

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

St. Augustine of Canterbury Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

St Augustine's Road,
Belvedere,
Kent,
DA17 5HP

Diocese: Rochester

Bexley LA

Unique Reference No: 3033508

Head Teacher: Mrs Denise Corbett

Inspector: Mr. John Viner N.S.No.144

Inspection: 5th – 6th December 2005

SUMMARY JUDGEMENT

St Augustine of Canterbury Voluntary Aided Church of England Primary School is a satisfactory church school that is developing well.

SCHOOL CONTEXT

St Augustine of Canterbury Voluntary Aided Church of England Primary School became a church school in 2003, having been a long-established community school in the London Borough of Bexley. It serves the parish of St Augustine's, Belvedere, drawing its pupils from an area of high social deprivation. Pupils come from a variety of ethnic backgrounds and faiths; 25 languages are spoken in the school and there are few church families. At the time it changed its status the school was in Special Measures. There has been significant improvement in behaviour since then, but pupils do not yet make enough progress so that academic standards are still too low.

ESTABLISHED STRENGTHS

- The developing Christian ethos is having a good effect on pupils' behaviour and respect for others.
- The links with the parish church are helping pupils and parents to feel part of a caring and supportive community.
- Collective Worship is an important part of each school day.

FOCUS FOR DEVELOPMENT

- Revise the school's Mission Statement so that it defines better the Christian distinctiveness of the school.
- Improve the Christian focus of the entrance area to make more explicit the Christian character of the school.
- Increase the amount of curriculum time allocated to Religious Education to ensure that pupils are taught all they are expected to learn.
- Make better use of the very good RE scheme of work so that it provides an effective tool for teachers' planning;
- Develop assessment systems in Religious Education so that teachers have a good understanding of their pupils' progress.

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

The change to an Anglican Aided school is beginning to transform the whole school community as its distinctive Christian character becomes established. Parents feel that the school is more approachable and that their children are well cared for. Pupils speak warmly of the difference it has made since the change to a Church school. Relationships in the school are very good and based on respect for all. Pupils show concern beyond the school by organising charity collections through the School Council. They understand that the Christian values taught by the school can be applied to their lives, and they feel comfortable in expressing their beliefs, whatever they may be. The moral and spiritual development of all pupils benefit from the ethos of the school. There are visual Christian signs around the school but the entrance lobby does not sufficiently proclaim the school's status while the crucifix in the hall is damaged and does not provide a focal point for worship.

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

Grade 3: SATISFACTORY

Worship occupies a secure place in the life of the school and acts of worship are always at least sound in quality and, with greater opportunity for reflection, would be good. Prayer plays an important role in worship; the School Prayer helps pupils to understand its centrality to the school and regular use of the Lord's Prayer ensures that it is learnt by all pupils. Prayer is also used at other points in the school day. Pupils help with worship in a number of ways, including doing the readings and prayers. It is good that all staff attend worship because this reinforces its importance to the life of the school. Although musical accompaniment is sometimes difficult, good use is made of recorded music to which pupils sing tunefully and with enthusiasm. School assemblies celebrate festivals of many faiths always in the context of a Christian Act of Worship. Central to worship at St Augustine's is the weekly Mass, led by the parish priest, which strongly and successfully reinforces the school's Anglican identity. This is a Parish Mass, sometimes attended by church members. Pupils speak warmly of it and enjoy being able to take part, whatever their faith.

How effective is the religious education? Grade 4: INADEQUATE

Standards in Religious Education are below average and the subject does not have the high profile expected in an Anglican school. Although the teaching seen was at least satisfactory, pupils' work shows that teachers are not consistent in their use of the RE scheme. Consequently, lessons are often poorly planned and not enough attention is given to what it is that pupils are expected to learn. There is not enough curriculum time allocated to Religious Education so that even the best planned lessons do not cover all that pupils should learn. Some teachers' expectations of their pupils are too low and they accept work that is not of a good enough standard. More able pupils are not challenged enough, do not have their ideas tested and do not make the progress of which they are capable. Nevertheless, good links are made with other subjects. Because there is no system of assessment in Religious Education, teachers do not know how much progress their pupils have made or what they must do to improve. Older pupils are unenthusiastic about their lessons and make less effort than in other subjects.

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

Grade 3: SATISFACTORY

The Headteacher and the governors provide effective leadership of the school overall and, together with the key staff, are determined to drive forward their vision of an effective Church School. Foundation Governors are quickly appointed to vacancies and are learning how to make the best use of their skills in supporting their school. The links between the school and the parish church are a strength, not least because the parish priest is also the chairman of governors. Joint events take place between school and church, and there is a real sense of partnership, which is appreciated by parents who feel more able to approach both the school and the church. Although the school has benefited from its change of status, the prospectus, policies and plans do not sufficiently reflect its Christian foundation and purpose, and need to be revised. Parents of all faiths are very happy that their children attend an Anglican school and it will help them to understand what this means more easily if it is made explicit in the school's documentation.