

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Herne Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

School Lane,
Herne,
Herne Bay,
Kent,
CT6 5DA.

Diocese: Canterbury

LA: Kent

Dates of inspection: 24 and 28 April 2006

Date of last inspection: 13-16 March 2000

School's Unique reference number: 118736

Headteacher: Mr Quentin Roper

Inspector's name and number: Miss Judy Bainbridge NS 328

School context

Herne is a three-form entry junior school serving the villages of Herne and Broomfield and the surrounding area. Almost all come from White British families and none are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of children known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The percentage of those with special educational needs is average. The present Headteacher has been in post since January 2005. The recent OFSTED inspection judged that this is an effective and very caring school in which standards and achievement are rising.

Summary Judgement

Herne Church of England Junior School is a satisfactory Church school with good features and very good capacity for improvement.

Established strengths

- The Christian values of mutual care and respect successfully underpin the school's work and ethos, and are expressed in the good relationships among all members of the school community.
- Pupils are well supported and cared for, and are happy and secure in school.
- The school fosters children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well.
- The vision and leadership of the new Headteacher are having a positive impact on the school's standards and on its character as a Church school.

Focus for development

- Make the school's distinctive Christian character, which is already reflected in its work and ethos, more explicit through documentation and visual signs.
- Ensure continuity and consistency in the provision of collective worship through the development of a co-ordinated system of planning, recording, monitoring and evaluation, involving foundation governors, staff and pupils.
- Ensure high standards of religious education in all classes through the consistent use of constructive marking, more careful matching of work to children's abilities, and higher expectations of attainment, especially in writing.
- Strengthen the role of the foundation governors in the school's self evaluation and in the development of strategies designed to enhance its effectiveness as a Church school.

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

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Clear Christian values underpin the school's commitment to the well-being of all learners. Children are well supported and cared for, and say that they are happy and feel secure in school. Very good provision for PSHCE makes a strong contribution to their personal development. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural growth is well promoted through a rich curriculum as well as in worship. Pupils value the opportunities they are given to care for one another and to take responsibility, for example through membership of the School Council, acting as "playmakers", or working to support local and national charities. Very good relationships throughout the school are characterised by mutual care and respect. Pupils of all abilities are enabled to make a positive contribution to lessons and to the wider life of the school.

Children are well aware that Herne is a Church of England school. They identify some of its distinctive features, such as its worship and its links with the parish church, and they value these as an integral part of their school's character. While that character is clearly reflected in the school's work and ethos, there are few permanent signs of its Anglican foundation around the building, and most policies do not refer explicitly to the Christian principles which inform them. The school's self evaluation identifies this as an area for development.

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

SATISFACTORY

The daily act of collective worship is firmly embedded in the life of the school. Content is carefully linked to pupils' own experiences, encouraging them to reflect on spiritual and moral issues which are of concern to them. Pupils speak warmly of the way in which worship helps them to feel part of a community. They value the many opportunities to take an active part, for example through acting out Bible stories, and they also appreciate the contributions of others, particularly in the Friday "sharing assembly". They respond eagerly to questions and engage thoughtfully with opportunities for quiet reflection. The new incumbent leads worship on a weekly basis and is working closely with the Headteacher to develop the use of the parish church for worship. Pupils especially enjoy the recently introduced year group services. However, while individual acts of worship are carefully planned, there is currently no overall worship plan to ensure continuity and coherence in provision. Worship is included briefly in the RE policy, and there is no systematic recording, monitoring or evaluation of worship. Staff, governors and pupils all have important contributions to make in addressing these issues.

How effective is the religious education?

SATISFACTORY

A detailed scheme of work ensures the delivery of a balanced curriculum which enables pupils to learn from religion as well as about it. Children speak knowledgeably about what they have learnt in their RE lessons. Some teaching is of a very high quality, using a range of interesting activities and stimulating pupils to attain standards beyond those expected for their age. However, in a few classes work is undemanding and there are too few opportunities for children to express themselves in writing. In these classes tasks are not differentiated to meet pupil needs and there is insufficient challenge for the more able. Marking is not used to help pupils extend their thinking and improve their work. Although assessment and monitoring of children's work are in place, they are not yet having an impact on standards of teaching and learning right across the school.

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

SATISFACTORY

The Headteacher has a very clear vision for the school and is deeply committed to promoting and strengthening its Christian character. The school's self evaluation identifies several ways of carrying this forward, including the establishment of a TLR post to develop its Christian distinctiveness, and an INSET day for governors and staff to review the mission statement and written policies. Greater rigour in the co-ordination of collective worship and in the monitoring of RE would contribute further to the development of this aspect of the school's work. Foundation governors are supportive of the school, but are not yet involved in its SIAS self evaluation or in the monitoring of RE and worship. The appointment of a link governor for RE and worship would benefit these areas. Links with the church are developing well following a long interregnum. There is good potential for extending the role of the incumbent in school, both pastorally and in support of the RE curriculum. The school is actively developing ways of consulting parents and pupils. The School Council gives pupils an effective voice, as shown in the recent review and rewriting of the school rules.

SIAS report April 2006 Herne Church of England (Aided) Junior School, School Lane, Herne, Herne Bay, Kent, CT6 5DA.