



## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

### **Lady Boswell's Church of England Primary School**

Plymouth Drive  
Sevenoaks  
Kent  
TN13 3RW

#### **Diocese: Rochester**

Local authority: Kent  
Date of inspection: 27 June 2013  
Dates of last inspection: 24-25 June 2008  
School's unique reference number: 118721  
Headteacher: Sharon Saunders  
Chair of Governors: Clare Whittaker  
Inspector's name and number: Jan Thompson 92

#### **School context**

Lady Boswell's Church of England Primary School in Sevenoaks is Voluntary Aided, with a large majority of pupils from church families. Founded by Lady Margaret Boswell in 1675, the school still benefits from her Church of England Charity. Its 216 pupils are mostly White British and from high socio-economic backgrounds. There are close ties with the large and successful St Nicholas' Church in the town. The honorary associate rector represents the incumbent at the school and there have been other changes in leadership and management since the last inspection, five years ago. The headteacher has been in post for three years. The school has high standards and is set to expand to two-form entry from September 2013.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Lady Boswell's Church of England Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding**

The school has gone from strength to strength under the leadership of the current headteacher and maintains its status as an outstanding Church school.

#### **Established strengths**

- The capable and committed Christian leadership of the headteacher, well supported by the governing body and staff.
- High standards of attainment in Religious Education (RE).
- Pupils' outstanding spiritual development.
- Strong links with the parish church.

#### **Focus for development**

- Implement formal monitoring of collective worship, with pupil involvement.
- Promote the school's identified core Christian values in publications.

### **The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is outstanding at meeting the needs of all learners**

As its motto states, 'Christ is at the centre' of this school. Clearly identified Christian values, all stemming from love, underpin everything the school does. The Christian ethos of the school supports all pupils in achieving their God-given potential, and standards are very high across the school in all areas of learning. Its Mission Statement draws attention to the value of every member of this community as a unique child of God. The excellent behaviour of pupils, motivated by respect for others, contributes to a positive learning environment where they work well together and listen attentively to their teachers. Also, happy relationships between staff and pupils help pupils to feel safe and to take risks in their learning. Care for individuals means that vulnerable groups make particularly good progress. The school also shows care for the needy throughout the world by raising money for charities. Pupils know that they are following Jesus' example by helping others.

The school is very successful at promoting Christian spiritual development. All classrooms have attractive interactive prayer stations that are well used by pupils. There is an annual Prayer Day, focusing on themes such as how and where we pray. Pupils engage thoroughly with this, assisted by parents and church members. This year, they brought in photographs of themselves in the places where they like to pray and wrote about them. At the last Year 6 residential in France, pupils produced a French and English prayer-book of graces to be said before their meals and prayers for the end of each day. Pupils were encouraged to enter the national Spirited Arts competition. One pupil wrote about his collage of crosses, entitled 'Everywhere', 'My picture is all about God being omnipresent.' Another wrote, 'Doing this work has made me think about the meaning of my faith and how to pray.' Regular collective worship and RE lessons also make a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Attractive RE displays on other religions as well as Christianity encourage respect for diversity.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding**

Each day begins with collective worship, which has a strong impact on the beliefs and values of the school. It is very popular with pupils, who recognise its importance in terms of praising and thanking God. They also like learning more about God and 'the amazing things Jesus did'. They like having a large white candle lit for worship and explained that it helps them to reflect on God. One pupil said, 'It makes me feel close to God.' Another said, 'It makes me feel warm inside because I know that God is with me.' Reception pupils benefit from having their own special acts of worship on three days a week. They explained, 'We listen to God, we pray and we sing.' They each have their own special cushion to sit on, made by their Year 6 'Buddy', with their own name and Christian symbols on it.

The headteacher co-ordinates worship well, in liaison with the incumbent, and acts of worship are of a high quality. The school uses the diocesan scheme for collective worship, which is Bible based, follows the Church year and uses Anglican liturgy. This is in response to the recommendation at the last inspection to strengthen Anglican aspects of worship. It adapts this scheme where appropriate, for instance, in focusing on the school's core Christian values at the beginning of each year and linking these with class Golden Rules. During the inspection, a well chosen New Testament story illustrated the theme of the worship: 'Be joyful always, pray at all times, be thankful in all circumstances' (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18). Pupils are involved in evaluating and developing collective worship, as recommended at the last inspection, but little monitoring takes place. During the inspection, pupils were keen to take an active part in the worship. For example, a class sang a Taizé chant as the school gathered and left, accompanied by pupils on flutes. A group of Year 6 pupils, who form the school's new Worship Council, regularly takes a leading role in collective worship. All pupils are involved in planning, preparing and delivering a class-led act of worship once a year. These celebrate Christian festivals such as Epiphany, Ash Wednesday and Pentecost. Christmas, Easter and Harvest are celebrated in church. Pupils are familiar with the concept of God the

Trinity, for example, they often share the Trinitarian grace at the end of school worship.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding**

RE is treated as a core subject, with pupils reaching high standards and making very good progress across the school. The importance of the subject is seen in the care taken by teachers in preparing lessons and by pupils in completing work in their RE books. There are also informative RE displays in the classrooms. The new RE subject leader has been well supported with training and has developed an effective system of assessment that tracks individual pupil progress. She and the headteacher are robust in their monitoring of the subject and the RE lessons they have observed have all been at least good, with many outstanding. The school has implemented the Diocesan RE Syllabus (2009) since the last inspection, resulting in a greater focus on Christianity, particularly at Key Stage 1. It also gives a very good balance between learning about religions and relating religious ideas to pupils' own lives. This supports their spiritual and moral development very well. In a recent pupil questionnaire, Year 6 pupils recognised that RE increased their global and cultural awareness whilst also helping them to reflect on and deepen their own beliefs, which influence their actions. Lessons are challenging but can also be fun, particularly for the younger pupils. Teachers are particularly good at questioning older pupils and helping them to reflect at a deep level, developing analytical skills and critical thinking. Pupils gain a mature knowledge and understanding of Christianity as well as of other religions, and they use religious vocabulary very well.

### **The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is outstanding**

The effective headteacher is a committed and energetic Christian leader who has overseen numerous Christian initiatives since taking over. She is well supported by her staff, many of whom are Christians, and by the governing body, particularly the Foundation Governors. The incumbent supports the headteacher very well and he, or someone else from the church ministry team, leads worship in school every week. There is a particularly close inter-relationship between church and school because a very high proportion of parents are church-goers, many of them belonging to St Nicholas' Church. Their comments in the parent questionnaires demonstrate their support for the school. For example, one said, 'I think it is so wonderful that the relationship with God can be expressed so freely within their school environment.' Parents and governors are welcomed into school to support its worship and to pray for the school. Governors have successfully addressed the two recommendations in the last report. The school's self-evaluation is thorough and accurate and has included all stakeholders. Everyone connected with the school can articulate its Christian vision. This is well advertised on its website and in its prospectus, but the Christian values that were chosen at a Values and Vision Day do not feature there. The headteacher and governors are rightly concerned to maintain and develop the school's distinctive Christian character when it expands to two-form entry. They have therefore appointed the RE subject leader to be the new Head of Spiritual and Pastoral Care, on the senior leadership team.

SIAMS report June 2013 Lady Boswell's CE Primary School, Sevenoaks, Kent TN13 TRW