation.
- Monitor all aspects of the school as a church school, involving all stakeholders, particularly pupils.
- Improve teachers' assessment of Religious Education and use of level descriptions in planning lessons.

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

Ide Hill Church of England Primary School is a small, friendly, welcoming village school where relationships are good at all levels and pupils are polite and well behaved. Everyone connected with the school recognises that it is underpinned by its Christian ethos and parents particularly like the strong moral grounding that their children receive. However, the school recognises that pupils need to make clearer links between these values and the teaching of Jesus. The school has recently begun to identify its Christian values as thankfulness, service, compassion, forgiveness and friendship. So far, it has focused on gratitude to God for the beauty of creation. Pupils' 'Thank you' prayers, attached to the school gate at the beginning of this school year, express this and make a powerful statement to parents about the school as a church school. The school environment is now better used for pupils' spiritual development than at the last inspection, including the prayer stations in each classroom and a particularly striking use of a wall in the hall as a focal point for worship. Collective Worship and Religious Education (RE) contribute well to pupils' spiritual development.

What is the impact of collective worship on the school community?

Grade 2: Good

Pupils interviewed were all very enthusiastic about worship. They like the various aspects of worship, particularly where they can participate, for example, through writing prayers that are chosen from the prayer-box and re-enacting Bible stories told by the Rector. Pupils sing tunefully and like it when the choir leads it or when they can sing songs in rounds. Pupils regard school worship as an extension of church and those from families that do other things on Sundays value this opportunity the school gives them to worship God. They like the times for reflection, using the candle, and want more of this. However, pupils do not regard their class-led 'assemblies' as worship. Pupils have a better experience and understanding of Anglican language and practices than at the last inspection. This has been brought about by a greater use of the church building for special services, such as the celebration of St.Mary's Day at the beginning of the school year. The school also took advice from the last inspection and involved Year 6 pupils in the Eucharist at the Church Schools Festival, attended by the Chair of governors and the Rector. Worship is an important part of school life, well planned by the headteacher and Rector, but not yet adequately monitored or documented.

How effective is Religious Education? Grade 3: Satisfactory

Pupils make steady progress in RE and achieve standards in line with national expectations. However, teachers do not use the level descriptions sufficiently well in their planning for mixed age classes, in order to set work of an appropriate level for all. The school follows the Diocesan RE syllabus, which pupils find interesting and informative, and teachers make 'fun'. Consequently they enjoy the subject and gain a good knowledge and understanding of Christianity and of the other religions they study. This is an improvement on the last inspection and contributes well to community cohesion, as pupils come to understand other people's religions. For example, some good evaluative work in Year 5/6 on Sikhism led to pupils showing respect for some of the Sikh moral values. The balance the syllabus promotes between learning about religions and learning from them ensures that RE makes a good contribution to pupils' moral and spiritual development. The headteacher gives good support to RE, as evidenced in a 'Faith Week' focus in the curriculum across the school. Sufficient time is now given to RE in the weekly timetable, as recommended at the last inspection. However, the subject is not yet formally assessed nor adequately monitored. Resources have been audited but not yet developed.

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

The school has undergone much upheaval and change since the last inspection, and the new headteacher has rightly focused on ensuring a good Ofsted outcome. She is also committed to the school as a church school and is well supported in this by the Rector and Chair of governors in particular. The recommendations from the last inspection are being addressed and there is vision and purpose in planning for all aspects of life as a church school. The governing body has a small group that meets six times a year to work through the self-evaluation process and this feeds into action plans. Also, teachers engaged very effectively together in working through the self-evaluation form before the inspection. However, formal monitoring is not yet good enough, in RE for example and in gathering pupils' views on Collective Worship, which is limiting the school's improvement in these areas. The school is somewhat reticent in advertising its distinctiveness as a church school, although parents spoke favourably of the religious teaching their children receive. They appreciate the strong links between school, church and the village community, and many parents get to know the Rector through their children's connection with the school.