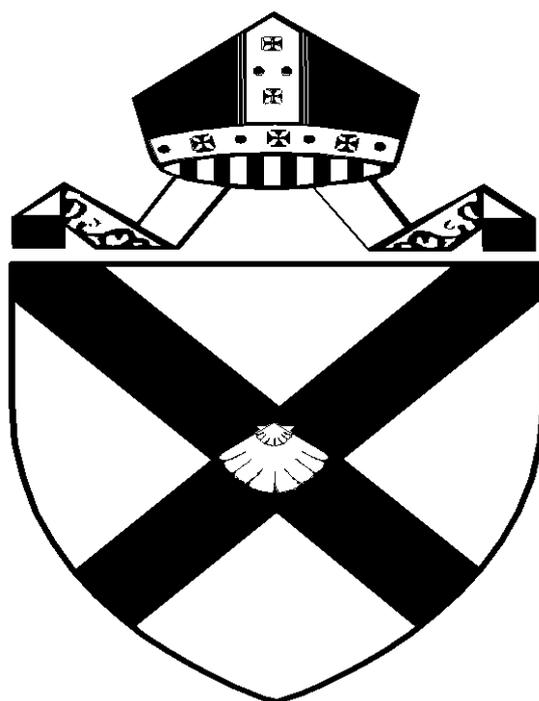


# STATUTORY INSPECTION of ANGLICAN SCHOOLS

## *ROCHESTER DIOCESE*

2011



**St. Botolph's Church of England Primary  
School**

Dover Road, Northfleet, Kent DA11 9PL

**Voluntary Aided**

Kent CC

Unique Reference No: 118856

Head Teacher: Sharon Smith

Chairman of Governors & Incumbent:

Fr. Lawrence Smith

Inspector: Jan Thompson N.S.92

Inspection: 10<sup>th</sup> October 2011

## Summary judgment

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

#### **Overall Grade 2: Good**

St. Botolph's Voluntary Aided Church of England Primary School in Northfleet, Kent continues to be a good Church school with some outstanding aspects.

#### **School Context**

St. Botolph's is a Voluntary Aided Church of England Primary School in Northfleet, Kent. Originally built in 1838 near to St. Botolph's Church, it is now on a new site, in modern buildings, surrounded by playing-fields. There are 211 pupils who come from a variety of backgrounds in the immediate locality. The majority are from White British families, with nearly a quarter from other ethnic backgrounds, more than half of whom are from religious Sikh families who want a faith school education for their children. About 25% of pupils are from active Church families. The headteacher and rector/ chair of governors are new since the last inspection of March 2007, and have each been in post for about two years. Ofsted judged the school to be satisfactory.

#### **Established strengths**

- The all-pervading Christian ethos of the school
- The sound Christian education that pupils receive
- The very strong relationship with the parish church
- The Christian leadership of the headteacher and rector

#### **Focus for development**

- The prayer areas in each classroom should be used more interactively by pupils.
- There should be more consistent use made of the national level descriptions in Religious Education (RE), particularly to set work appropriate to pupils' different abilities. (This was an issue at the last inspection.)
- The governing body should consider the impact on curriculum RE of the new confirmation course and should include it in the RE policy statement.

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

This is a strong Church school, where spiritual and moral development is fundamental to all aspects of school life. A new motto sums this up very well as 'Learning, Loving and Living like Jesus.' Parents speak of the 'good provision – educationally and spiritually' and recognise the clear Christian direction that is given. This helps pupils to understand right and wrong, based on Christian teaching. Five core Christian values have been identified as love, peace, respect, honesty and service. At the time of the inspection, 'service' was being explored in Collective Worship during Term 1 and each class had chosen a different aspect of service and set up a prayer area on this in their classrooms. In this way, pupils are encouraged to help in school and in the local community, such as at church and in the gurdwara. Pupils are also aware of global issues and they and their parents raise money to support an orphanage in the Philippines run by the Christian Compassion Ministry. Relationships and behaviour in school are very good at all levels, with care shown for individual needs. There is racial harmony in the school and a well-established ethos of respect for other religions. The school environment clearly promotes its Church foundation. The hall has an impressive display of RE artwork on crosses from around the world, which enhances this space for worship. The classroom prayer areas are attractive but are not interactive and pupils therefore make little use of them, although they do use the prayer box in the hall.

## **What is the impact of Collective Worship on the school community?**

### **Grade 1: Outstanding**

The weekly Eucharist continues to be at the heart of school worship and establishes its strong Anglican nature, as does the use of a candle and responses in daily worship and the celebration of major Christian festivals. St Botolph's patronal festival is celebrated in school each summer and pupils know the story of his life. Pupils of all ages respond very well to the Eucharist and behave reverently. They participate well, with classes taking turns to bring up the offertory and write their own prayers. They particularly enjoy school worship that takes place in St Botolph's Church where even younger pupils spoke of feeling calm and peaceful. Collective Worship on other days takes a variety of forms and is appropriately planned on Christian themes with mostly biblical material. Pupils enjoy singing religious songs, particularly when accompanied by the piano. Pupils know that worship is offered to God and say that it helps them to learn about the Bible and to be more reflective about their own behaviour. All staff now attend daily Collective Worship and all classes end the day with prayer, both of which were issues at the last inspection.

## **How effective is Religious Education? Grade 3: Satisfactory**

There are many good aspects of RE, but attainment is average and progress is satisfactory when measured against national standards. The school recognises the need to raise academic standards in RE, particularly for the more able pupils. Where the Diocesan RE Syllabus (2009) is being well used, pupils are given clear and appropriate learning intentions for each lesson, suited to their different needs. However, not all teachers are making best use of the level descriptions, which was an issue at the last inspection. Marking across the school does not help pupils to move onto higher levels. One of the strengths of RE is the balance between learning about religious content and relating this to pupils' own lives. Consequently, RE makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development. For example, a creative Year 6 lesson gave pupils opportunity to explore concepts like loss, love and hope in relation to the biblical story of Ruth. Pupils gain a good knowledge and understanding of Christianity at this school and also value studying other religions and understanding other people's points of view. Last year, a confirmation course was taught by the rector to pupils in Years 5 and 6 for nearly a third of their RE curriculum time. Pupils enjoyed learning from the Bible and discussing their own beliefs, and ten were confirmed. However, this took the place of the RE syllabus, did not result in much recorded work and was not assessed against national standards by their class teachers. These changes to the syllabus were not made clear to parents in the RE policy statement.

## **How effective are the leadership and management of the school as a Church school? Grade 2: Good**

The governing body went out of its way to appoint a church-going Christian as the new headteacher, and both she and the new rector are very energetic leaders of this Church school. They have strengthened the links between St. Botolph's church and the school and taken up numerous diocesan initiatives. A portfolio, documenting the Christian life of the school, was awarded the Bishop's Commendation in 2010 and Bishop James visited recently to celebrate the Eucharist and dedicate an external Christian mural. The school performed a Passion Play as part of the National RE Celebrations last March with other local church schools and also contributed to the display of Christian symbols in Rochester Cathedral for the annual Church Schools Festival. RE days on Easter and Pentecost have helped pupils' understanding. All the issues from the last inspection have been addressed and new Foundation Governors are more actively involved. The monitoring and evaluation of the school as a Church school is thorough, with ideas for further improvements, but the introduction of confirmation teaching to RE was not fully considered.

