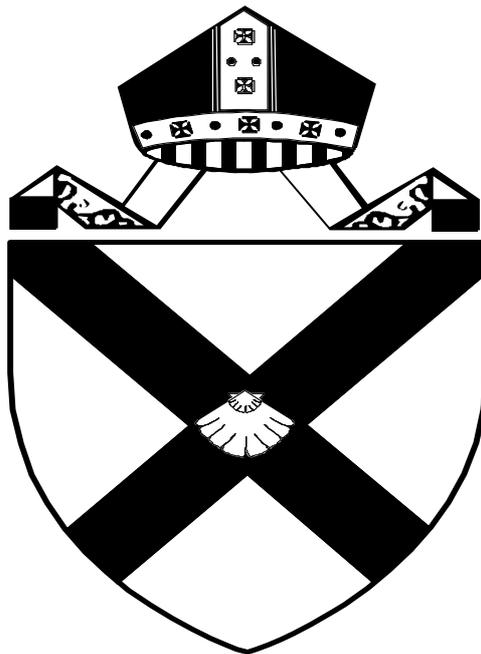


STATUTORY INSPECTION of ANGLICAN SCHOOLS

ROCHESTER DIOCESE

2011



St. Mark's Church of England

Primary School

Voluntary Controlled

Ramslye Road, Tunbridge Wells,
Kent TN4 8LN

Unique Reference No:118613
Kent LA

Acting Head Teacher: Mrs Helen Roberts
Chair of Governors: Mrs. Karen Stevenson
Incumbent: Rev. Brian Fortnum
Inspector: Ms Jan Thompson (NS 92)
Inspection: 4th March 2011

SUMMARY JUDGEMENT

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

St. Mark's Church of England Primary School is a satisfactory church school that has improved since the last inspection.

GRADE 3: Satisfactory

SCHOOL CONTEXT

St. Mark's is a Voluntary Controlled Church of England Primary School. It is situated in Tunbridge Wells in an area of mixed housing with considerable social deprivation. Its 183 pupils are mostly local and from White British families. About 10% of pupils come from regular worshipping Church families, with others having some connection with local churches that are active in the area. The school was founded in 1872 and moved to its present site in a new building in the 1980s. It is now some distance from St. Mark's Church. The previous headteacher left in the Summer and an Acting Headteacher has been in post since September 2010 on a part-time basis. The newly appointed headteacher takes over in September 2011. Ofsted judged the school to be satisfactory.

ESTABLISHED STRENGTHS

- Pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity
- The strong support of the parish church
- The 'Church and Community Committee' that brings about improvements in the Christian aspects of the school

FOCUS FOR DEVELOPMENT

- Involve all stakeholders in exploring and identifying the school's fundamental Christian values and vision.
- Promote these Christian values in the life of the school.
- Ensure that the school's distinctive Christian character is included in all relevant documentation and on the school's website.

How well does the school, through its distinctive Christian character, meet the needs of all learners? Grade 3: Satisfactory

St. Mark's Church of England Primary School is a friendly, welcoming school with a strong community spirit. The school's approach is based on Christian values but these are still not clearly identified by all stakeholders, which was an issue at the last inspection. The Acting Headteacher has introduced a scheme for Collective Worship that is based on Christian values, such as forgiveness, truth and humility, and these are beginning to have an impact in the school. Teachers treat the pupils kindly, so that they are happy at school and get on well together. Religious Education (RE) also promotes moral development, although there is still a greater emphasis on learning facts about religions that relating religious concepts to the pupils' own lives. Pupils recognise the importance of learning about religions in order to understand other people and show them respect. Their social concern is translated into charitable work in the community, such as giving at Harvest to projects for the homeless in Tunbridge Wells. The school environment is much better used than at the last inspection to promote pupils' spiritual development. As well as attractive RE displays in some parts of the school, all classrooms now have prayer stations that many pupils find helpful.

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

Grade 2: Good

Pupils behave well during Collective Worship, enjoy singing and respond well to questions, demonstrating a good knowledge and understanding of Christianity. On Fridays, members of the School Council confidently lead the worship and their celebration assembly. This short act of worship has a clear Anglican structure, with Bible reading and prayer, thereby ensuring that it is genuine worship, as recommended at the last inspection. It reflects the good quality of worship throughout the week. Pupils have a good understanding of the divine nature of worship, commenting particularly on the importance of prayer. They appreciate the quiet reflection time in Collective Worship when, they say, "you can pray in your head on your own". Pupils become familiar with Anglican practices by celebrating the seasons and festivals of the Church's year, some of which are held in St Mark's Church. Christian symbolism is prominent in worship and pupils use some set prayers and responses. Collective Worship is very well supported by the Vicar, Curate and Children's Worker from St Mark's Church. The Acting Headteacher has put in place the recommendation from the last inspection that all teachers should attend daily Collective Worship.

How effective are the leadership and management of the school as a church school? Grade 3: Satisfactory

The governing body has successfully addressed a number of issues from the last inspection, but has not improved documentation or the website, or focused on the Christian values and vision of the school. RE has improved in that all teachers now follow the scheme of work and give the subject adequate time. However, not all work is sufficiently challenging to enable pupils to make progress and there is still a greater emphasis on learning about religion than learning from it. A good development since last time is that the 'Worship Committee' of the governing body has now broadened its brief to a 'Church and Community Committee', with a wider membership. It has begun to establish a system of monitoring to bring about improvements, which has included the use of parent and pupil questionnaires. The Vicar and new Curate are Foundation Governors on this Committee, which reflects the strong and effective Christian support that the school receives from the parish church. Since the last inspection, the church has employed a full time Children and Family Worker, who has built good relationships with the school and who contributes to the church-led Collective Worship on Wednesdays. Parents approve of the links between the school and the local church and like the Christian ethos of the school. Some have attended a new prayer-group at the school that has been set up by the church. With the resignation of the previous headteacher, the governing body has had to address succession planning, and gave due consideration to the future headteacher's ability to lead a church school.