

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### Hartlip Endowed Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Sittingbourne

Kent

**Diocese: Canterbury**

Local authority: Kent

Dates of inspection: 5 and 6 July 2007

Date of previous inspection: July 2000

School's unique reference number: 118734

Headteacher: Mrs Lesley Lawson

Inspector's name and number: Julia Watts 466

#### School context

Hartlip Endowed Church of England (Aided) Primary school is a small village school with 99 pupils currently on roll. Some children live in Hartlip, but many travel in from the surrounding area because it is a small church school. Standards on entry are average and above average when pupils leave. The vast majority of pupils are white British with approximately 30% from worshipping Christian backgrounds. The school is endowed by a Trust that actively supports the Christian ethos of the school through initiatives such as gifting Y6 pupils with a Bible. Ofsted recently judged Hartlip to be a good school.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Hartlip Endowed as a Church of England school are good

#### Established strengths

- The strong Christian ethos and supportive, family atmosphere of the school which fosters pupils' sense of compassion for others;
- The positive, mutually affirming relationship and good communication with the parish church;
- The vast majority of parents who speak positively of the school and support it.

#### Focus for development

- To continue to develop good practice in RE by ensuring that teaching and learning opportunities for Attainment Target 2 (Learning from religion) are as strong as those for Attainment Target 1 (Learning about religion);
- To build on existing good practice in the evaluation of worship and ensure it remains on the school improvement plan with a specific focus;
- To develop opportunities for encouraging reflection and furthering pupils' spiritual development.

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

Pupils at Hartlip are happy and confident and speak of their enjoyment of school. They feel able to contribute to many aspects of school life, and believe that their thoughts and opinions matter. Pupils are encouraged to share their ideas knowing that they will be heard through school council meetings. The headteacher and governing body are proud of the school's strong Christian ethos and these values underpin all areas of its life. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is encouraged and developed through the Christian character of the school. Pupils are thoughtful and caring towards others. They are willing to support one another through the buddy system as well as those in need because they know that being part of a Christian community means loving one another. Pupils are involved in collecting for several charities both locally and in Africa. The compassion they demonstrate towards those less fortunate than themselves is clearly rooted in Christian moral values. There are Christian crosses and other symbols in each classroom however displays in key areas around the school could be better used to encourage spiritual reflection. The school's

proximity to the church serves as a constant reminder of the strong links between them.

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

Collective worship is well organised by the Headteacher and local clergy following the Diocesan termly plans. The school has recently begun to evaluate its provision and planning of collective worship and has acted on suggestions made by pupils. However this process needs to be formally embedded into the school improvement plan with a specific focus. All teaching staff take part in leading worship across the week and all staff attend collective worship. This contributes to the sense that the daily act of worship is central to the life of the school. Older pupils speak of the importance of worship as being an opportunity to talk to God through prayer and singing. All pupils know the Lord's prayer and can sign to it. Pupils take turns to say Grace before lunch. Pupils enjoy the weekly act of worship held in the church and enjoy the opportunities to contribute to it. The worship is lively and inclusive and reflects pupils' abilities and needs. It is well attended by parents and governors. In the 'Praising Assembly' observed during the inspection, pupils were eager to participate and share their prayers of thanksgiving and sorrow. Links with the parish Church are very strong and supportive. Pupils talk with confidence, knowledge and understanding of the key Christian festivals and have some knowledge of Anglican traditions such as liturgical colours and church seasons. Although older pupils show some understanding of the Eucharist through curriculum RE, they have little experience of the Eucharist in the context of school worship.

**The effectiveness of the religious education is satisfactory**

Most learners reach standards in RE as high or better than in other core subjects. Progress in RE is secure in Key Stage 2. Lessons observed were satisfactory or better. Assessment is used to guide teachers' planning but it not always consistent across both key stages. Most pupils enjoy RE. They show a positive attitude and are confident to share their own ideas and beliefs. Younger pupils can recall key Bible stories and older pupils are able to interpret Jesus' sayings and derive meaning for their own attitudes and behaviour. Pupils' learning in RE enables them to grow morally and spiritually although opportunities for teaching and learning at AT2 (learning from religion) are not as strong as those in AT1 (learning about religion). RE is recognised by the school as important. Adequate time is given to RE and it is well resourced. Further staff development will be needed to ensure the new Diocesan scheme of work is successfully embedded in the new curriculum.

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

The headteacher and governors are committed to maintaining and developing the school as a Church school. The Christian vision of the school is clear in all documentation. The school's own self-evaluation is accurate. Governors and Trustees meetings always begin with prayer. The foundation governors take an active role on the governing body and seek at all times to promote the core Christian values of acceptance, forgiveness and reconciliation. Governors maintain excellent communication between the church and the school and ensure that pupils are both invited to and involved in church services at Christmas and Easter. The headteacher and governors attended training led by the Diocese and benefit from the support of the Diocese and local clergy, both practically and spiritually. Parents speak very positively about the school, especially its good discipline, caring ethos and opportunities for pupils to develop spiritually and morally within a Christian framework. Parents feel staff are approachable and that the school communicates extremely well through the weekly newsletter.