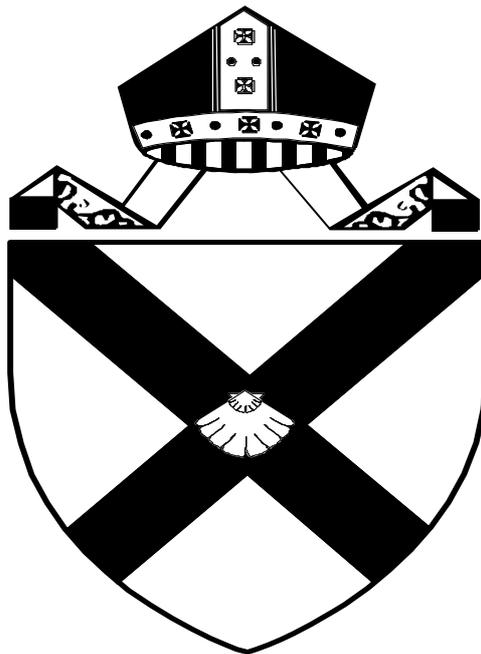


STATUTORY INSPECTION of ANGLICAN SCHOOLS

ROCHESTER DIOCESE

2010



**St. Matthew's High Brooms
Church of England
Primary School**

Voluntary Controlled

Powder Mill Lane, Tunbridge Wells TN4 9DY
Kent Local Authority

Unique Reference No: 118709

Head Teacher: Mrs. Mandy Cebunka

Chair of Governors: Mr Stephen Brewin

Inspector: Miss Judy Bainbridge (NS 328)

Inspection: 8th December 2010

SUMMARY JUDGEMENT

How distinctive and effective is the school as a Church of England school? Grade 2: Good

St. Matthew's High Brooms Voluntary Controlled Church of England Primary School is a good Church school that has improved significantly since the last inspection.

SCHOOL CONTEXT

St. Matthew's High Brooms is a Voluntary Controlled two-form entry primary school which serves a community on the north-eastern outskirts of Tunbridge Wells. Most pupils are drawn from the local area, and come from White British families. About ten percent are from regular church-going families, but many more pupils have associations with St. Matthew's Church through their very active youth work. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is above the national average, as is the percentage known to be eligible for free school meals. OfSTED recently judged the overall effectiveness of the school to be satisfactory, but found that pupils' personal development was good.

ESTABLISHED STRENGTHS

- The school is a happy, caring and welcoming community inspired and underpinned by clear Christian values which are understood by all its members.
- Religious Education (RE) and Collective Worship are exceptionally well led and managed.
- Staff work as a united team, firmly committed to the continued development of the school's Christian character.
- The hard work of the headteacher, staff and governors has ensured very good progress since the last inspection.

FOCUS FOR DEVELOPMENT

- Formalise and extend arrangements for monitoring and evaluating Collective Worship, involving teaching staff and pupils in the process.
- Incorporate more explicit Christian values in key documentation, such as the prospectus and policy for behaviour, in order to reflect fully the values already evident in the life and work of the school.

How well does the school, through its distinctive Christian character, meet the needs of all learners? Grade 2: Good

St Matthew's is a caring and friendly community where pupils, parents, staff and governors all speak of being welcome. Relationships at all levels are excellent and pupils and adults know that their attitudes and behaviour reflect the Christian values that underpin the school's life, highlighting particularly respect, hope, perseverance and love. Pupils can explain how these values are expressed in their support of charities to help people less fortunate than themselves, as well as in looking out for anyone who is lonely in the playground. The school environment is used well to remind pupils of the school's values and to express its Christian character. Displays in classrooms and common areas help them to think about topics covered in Collective Worship and RE, both of which contribute well to their spiritual and moral awareness. For example, an interactive display based on the story of the feeding of the five thousand invites pupils to contribute their own ideas about how they might share what they have. The new vision statement refers to the provision of 'a distinctive Christian environment', and the school motto to 'growing in faith' together. However, key documentation, such as the prospectus and policy for behaviour, does not yet make explicit the values which are so evident in the life and work of the

school. Following the last inspection, prayer has been given a much higher profile in the school. Each classroom now has its own prayer station, and pupils make good use of opportunities to write their own prayers. They also value the places in common areas, such as the 'Ready to Share' display in the hall, where they are encouraged to reflect and pray.

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

Grade 2: Good

Pupils thoroughly enjoy Collective Worship and approach it with a sense of expectancy. They show that they are keen to take part by responding eagerly to questions and joining in singing of high quality. They are also able to use opportunities for reflection effectively, with some identifying the 'quiet time' as particularly meaningful for them. Worship is carefully planned so that it relates well to pupils' own needs and experiences. As a result, they are able to explain how it helps them to know more about God and his relevance to their own lives. For example, one girl described how it had taught her that 'God will be with you wherever you go.' Staff also participate in worship, and emphasise the way in which it helps to foster a strong sense of 'family' in the school. The school's Anglican status is expressed through its active links with St Matthew's Church. The parish youth workers lead Collective Worship on a weekly basis, and their input is greatly valued by pupils. The major festivals of Christmas, Easter and Pentecost are celebrated in church. These services also involve parents. 'It's friendly and warm and everyone seems to join in', one commented. The headteacher, staff and governors have successfully raised the profile of worship since the last inspection. In particular, the co-ordinator has strengthened its Christian character so that it is now fully 'God-centred'. All pupils now attend worship. Monitoring by foundation governors is now in place. However, staff and pupils do not currently contribute to the evaluation process.

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

Since the last inspection, the headteacher, staff and governors have worked hard to develop the Christian character of the school. Together, they have identified the distinctive Christian values that are consistently promoted through RE, worship and displays around the school, helping pupils to understand these clearly. They have consulted parents and collaborated in rewriting the vision statement to reflect the school's faith status. As recommended in the last inspection report, they have undertaken a thorough self-evaluation of the school as a Church school, and have sought the views of pupils and parents as part of this process. As a result, they have gained a sound awareness both of the school's strengths and of priorities for development. The co-ordinator for RE and Collective Worship exercises exceptionally strong and enthusiastic leadership. She has made good use of diocesan training opportunities, and been very effective in supporting staff in their delivery of RE and contribution to worship. The headteacher's commitment to distributive leadership has also enabled other staff to take responsibility for specific initiatives, such as the development of prayer stations in classrooms and common areas. The school has a well-established relationship with the parish church: church and school together are at the heart of the local community. Pupils benefit from good links with a number of neighbourhood groups, and develop a strong sense of service. Both pupils and staff also enjoy working jointly with other schools in the area. Support for a school in Gambia enables them to contribute to community cohesion at an international level. Parents are very supportive of the school. Most choose it because of its location, and value its inclusiveness and the welcome offered to families as well as pupils.