

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

St George's Voluntary Controlled Church of England Primary School

Old London Road, WROTHAM, Kent TN15 7DL

Diocese: Rochester

Local authority: Kent

School's Unique reference number: 118635

Date of inspection: 6 December 2012

Dates of last inspection: 18-19 April 2008

Headteacher: David Jones

Chair of Governors: Marleen Harvey-Kelly

Incumbent: Rev Canon Brenda Hurd

SIAS Inspector: John Viner (NS144)

School context

St. George's CE (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School is a smaller than average primary school, located in the village of Wrotham, near Sevenoaks and within the parish of St George's Wrotham. It is housed in spacious modern buildings and the bulk of its 181 pupils are drawn from the immediate area. The majority of pupils are of white British heritage with a few from other backgrounds who speak English as an additional language. There is a higher than average proportion of pupils with special educational needs and disabilities. Around a quarter of pupils attend St George's or another local church. Pupils make good progress from their starting points and, by the time they leave the school, achieve average standards.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St George's CE Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding

St George's is a school that is very clear in its Christian and Anglican character. This has a significantly positive impact on the lives of its pupils and their families. Pupils learn the value and purpose of prayer and have many excellent opportunities to explore their own faith and the faith of others. The partnership with the parish church is a key strength that enables the school to be a beacon of Christian love in the community which it serves.

Established strengths

- Christian values underpin the school, are evident in its work and inspire the excellent relationships between and among adults and learners.
- Collective worship is at the heart of the school, encouraging and motivating all who attend.
- Religious Education (RE) is well taught and promotes the school's Christian and Anglican identity.
- The strong and effective partnership with the parish church enriches the work of the school and the lives of its families.

Focus for development

- Governors and leaders should formally plan for the school's future leadership and governance needs as a Church school.

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

The school's motto that it 'brings faith and education together' defines its Christian distinctiveness. The Christian values which it promotes include honesty, courage, compassion and forgiveness, cleverly linked in a mission statement centred on the life of St George. They are seen in the excellent relationships between and among adults and learners. Pupils feel safe and secure and say that one of the best things about school is coming together each day to make new friends. Parents recognise the school's Christian identity and, regardless of their own faith, say that it contributes to the relaxed, family atmosphere. Religious Education (RE) successfully promotes the school's Christian distinctiveness. It has the status of a core subject, is well taught and pupils agree that teachers make it fun. Through RE, pupils acquire a good foundation of Christian knowledge and say that they love to learn about other faiths. This enriches their understanding of a diverse world. Pupils put Christian compassion into action; for example, having learned about homelessness, they raised money for an appropriate charity. The school ensures that its pupils become responsible citizens with a firm foundation for their lives. Excellent use is made of the school environment to proclaim its Christian character. The bright RE displays in each classroom and the signs and symbols around the building are a focus for pupils' personal reflection and prayer and are very effective reminders that this is a Christian and Anglican school.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

The school's policy states that collective worship 'draws the whole school together for a common purpose'. Pupils say that they like worship because it helps them to think about God. Pupils know that all staff attend and this reminds them that this is a special part of every day. All say that they often find comfort or inspiration in worship. Their attitudes are exemplary; they behave reverently yet participate enthusiastically. Pupils like leading important aspects of worship, such as readings and prayers. They pray at lunchtime and at the end of each day. Worship is effectively planned around a series of Christian themes and is led by a range of stakeholders, including the rector. This keeps it fresh and interesting. Regular church services celebrate festivals such as Christmas, Easter and Pentecost as well special occasions like the annual leavers' service. The Eucharist takes place three times a year. These events are well attended by parents who also enjoy school worship when it is led by their child's class. Worship enriches pupils' experience of Anglican belief and practice, through simple responses, such as when the worship candle is lit; through the regular use of the Lord's Prayer and through familiarity with the church. The school participates in the Diocesan Church Schools Festival. Worship is carefully and thoroughly evaluated by pupils and through the headteacher's detailed monitoring. All this helps to ensure that it is consistently outstanding.

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

The headteacher, key staff, incumbent and Foundation Governors share an ambitious Christian vision for the school. This is understood by all stakeholders and leads to purposeful strategic planning with faith at its core. Parents say that the school displays its Christian values through educational activities for the pupils and social activities for the families. Since the last inspection, the school has successfully reviewed the ways in which it expresses its distinctive Christian and Anglican character. Foundation governors know their school well; they understand its many strengths and work with the leaders to secure future plans. They are aware of the school's future leadership needs, although this is not formally planned for. There is strong leadership of all aspects of the school's Christian identity. The headteacher and governors take a leading role in the local family of Anglican schools. RE is well led by a knowledgeable leader and has been very well supported by Diocesan officers. The outstanding partnership with the parish church draws in the whole community. The Rector contributes to RE lessons and fulfils a chaplaincy role amongst pupils, staff and families. The headteacher and other staff report to the Annual Parish Meeting and sometimes attend the parish church. As a result, the congregation values its Church school so highly that church members annually present personalised Bibles to Year 5 pupils. Parents comment that the school is the glue that joins the church and community together and it is this, with the strong leadership of the headteacher and his team, that makes leadership and management outstanding.