

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### **Christ Church Church of England Voluntary Controlled Junior School**

London Road

Ramsgate

Kent

CT11 0ZZ

**Diocese: Canterbury**

Local authority: Kent

Dates of inspection: 21 and 22 May 2008

Date of previous inspection: 4 and 5 February 2003

School's unique reference number: 118700

Headteacher: Mrs Janet Carpenter (acting)

Inspector's name and number: Mrs Virginia Corbyn 86

#### **School context**

This is a two form entry junior school close to Ramsgate town centre. There is a higher than average number of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities. The acting headteacher and the acting assistant headteacher took up their posts in September 2007. The recent OfSTED report judged the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils to be good, and commented upon the significant contribution which well-focused assemblies made to spiritual development in the school.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Christ Church as a Church of England school are good**

Christ Church, Ramsgate Church of England Junior School is a good Church school.

#### **Established strengths**

- The headteacher's understanding of and commitment to the centrality of a clear Christian vision as a key component of school improvement
- Acts of collective worship which pupils enjoy and value
- Strong links with the local church and its clergy

#### **Focus for development**

- Consult with pupils in order to develop the prayer life of the school
- Provide opportunities for more pupil participation in collective worship
- Ensure that monitoring systems embed consistency within collective worship
- and RE
- Review the school's vision statement and aims in partnership with all stakeholders to ensure that its Christian values can be articulated clearly by all members of the school community

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

The acting headteacher has a clear Christian vision for this school as a Church of England school. Since taking up her post in September, she has worked hard to ensure that all of her staff team have an understanding and ownership of this same vision. All adults in the school provide strong Christian role models. Relationships throughout the school are excellent. One pupil said that the best thing about the school was 'the teachers'. Another commented that 'there is always someone to talk to if you are worried or upset'. Parents described a safe and secure environment in which their children are happy and in which their particular needs are fully met. There is a calm purpose throughout the school which is the result of 'all being the same but everyone being special in some way'. The spiritual needs of all pupils are a high priority for the school. In observations in two RE lessons, time for personal reflection was central to the learning and the teaching. Prayer was offered for those suffering hardship

in China and Burma at the end of a lesson in which pupils had thought about the events leading up to the Exodus. In another lesson, pupils with a Christian faith, those of other faiths and those of none, were able to describe their ideal place for a personal pilgrimage giving clear reasons for this. Pupils' 'big' questions are left on question walls. These are addressed by their teachers at regular intervals. There are prayer trees in each classroom on which pupils offer suggestions for prayers. Some classes use these requests as part of prayers at the end of the day but others do not. A consistent approach to this is needed. The school has identified that prayer within the life of the school is an area for development. Pupils have a crucial contribution to make to this process. Pupils raise money enthusiastically for a variety of charities and crisis appeals as well as sponsoring two children overseas on a long-term basis.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is good**

Pupils speak warmly of their experiences in collective worship which they regard as an important time for the whole school community, including all staff, to spend time together. They respond well by singing with enthusiasm, volunteering to help the worship leader and offering thoughtful answers to questions asked. They are able to reflect in times of quiet, and say that they sometimes use the Lord's Prayer. Since September, collective worship has been planned using the SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) themes which are then linked with Christian teaching. This has been an important element in developing the Christian character of school by focusing upon the spiritual needs of each child across all aspects of school life, but most particularly in worship and in PSHE. There is a need to ensure that the themes are delivered consistently within all acts of worship through careful monitoring and through the more detailed development of worship plans. Clergy and other local Christians lead worship on a regular basis. Celebrations are held in the church for Harvest, Christmas and Easter, and there are plans to extend this to six occasions in the school year. Parental attendance for these services is good, and they also attend class-led worship once a term. They said that they appreciate these services as times for acknowledging the significance of Christ Church as a Church school. The school's self evaluation recognises the need to extend opportunities for pupil participation within all types of worship, and this is echoed by the children themselves.

### **The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is good**

The acting headteacher and her senior leadership team have set a clear direction for the school since last September. Their Christian vision is based upon a sound school self evaluation. Their conviction is that such a vision is a key component in driving school improvement and the development of the whole child. The staff support and live out the Christian principles modelled by the leadership team. This impacts strongly upon the pupils through the positive and calm environment which the staff have created. The vision needs to be extended so that it can be owned and articulated by pupils and by parents. All governors have an important role in supporting this process especially through continued rigorous self evaluation. There is good leadership of RE by the subject leader who has ensured that all teachers are supported in imaginatively delivering the Kent Agreed Syllabus 2006. The governors and headteacher have provided resources to underpin this work which will continue to require monitoring to ensure consistency across the school. The links with the local parish are strong. The vicar or his assistant lead worship fortnightly, and they provide input for the RE curriculum where appropriate. They pray for the successes and for the needs of their school, and the incumbent has given important personal support to the acting headteacher. A summer holiday Bible Club attracts large numbers of the pupils from school, who speak warmly of their experiences of it. The school has considerable capacity and potential to move forward as a distinctive and inclusive Church school given its significant development over the last nine months.