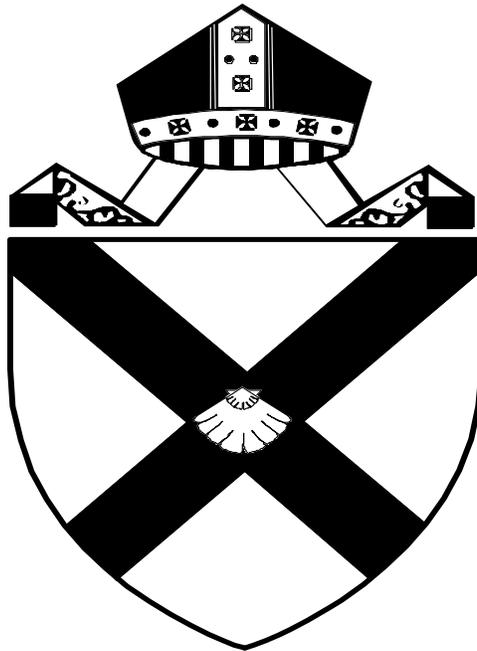


STATUTORY INSPECTION of ANGLICAN SCHOOLS

ROCHESTER DIOCESE

2010



**Old Bexley Church of England
Primary School
Voluntary Controlled**

Hurst Road, Bexley, Kent DA5 3JR

Unique Reference No: 101452

Bexley Local Authority

Head Teacher: Mr. Peter Wilson

Chair of Governors: Mr. Paul Allen

Incumbents: Rev. Scott Lamb & Rev. Paul Spreadbridge

Inspector: Ms. Jan Thompson (NS 92)

Inspection: 18 June 2010

SUMMARY JUDGEMENT

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

Old Bexley Voluntary Controlled Church of England Primary School is an outstanding Church school that has made very good progress since the last inspection.

Grade 1: Outstanding

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Old Bexley Church of England Primary School is a Voluntary Controlled school in the village of Old Bexley, which is a socially affluent area. It is a large school of 678 pupils, most of whom are White British. It is a successful school that is oversubscribed. About a quarter of pupils are from worshipping church families, many of them attending the two local parish churches of St Mary's and St John's. The school was judged to be good by Ofsted, with many outstanding features.

ESTABLISHED STRENGTHS

- The committed and effective Christian leadership of the headteacher, well supported by the senior leadership team, the Religious Education (RE) subject leader and the governing body.
- The spiritual and moral development of the pupils, well supported by RE, Collective Worship, use of the school environment and the whole Christian life of the school.

FOCUS FOR DEVELOPMENT

- Establish a formal system for monitoring and evaluating acts of Collective Worship.
- Use level descriptions in planning RE lessons.

How well does the school, through its distinctive Christian character, meet the needs of all learners? Grade 1: Outstanding

This is a friendly school where every individual is known and cared for, despite the large number of pupils and teachers. The school's aims include the Christian values of caring, faith, forgiveness, hope and trust. Pupils feel confident to talk openly about faith; a new pupil commented that "People do not make fun of religion." Pupils learn right behaviour. For example, detentions encourage them to recognise where they have gone wrong and to consider how they can put things right and improve in future. The spiritual and moral development of pupils is well supported by RE lessons because there is a good balance between learning about religions and relating it to their own lives. Collective Worship also plays an important role in this. Pupils value the prayers at lunchtime and at the end of the day, which have been introduced as a result of the last inspection. The school environment also plays a much better role now in pupils' spiritual development. Prayer areas have been established for each year group and these are well used by pupils. Year 1 pupils spoke of holding the small wooden crosses and said "We can talk to God" ... "Hear God" ... and "Say we love God." A prayer tent in the Year 1 outdoor area provides them with a quiet place that they enjoy using. The school helps pupils to become mature and responsible citizens by encouraging respect for all, including sensitivity towards people with special needs. Pupils support charities, including Christian Aid and a link school in Malawi. They plan, organise and run fundraising activities during a special week each year. Relationships in school and behaviour are excellent.

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

Grade 1: Outstanding

Two things have significantly improved Collective Worship as a result of the last inspection report: all teachers now benefit from daily attendance and pupils have more opportunities to worship throughout the day. Pupil and staff questionnaires show that both adults and children find participating in worship a positive experience of personal value. Pupils know that they offer worship to God, that they learn more about Him and that it helps them to live their lives well. The setting for worship has been enhanced by improving the Christian wall displays in the Key Stage 1 and 2 halls; and members of St John's Church have made candlesticks and table cloths for the different seasons of the church's year. The quality of the acts of worship has been improved by installing data projectors, which are well used to display responses, words of the hymns, Bible passages, prayers and presentations. For instance, during the inspection, the deputy headteacher showed photographs she had taken when visiting an orphanage in India. Pupils behave and respond very well. They particularly enjoy singing, which continues to be of a high standard, accompanied on the piano. They like the different elements in each act of worship and also the variety provided by different teachers and by visitors such as those from CRIBS (Christian Resources In Bexley Schools). Older pupils take a more active part in worship than at the last inspection, and this has helped to retain their interest. A termly Eucharist has also been introduced recently for Year 5/6 pupils and they have responded exceptionally well to this. This is one of many aspects of worship that helps pupils benefit from and understand Anglican traditions. Other examples include a day to celebrate Pentecost and the practice of ashing at the service in school on Ash Wednesday. All this shows how important Christian worship is in the life of the school. However, there is no system of evaluating individual acts of worship.

How effective are the leadership and management of the school as a church school? Grade 1: Outstanding

The school continues to benefit from the committed Christian leadership of the head teacher, who is training as a Professional Partner to support new leaders in other church schools. As a Reader in his church, he co-ordinates Collective Worship and works closely with the two local vicars to develop the school's distinctive Anglican character. He is well supported in this by the senior leadership team, the RE subject leader and the governing body, particularly the Foundation Governors. The school continues to monitor and evaluate the Christian aspects of the school and to include these in its school improvement plan, which has brought about many effective developments. The new Bexley Agreed Syllabus for RE has been successfully introduced. All teachers were given a performance management target for RE, which has raised standards since the last inspection. However, although teachers use the national levels for assessment, they are still not making good enough use of the level descriptions when planning their lessons. All stakeholders are involved in the on-going self-evaluation process and questionnaires indicate a growing awareness of the school's Christian values. One parent wrote that the school "provides an excellent example of Christian love". The school is known in the local community as a church school and a third of new parents indicate church membership in their applications. There is a strong relationship of mutual support between the school and the two local parishes. The two vicars act as chaplains in the school, each taking a Key Stage worship on Thursdays. Pupils from the school swell the numbers at the monthly All Age worship services and St John's has successfully recruited pupils into its choir. Relationships are also good with the Diocese, with the school orchestra regularly attending the Church Schools Festival in the Cathedral along with Year 6 pupils.