

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### **The Archbishop's Foundation Church of England School**

St Stephens Hill

Canterbury

Kent

CT2 7AP

#### **Diocese of Canterbury**

Kent LEA

School Number: 118898

Headteacher: Mr Alasdair Hogarth

Inspector: Mrs Virginia Corbyn (NS number 86)

Inspected on 16 and 18 January 2006

Last inspected on 24-28 January 2000

### **SUMMARY JUDGEMENT**

The Archbishop's (Foundation) Secondary School is an outstanding Church school.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Archbishop's School, a mixed comprehensive Church of England foundation school situated on the outskirts of Canterbury, has 873 pupils on roll, including 146 in the sixth form. Pupils are drawn from a wide variety of social backgrounds and from more than 50 feeder primary schools. The large majority of pupils (up to 80%) in the school is drawn from Church families, mainly Anglican. The school is heavily oversubscribed. Standards and achievement in Years 7 to 11 have been judged as outstanding in a recent OFSTED inspection and as good in Years 11 and 12. The curriculum is designed to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities and specialist provision for pupils with dyslexia and for the visually impaired is provided. The number of pupils with special educational needs is above average. There are small numbers of pupils from several ethnic minority groups, the remainder being drawn from White British families.

### **ESTABLISHED STRENGTHS**

- This is an outstanding church school which nurtures and values the contribution and the faith of every member of its close-knit community.
- Collective Worship is regarded as the central means of demonstrating what it means to function effectively as a Christian community.
- The leadership and management team together with the Head of Religious Education embody clear and strong Christian values in their individual roles, and in their support for and development of the pastoral systems within the school.

### **FOCUS FOR DEVELOPMENT**

- The school should continue to build on its good relationships with local clergy, considering ways in which they might serve the school in the support and enrichment of the existing pastoral systems.

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

'The school is a Christian community, characterised by mutual care and respect, a regard for the individual and a witness to life and teachings of Our Lord Jesus Christ'. As one of the aims of the school, this statement encapsulates the key attitudes of the members of the school community. Pupils spoke at length about the importance of community and the ways in which the vertically organised House system ensured that there was a warmth and security in relationships throughout the school, and that all pupils knew whom they could approach with concerns or questions. Staff speak warmly and encouragingly to and about their pupils, and about the strength of the House system in supporting them in their knowledge about individual pupils. There is an openness about the Christian faith which enables everyone to be honest about their own beliefs yet to respect fully those of others. Pupils are expected to develop their own potential, but with a high level guidance and support on an individual basis to ensure choices which best suit their particular God-given talents and interests. The school is inclusive of all abilities, ensuring the smallest possible tutor and teaching groups in order to maximise the opportunities for building pupils' self esteem through positive staff-pupil relationships. The responsibility of 6<sup>th</sup> form students as mentors for Year 7 pupils forms another

important network of relationships within the school. RE is taught in mixed ability groups with appropriate levels of differentiation for pupils with particular needs. All pupils take a short course GCSE in Year 11 which is focussed upon Christianity in order to further strengthen the understanding of all pupils of the Christian character of the school. Pupils are ambitious in their efforts to support charitable projects as a practical expression of faith in action – an outstanding example of this was the raising of £20,000 to build a school in Kenya which a group of staff and pupils was able to visit.

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

**OUTSTANDING**

The daily act of collective worship is the most important means of expressing and understanding the concept of Christian community for the school. The whole school meets together on three occasions each week with a House or form grouping on the other two days. Year 7 pupils meet together for worship as a year group in their first two terms, time which is used in order to support these pupils pastorally in their early days in their new school. Christian hymns and prayer form an integral part of worship. Those who lead whole school worship are committed Christians who convey their own faith and the Christian values by which the school grows and flourishes. A whole school Eucharist is held once each term using material from Common Worship. Pupils spoke warmly about these services, two of which coincide with the Christian festivals of Christmas and Easter. There is also an annual service of dedication at Canterbury Cathedral for the whole school. Both staff and pupils regarded these special services as times of worship which bind together all members into a single Christian community, despite the representation of a range of denominations across the school. Worship is led on a weekly basis by mainly Anglican clergy from the local communities, who praised the strong and unmistakeable Christian character of the school. The extension of such links with the local clergy should be explored creatively to enrich as far as possible the Christian life of the school. Opportunities are also provided for worship by the Christian Union (Revive) which has a regular attendance of 65 to 70 pupils with many more (up to 300) attending when there are visiting speakers, artists and musicians. Those who are involved spoke enthusiastically of the opportunities which Revive provides for them to express their faith through worship in a different context, and about the ways in which their skills in peer mentoring are able to be developed through leadership roles.

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

The Headteacher, Senior Managers, the Head of RE and the Governing Body provide outstanding leadership and management. The excellent relationships in the school are nurtured by the Senior Management team who promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils wherever possible. They lead the pastoral systems of the school by their own examples of Christian care and concern for each individual pupil. Strong pastoral support is also provided for staff. Collective worship is carefully planned by the Head of RE around Christian themes which encourages the pupils to reflect upon their own lives and experiences, and to demonstrate this in their action within the school community. The RE Department is very well led and managed. The RE taught across the Key Stages provides a good balance between Christianity and those world faiths which are required by the Agreed Syllabus. There is a particular focus upon Christianity through the short course GCSE taken by all pupils in Year 11 and through the AS and A2 courses also. The Governing Body believes that this reflects and underpins the importance of the Christian message within the school as a whole. The leaders and managers of the school work closely with parents who speak highly of the ways in which both they and their children are known, valued, supported and involved within the school community.