

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Shorne Voluntary Controlled CE Primary School

Cob Drive, SHORNE, Kent DA12 3DU

Diocese: Rochester

Local authority: Kent

Date of inspection: 30 January 2013

Date of last inspection: 14 January 2010

School's unique reference number: 118594

Headteacher: Caroline Conroy

Chair of Governors: Bill Johnson

Incumbent: Rev. Glyn Ackerley

Inspector's name and number: Jan Thompson No 92

School context

Shorne Church of England Primary School is a Voluntary Controlled school situated in a small Kent village close to Gravesend. Its 207 pupils are drawn mainly from surrounding areas. Almost all are from White British families, with an average level of special needs or disabilities. About ten percent of pupils are from regular worshipping church families. A recent Ofsted inspection found that the school had improved from satisfactory to good in all areas.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Shorne CE Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding.

Much positive development has taken place in the three years since the last inspection, with the result that Shorne Church of England Primary School is now an outstanding Church school with the capacity to improve further.

Established strengths

- The leadership and management, particularly that of the headteacher and Foundation governors.
- The strong spiritual development of staff and pupils.
- The effective links between the school, the parish church and the local community.

Focus for development

- Pupils should be involved in regular, annual feedback on the church aspects of the school.

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

The school's core Christian values are central to its Mission Statement and underpin its whole ethos. They are 'Respect through love; perseverance through faith and achievement through learning'. These are taught through collective worship, linked with the school's Golden Rules through Psalm 86 verse 11: 'Teach us your way, O Lord', and form the basis of a termly award system. Parents recognise the school's values as distinctively Christian and comment on the good behaviour and respect that is shown to everyone. One parent said, 'My child always craved individual attention. Since recently moving him to Shorne, his favourite word is now 'share'.' Staff are good role models, and pupils are loving and caring. Pupils' spiritual development is nurtured in many ways. Religious Education (RE) always links the religious content of the lessons to pupils' own lives. For example, some Year 6 lessons on Sikhism encouraged pupils to think about their own commitments, beliefs and gifts. Pupils are actively involved in supporting charities, both those at home and abroad. For example, they raise money for a school in Zambia, which the parish church also supports. The environment of the school is much better used for spiritual development than at the time of the last inspection. Attractive, interactive prayer stations in two common areas of the school are well used by pupils. The school prayer, written by a Year 6 pupil, is displayed in all classrooms

and is frequently used in worship. A large wooden cross, made by an ex-pupil of the school and blessed by the Bishop of Tonbridge, adorns the entrance to the school. Another cross inside the school was made by three pupils through their own initiative and this has started a competition to make more crosses for Easter. The Eco Committee looks after an outside quiet garden. RE displays in all classrooms show the high quality of pupils' work and the importance given to this subject.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding.

Pupils are very positive about all aspects of collective worship. For example, they say that they like singing religious songs because it helps them to express their feelings and to remember God and Jesus. They speak of worship as a time to connect with God. For example, one pupil said, 'Worship helps you to believe more in God and brings you closer to him.' They appreciate worship as a peaceful time in the busy school day. There have been many improvements to collective worship since the last inspection, demonstrating the importance placed upon this activity in the daily life of the school. All teachers now attend worship every day with their classes and take turns on a rota to lead worship. The Anglican nature of collective worship has been strengthened, as recommended, and now follows the scheme provided by the Diocese. This enables an in-depth exploration of Christian themes, within the Anglican structure of worship and using Anglican prayers and responses. The vicar celebrated a Eucharist in school for the first time last year, in preparation for Year 6 attending the Church Schools Festival in Rochester Cathedral. A small group of enthusiastic older pupils, called 'Leading Lights', is now taking a developing role in leading aspects of daily worship. They have encouraged pupils to learn and understand the Lord's Prayer and use it more frequently in worship. Pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of the Church calendar, as a result of keeping the major seasons and festivals of the Church's Year. The new policy statement on collective worship is a very thoughtful and well-written document, explaining clearly the Anglican nature of Christian worship at this school.

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

The governing body has addressed the many issues from the last inspection and this has led to significant improvements. The process has been very well managed by a working party made up of the Foundation Governors and senior teachers. The headteacher, in particular, has benefited from diocesan training and from her involvement with local Church schools. The working party has drawn up a clear action plan that is reported on regularly to the whole governing body, and demonstrates an ability to continue to improve. It has been slow, however, in gaining the views of all pupils in formal monitoring of such things as collective worship. The policy statements for Religious Education and collective worship have been rewritten, as recommended, and are now clear, up-to-date statements of the school's principles and practice in these areas. All staff and governors met together on a Development Day to review the school values and these were also discussed at a Parents' Council Meeting. The new Mission Statement and a competition to design a new school badge that reflects the Church foundation of the school have helped all stakeholders to be aware of the Christian character of the school. The historic links between the school, the parish church and the local community are now more effective. A greater number of school families now attend special Sunday services at the church. The vicar also ran an evening course at church, attended by the deputy headteacher and three other members of staff, to deepen their knowledge and understanding of Christianity. The school makes good use of diocesan support. The chair of governors and headteacher attend briefings to keep them up to date with national and local developments. The new RE subject leader has been well supported and she regularly attends diocesan training.

