

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Churchill Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Rysted Lane,
Westerham.

Kent

TN16 1EZ

Diocese: Rochester

LA: Kent

Dates of inspection: 2nd – 3rd May 2006

Date of last inspection: 2000

School's Unique reference number: 118616

Headteacher: Mr. Keith Blackwell

Inspector's name and number: 2nd – 3rd May 2006

School context

Churchill Church of England School serves the town of Westerham in Kent, where it is the only primary school. Its 253 pupils are mostly White British and represent a wide socio-economic mix. Pupils are of broadly average ability on joining the school. They make good progress throughout their school lives and leave with standards well above average in English, Maths and Science. A very small percentage are from worshipping church families.

Summary Judgement

Churchill Voluntary Controlled Church of England Primary School, Westerham is a satisfactory church school that has recently begun some significant developments.
Grade 3: Satisfactory

Established strengths

- This is a friendly school where pupils are happy and make good progress.
- Pupils are encouraged to care for others, and raise large sums for charity.
- There are good and developing links with the parish church.

Focus for development

- The Anglican schools' self-evaluation process should be developed with interested parties and should feed into the school improvement plan.
- The Governing Body needs to apply rigour in defining the school's Christian values and should make this clear in the prospectus and relevant policy statements.
- The environment of the school hall should be developed to enhance Collective Worship.
- Religious Education should be given a much higher status in this church school. It requires at least 5% of curriculum time and more resources.

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

Grade 2: Good

This is a happy, friendly and welcoming school, where children and adults thrive. It has a justifiably good reputation: behaviour is excellent and standards are high. There is a general acceptance among adults associated with the school that the school's values are Christian, without this being defined in the school's aims or documentation. Hence the prospectus, for example, is not a good advertisement for a church school. Within the school, however, pupils' moral development is good and is enhanced by the Christian teaching they receive in Collective Worship. Pupils enthusiastically raise large sums of money for charitable projects, such as the rebuilding of a school in Sri Lanka that was destroyed by the Tsunami. They are able to relate this to Jesus' example of helping others, and see the school motto 'Others' as a Christian message. Spiritual development is satisfactory. Pupils particularly appreciate opportunities for quiet reflection and prayer, and older pupils spoke positively about prayers in their classes before lunch and at the end of the day. Lack of time for Religious Education limits the contribution it could make to pupils' spiritual and moral development; and the work is not sufficiently challenging for higher attaining pupils. Response to the last denominational inspection has led to an effective Christian focus in the entrance hall as well as prayer-boards or similar in each classroom, but nothing has yet been done inside the main hall where Collective Worship takes place.

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

Grade 3: Satisfactory

Daily Collective Worship occupies a secure place in the life of the school, being led each week mainly by the headteacher, worship co-ordinator and vicar, with all teachers in attendance. It is whole-school, apart from once a week when class teachers conduct worship in their classrooms. Some key stage worship would allow it to be more age related. The Canterbury diocesan scheme has recently been adopted, made available by Rochester diocese. This is based on half-termly themes and ensures biblical content and Christian teaching and prayers. The quality of worship is satisfactory, but the hall is drab and uninspiring. Pupils behave well in worship and sing tunefully; but they are not enthusiastic in their evaluation of it. They do, however, appreciate times of quiet reflection, and like leading their own worship in their classes. The school celebrates some major Christian festivals in the church, which are well-attended by pupils' families. This year a welcoming Sunday service for new pupils proved popular; and a service for Education Sunday has been introduced. As yet, pupils have not visited Rochester Cathedral or taken part in the annual Church Schools Festival there.

How effective are the leadership and management of the school as a church school?

Grade 3: Satisfactory

The school's Christian vision is not yet clearly defined or promoted; and the role of Religious Education is underdeveloped. However, good progress has been made since the last inspection in 2004 (only 20 months ago), through a working-party consisting of two committed Christian members of staff and the vicar. Strong links with the parish church exist mainly through the vicar, who is vice-chairman of governors. It is good that the school now advertises and supports some Church events; but more could be done by using the school website and prospectus. The Church is developing its children's work and runs activity days in the holidays, attended by pupils. It has initiated a welcoming service in September for new pupils and their families, at which children's Bibles are presented.

SIAS report May 2006 Churchill Church of England Primary School, Rysted Lane, Westerham. Kent TN16 1EZ