

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### Seal Church of England (controlled) Primary School

Zambra Way  
Seal  
Sevenoaks  
Kent  
TN15 0DJ

#### Diocese: Rochester

Local authority: Kent  
Dates of inspection: 2 November 2011  
Date of last inspection: 30 March 2009  
School's unique reference number: 118605  
Headteacher: Miss Tracey Smith  
Inspector's name and number: Patricia Martin NS105

#### School context

Seal Voluntary Controlled Primary School is a smaller than average school situated on the outskirts of Sevenoaks. The school predominantly serves the villages of Seal and Kemsing and includes a significant number of families living in social housing. Most pupils are White British with a small range of ethnic minorities. The percentage of children with Special Educational Needs is high and the number of children with Statements of Educational Need is above average. Approximately ten percent of pupils are from regular worshipping Church families. The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school during their primary education is high. Ofsted very recently judged the school to be Good.

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

Seal Church of England Primary School is a good Church school with some outstanding features. Through its very close links with the church, it effectively promotes Gospel values.

#### GRADE 2: GOOD

#### Established strengths

- The inclusive care of all members of the school community
- Robust self-evaluation as a Church school
- Very strong links with the local Church

#### Focus for development

- Give pupils greater ownership of collective worship by involving them in the planning and leading of worship and develop a way of recording pupil's responses to worship
- Raise levels of pupil engagement in Religious Education lessons through creative activities
- Ensure consistency of marking across the school in Religious Education

#### How well does the school through its distinctive Christian character, meet the needs of all learners?

#### GRADE 2:GOOD

The school provides a safe and secure environment in which pupils flourish and become confident individuals. Good relationships are evident between all members of the school community. This is because Christian values are modelled by the staff. The use of the school environment to promote spiritual development was an issue for development in the last report and has resulted in the creation of a Quiet Garden. One child has spontaneously named one of the features of the garden a 'praying seat' showing her understanding of the importance of prayer in the life of the school. Pupils enjoy this space which gives them the opportunity to be quiet and think. Further ideas for thought and reflection are provided in stimulating displays in classrooms. The good effect of these areas is illustrated by a question posed by a child. "When you die does your heart stay in your body and rot or does it go up to heaven to God with your soul?" This is one of many examples of outstanding spiritual development.

Religious Education (RE) plays an important part in the life of the school and is well managed by the subject leader. Overall the standards achieved in RE are good but there is some inconsistency of teaching and learning across the year groups which needs to be better supported by good quality marking linked to the Statements of Attainment. The school council, through which pupils represent the views of themselves and others, encourages pupils to listen to others, find solutions to problems and gives them an understanding of what it means to be a responsible citizen. They learn what it means to be a member of a community and the consequent responsibility for others. Pupils show a mature understanding of why they cannot have everything for which they ask.

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

#### **GRADE 2: GOOD**

Pupils' attitudes towards collective worship are positive because they experience a variety of styles of worship which provide a breadth of worship experiences. These are based on very good planning on a three year cycle which is supported by a good budget allocation which enables relevant resources to be purchased and used. Pupils share thoughts and ask questions freely because they are in an environment where faith is valued and respected. One child said, when reflecting on an act of worship about *Considering the Lilies* "It is like when you have a bad dream about something you are frightened about and you need to get it out of your head [by talking about it with those who care]." Another child commented that collective worship "teaches us not to be mean and to be kind," Worship generally follows the Anglican pattern of prayer, liturgy, praise and Bible teaching thereby developing the pupils' awareness of Anglican practise that underpins its traditions. Another child explained "At the start of assemblies we light the candle to remind us that Jesus is the light of the world." The incumbent gives outstanding support to the school in a gentle, unobtrusive way which supports the school and enables it to grow spiritually. The school has already identified the need to give children greater ownership of worship and develop ways of recording their responses to enable further development of their good practise.

### **How effective are the leadership and management of the school as a church school?**

#### **GRADE 2: GOOD**

The school is very well led by the headteacher, senior staff and governors. The issues raised in the last inspection report have been taken seriously and addressed. Governors and senior management team share a clear vision for the school with a particular focus on inclusion which is evident through school policies and resulting practise. They provide an environment which is stimulating both inside and out. Christian values form the basis of the school's ethos. Banners displayed in the hall reflect the two commandments of Jesus – loving God and loving your neighbour as yourself. The school's love of God can be seen in their commitment to Christian worship and the very close relationship with the incumbent and local church. Their love of neighbour is demonstrated through for example, their willingness to include and develop pupils who have been removed from other schools. Staff and governors share this vision and promote it through such things as events and newsletters, the recently developed prayer letter and their accessibility to parents. They have an outstanding group of governors who monitor and develop the school's ethos, engage robustly with school self-evaluation and, most importantly, live out the Christian vision. Through the school's work with the diocese and other local church schools they prepare the way for future church leadership. The leadership and management have developed strong partnerships with all stakeholders.

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