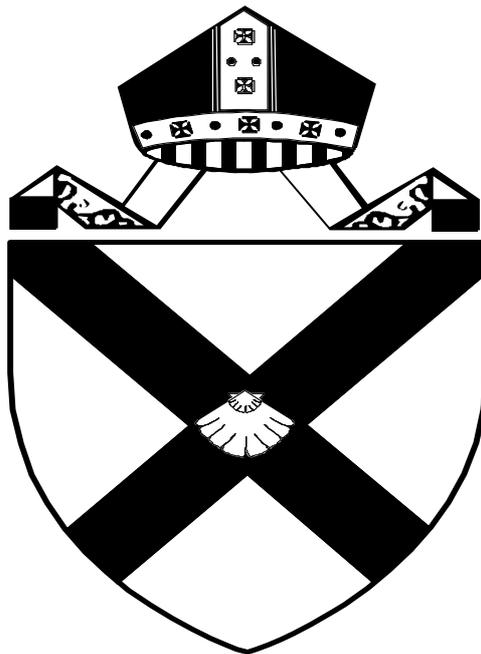


STATUTORY INSPECTION of ANGLICAN SCHOOLS

ROCHESTER DIOCESE

2011



**Laddingford St. Mary's
Church of England Primary School
Voluntary Controlled**

Darman Lane, Laddingford, Maidstone, ME18 6BL
Kent LA

Unique Reference No: 118637

Head Teacher: Mrs. Linda Oliver

Chair of Governors: Mrs. Sarah Murdoch

Incumbent: Rev. Paul Filmer

Inspector: Ms Jan Thompson (NS 92)

Inspection: 23 March 2011

SUMMARY JUDGEMENT

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

Laddingford St. Mary's Voluntary Controlled Church of England Primary School is a good Church school in its impact on pupils.

Grade 2: GOOD

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Laddingford St. Mary's is a Voluntary Controlled Church of England primary school, situated in the small Kent village of Laddingford, near Maidstone. It has 78 pupils, mostly White British and some from Traveller backgrounds. About 4% of families are committed church goers; and there are a small number of Muslim pupils in the school. The original Victorian building has been modernised and extended and there is a small mission church attached to it, which is used by the school as its hall. The new headteacher has only been in post since January, having followed a period with an advisory headteacher and then a soft federation. Ofsted judged the school to be satisfactory with some good features, including pupils' care, guidance and support. Ofsted commented on the effectiveness of 'the school's inclusive Christian ethos.'

ESTABLISHED STRENGTHS

- The use of the school environment to promote pupils' spiritual development.
- The impact of Collective Worship.
- The Vicar's support for the school.

FOCUS FOR DEVELOPMENT

- The governing body should establish new systems for monitoring and self-evaluating the school as a Church school.
- The governing body should involve all stakeholders in identifying the distinctive Christian values of the school and promoting these in school documentation (as recommended in the last report).
- Pupils should help to evaluate Collective Worship (as recommended in the last report).

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

This is a small, friendly school where everyone knows each other and all are treated as individuals. The school's inclusive Christian ethos results in pupils accepting each other, as they learn to respect differences. Relationships throughout the school are good at all levels. Spiritual and moral development are good, supported well by Collective Worship and Religious Education (RE). For example, in a Year 1/2 class on St. George, pupils discussed their own experiences of bravery and Year 5/6 pupils explored the reasons why people pray. Adults and pupils talk openly and honestly about matters of faith. In the Year 3/4 classroom, pupils had written prayers for those affected by the Japanese earthquake and tsunami, and the school follows up these concerns with practical support for charities. Although space is limited, the school environment is well used for displays that promote pupils' spiritual development. In the school office, a board displayed some of the work done by the whole school on the theme of New Life at Easter, which was part of the National RE Celebration month. Every classroom has a Christian area, with a prayer box used by pupils.

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

Grade 2: Good

Most pupils like Collective Worship, and commented particularly on the Vicar's weekly act of worship because it engages them so well. They like the variety of fun activities as well as listening quietly to the music at the beginning and end of worship. They also sing well, although they are a small school. Pupils have a good understanding of the divine nature of worship. One pupil described it as "A time to think about God and what He's done for us". Pupils also say that it helps them to be better Christians and they learn a lot about Christianity through Collective Worship. Adults, too, appreciate time for Collective Worship and spoke of the Vicar's thought-provoking messages. Pupils benefit from the experience of daily worship in a traditional church building, with the Christian symbols of a cross and candle. They are familiar with Anglican liturgical greetings and responses and have a growing knowledge and understanding of the Church's year. The school's regular attendance at the annual Church School's Festival in Rochester Cathedral gives pupils experience of the Eucharist. The good quality of worship, with careful planning and preparation, witnesses to its importance in the school, and prayers are also said at lunchtime and at the end of the day. However, the school has done very little monitoring of pupils' views and what they are getting out of worship, despite this being a recommendation at the last inspection.

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

Stakeholders take for granted the Christian ethos of the school, without stopping to consider why its values of inclusion and respect are Christian, despite this being recommended at the last inspection. Similarly, the school's Christian Mission Statement has not been updated for some time, although the school is now a stronger Church school. The Governing Body is supportive of the distinctive Christian character of the school and ensured that the new headteacher was capable of leading a Church school. The chair of governors knows that parents appreciate the links with the Church in this village community and the Christian education that their children receive. However, the governing body has not taken strategic management of the school's self-evaluation as a church school and has allowed this to become neglected, particularly during the recent disruption in school leadership. There is very good support from the local church. The Vicar, who is new since the last inspection, is very committed to all three of his Church schools and leads Collective Worship in each school every week. He also runs a Confirmation class in school for some Year 6 pupils, which encourages pupils to continue their link with the church after leaving primary school.