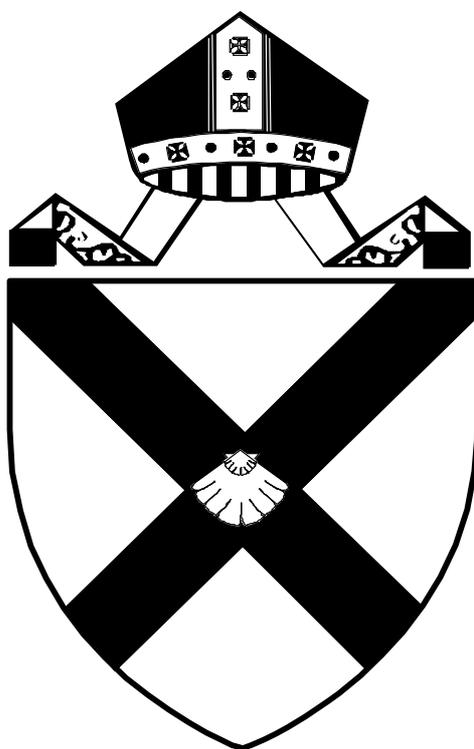


# STATUTORY INSPECTION of ANGLICAN SCHOOLS

## ROCHESTER DIOCESE

2010



**St Barnabas Church of England  
Primary School  
Quarry Road, Tunbridge Wells, Kent TN1 2EY  
Voluntary Aided**

Kent LA

Unique Reference No: 118724

Head Teacher: Mrs Teresa Anderson

Chair of Governors and Incumbent:

Revd Edward Tomlinson

Inspector: John Viner (NS144)

Inspection: 23 June 2010

## **SUMMARY JUDGEMENT**

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

St Barnabas Primary School is an outstanding Church school.

**GRADE 1: OUTSTANDING**

#### **SCHOOL CONTEXT**

St Barnabas is a small primary school, housed in a substantial Victorian building located near the centre of Tunbridge Wells and serving the parish of St Barnabas. Its 120 pupils are drawn from the immediate area and less than ten percent attend church. A higher than average proportion receive free school meals. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties is well above average, as is the percentage of pupils with English as an additional language. Attainment on entry is low, although pupils achieve around the national average when they leave the school. Ofsted recently judged the school's overall effectiveness to be good.

#### **ESTABLISHED STRENGTHS**

- Christian values underpin the school, unite its leaders, and are evident in all aspects of its work.
- Collective worship is at the heart of the school and makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual development.
- Religious Education (RE) makes an excellent contribution to the school's Christian distinctiveness.
- The strong partnership between the school and the parish church supports the ambitious Christian vision of its leaders.

#### **FOCUS FOR DEVELOPMENT**

- Ensure that all practice in RE is as good as the best.
- Articulate better in documentation the schools fundamental Christian values.

### **How well does the school, through its distinctive Christian character, meet the needs of all learners? GRADE 1: OUTSTANDING**

St Barnabas is founded on and motivated by Christian values. Love, respect and compassion for others are visible in every aspect of its work. Pupils attribute to this the love and acceptance they feel. Outstanding relationships between and among adults and learners ensure that pupils feel valued and special. Pupils behave well, care for one another and quickly learn a sense of Christian responsibility and compassion for others. This is seen in their response to events such as famine and earthquake when they are motivated to raise money for aid. Parents recognise that 'there is something special about this school' that makes it 'like a big family.' Staff comment that, although few pupils attend church, 'all show interest in matters of faith'. The school environment is very well used to celebrate and confirm its Christian identity, through signs and symbols and displays that include prayers and Biblical references. Each classroom includes some focus for reflection and there is a quiet area with a prayer table and soft cushions where pupils are able to go to reflect and respond in personal prayer. This is frequently used. All stakeholders appreciate that the school's Christian distinctiveness motivates its staff and leads to the outstanding spiritual development of its pupils.

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

### **GRADE 1: OUTSTANDING**

Collective worship is at the heart of the school. It is carefully planned and regarded as a special part of each day. Pupils understand the nature and divine purpose of worship and, through it, embark on their own journeys of faith. They respond reverently yet enthusiastically to worship, sing tunefully and enjoy the many opportunities they have to take part. Worship is of a high quality and both pupils and adults are affirmed by it. All adults attend worship and say they are happy to do so. Pupils say that they enjoy it because it 'helps me understand more about God'. It gives them opportunities to respond emotionally to deep questions about such things as forgiveness and gratitude. Worship is regularly evaluated by staff and pupils, which leads to planned improvements. There is a thread of prayer that runs through the school, uniting pupils and staff. Pupils recognise the importance of collective and personal prayer and are keen to offer their own contributions. Prayer also takes place at the beginning and end of each day and at lunchtime. A school mass takes place in the school at least six times each year. These occasions can be moving and deeply spiritual, giving pupils an outstanding appreciation of Anglican traditions and practice.

## **How effective is Religious Education? GRADE 2: GOOD**

At the last inspection the school was asked to raise standards in RE through more effective planning and assessment and to put a greater emphasis on pupils' spiritual development. Since then it has taken robust steps to secure these improvements. Assessment takes place regularly against recognised criteria and, because it is taught from the Diocesan syllabus, RE now makes an excellent contribution to pupils' spiritual development. Pupils attain average standards and make good progress. The great strength of RE is its practical and active approach that creates memorable experiences for pupils so that their learning is secured and they build up good knowledge of Christianity and other faiths. It is this that makes the subject so popular among pupils who say 'everyone loves RE' and 'teachers make lessons such fun.' However, the way RE is recorded by pupils is not consistent from class to class and pupils do not always take as much presentational care as they do in other subjects. The very good links to local, national and global communities help pupils to learn respect for others' viewpoints and appreciate diversity. RE is very important to the school and to its distinctive Christian character.

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

### **GRADE 1: OUTSTANDING**

Since the last inspection the school leaders and governors have thoroughly reviewed the way they promote the school's Christian vision. It is now well understood by all stakeholders and has a positive impact on all members of the school community, even though it is not always clearly articulated in documentation. The headteacher and Chair of Governors provide ambitious, visionary, Christian leadership that is moving the school forward in all aspects of its work. Foundation governors and staff share this vision. Governors are now in focus teams which play a key role in monitoring and developing the school's Christian work. They challenge and support leaders' decisions and understand the school's future leadership needs. Governors have ensured that all the issues from the last inspection have been addressed. The headteacher provides outstanding Christian leadership, parents say that they value her and trust her judgements. The partnership with the church and the local community is outstanding and seamless. Although few pupils attend the church some have made important personal decisions to become active members through baptism. The school regularly takes part in the diocesan Church Schools Festival, held in the cathedral, where they always make a good contribution to the service. With the church, the school occupies a pivotal role in community projects and is held in high local regard. Pupils grow in their spiritual and cultural development as a result of the good partnership with the church and parents have an anchor of hope that they can rely on for help and support.