

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Charlton Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Barton Road

Dover

Kent

CT16 2LX

Diocese: Canterbury

Local Authority: Kent

Dates of inspection: 12th, 14th and 18th December 2007

Date of last inspection: February 2003

School's Unique Reference Number: 118747

Headteacher: Carole Barrett

Inspector's name and number: Judy Bainbridge, 328

School context

Charlton is a one form entry primary school serving the Buckland, St Radigund's and Tower Hamlets wards of Dover. While pupils are drawn from a range of socio-economic backgrounds overall, many come from disadvantaged homes. The school is popular, and the consequent application of the oversubscription criteria means that a relatively high proportion are from church-going families. The great majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds and only a very small number are at an early stage of learning to speak English. The percentage of those with learning difficulties and disabilities is above the national average. In recent years, standards in the national tests in English, mathematics and science have been at least in line with the national average. The recent OfSTED report judged pupils' progress to be good. It rated the care, guidance and support offered to pupils and their personal development as outstanding.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Charlton as a Church of England school are outstanding

Charlton Church of England Primary School is an outstanding Church school.

Established strengths

- Both children and adults describe their school as a loving family within which all feel valued and secure.
- All members of the school community understand, articulate and strive to live out the distinctive Christian values which provide the foundation for its life and work.
- Prayer is deeply embedded in the life of the school, and underpins all its activities.
- High quality planning and teaching ensure that pupils make very good progress in Religious Education.

Focus for development

- Develop more opportunities for extended writing in RE, particularly in relation to Attainment Target 2 (Learning from religion).

The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is outstanding at meeting the needs of all learners

The sense of family at Charlton is almost tangible. It is something to which all stakeholders refer when speaking of the school's distinctive character. Within this family, all feel secure and valued. The loving concern and mutual respect shown by all its members are unmistakably built upon Christian values. Both adults and children readily speak of the roots of these values in Christian belief and teaching. For example, pupils talk about how they try to be kind to one another and to support those less fortunate than themselves through raising funds for charities. They link this explicitly to their attempts to follow the example and teaching of Jesus who, in one girl's words, 'helped people even if they weren't his friends'. Within the Charlton family, each pupil is treated as a unique individual with a valuable contribution to bring to the shared life of the school. As a result, pupils of all abilities are

enthusiastic about learning and make good progress. Pastoral care is also of a high quality and is extended to families as well as pupils. The underlying Christian values are made explicit within documents such as the school prospectus and key policies. They are also expressed in the physical environment which is enriched by Christian symbols and displays. Within this context, pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is fostered particularly well. Both worship and RE provide very good opportunities for reflection on matters which concern them.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

The daily act of worship is central to the life of the school. It is valued highly by pupils and staff for the Christian teaching it conveys, and for the strong sense of community it helps to foster. 'You feel you're not leaving anyone out', one pupil commented. Careful planning and sensitive delivery ensure that each act of worship engages and involves pupils of all ages. They participate eagerly, responding readily to invitations to take an active part, and singing with great enthusiasm. They also appreciate the use of silence: 'It gives you privacy to talk to God', as one pupil put it. A prayer box in the hall encourages pupils to offer their own subjects for prayer. Further opportunities for prayer are provided at lunchtime and at bedtime. These are described by the Headteacher as 'the hooks you hang the day on'. Pupils see them as a key feature of their school. Each class has its own 'prayer wall' which includes a prayer book compiled by pupils themselves. Services are held in the parish church at key festivals and at the end of the school year. Pupils are at ease in the church, and greatly enjoy these occasions. Such services are well supported by parents, governors and parishioners. The introduction of a celebration of the Eucharist for older pupils has helped to strengthen the school's distinctive Anglican identity. Both pupils and staff contribute to the maintenance of excellent practice in worship through regular monitoring which is then used to inform future planning. All teaching staff attend and lead worship.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

RE is given the status of a core subject within the school and is very well led and managed. Careful monitoring has resulted in a clear and realistic plan for the subject. Teaching is good overall, with some examples of outstanding practice. Pupils have very positive attitudes towards RE, recognising its important place within the curriculum. They understand that the subject teaches them valuable lessons for living. They also identify the ways in which learning about other faiths helps them to understand those whose beliefs and ways of life are different from their own. Pupils enjoy the range of interesting tasks they are given, and respond thoughtfully to challenging questioning. They are enabled to learn from religion (AT2) as well as about it (AT1). Standards are at least in line with those laid down in the current Agreed Syllabus, with many pupils exceeding these by the end of Year 6, especially in speaking and listening. The provision of more opportunities for extended writing, particularly in work on AT2, would help to stretch pupils even further. Teachers make effective use of level descriptors to plan work and to set targets for pupils. As a result, pupils are aware of their targets, and know how well they are progressing.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is outstanding

The Headteacher, staff and governors are united in their commitment to realising a clear Christian vision for the school. Their self evaluation is accurate and feeds effectively into the School Improvement Plan. The views of parents and pupils are actively sought as part of this process. RE and collective worship benefit from strong and dedicated leadership, which is supported well by the respective link governors. The parish priest is a popular and regular visitor to the school. He works hard to ensure that church links are sustained and developed. There are also good links with local churches of other denominations. Pupils readily take on roles of responsibility, as School Councillors, prefects or playground pals, and are proud of the contribution they make to their school.