

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Kingsnorth Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Ashford

Kent

Diocese: Canterbury

Local Authority Kent

Inspected on: 28 September & 1 October 2007

Last inspected: May 2001

School Number: 118667

Headteacher: Mrs Claire Foinette

Inspector's name and number: Mr John Viner 144

School Context

Kingsnorth Church of England Primary School is housed in attractive modern buildings beside the parish church of St Michael and All Angels in the expanding village of Kingsnorth, just outside the large town of Ashford. The school is popular and over-subscribed, having around 400 pupils on roll. There is a high degree of owner-occupation and an increasing number of private lets in the area served by the school. Few of the pupils come from ethnic minority backgrounds and the percentage of those with learning difficulties is lower than average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Kingsnorth as a Church of England School is good

Established strengths

- Christian values are at the heart of the school and its work.
- The relationships between and among staff and pupils make the school a happy place where pupils feel safe and cared for.
- The involvement of the whole community in the life of the school is outstanding.
- The enthusiasm of pupils contributes to high quality acts of worship.

Focus for development

- Develop a system for more effective evaluation of collective worship.
- Provide pupils with a place for personal reflection to strengthen their spiritual independence.
- Strengthen the declaration that "Jesus is the Light of the World" by setting it in the context of a bidding and response.
- Address the health and safety concerns arising from a single leader taking worship with the whole school and no additional adult support.

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

This is a school where all pupils feel valued and special and this is evident because Christian values are at the heart of the school and all aspects of its work. All staff demonstrate these values, nurturing and enriching the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils. Parents speak warmly of the nurturing nature of the school and the majority, regardless of faith, say that they chose it because of its Christian character. Prayer is used sensitively at three points in the day and pupils talk openly about how they feel about praying. Several pupils enjoy the reflective opportunities afforded by prayer and would like the school to have a place where they can be quiet and reflective. All pupils understand that they are listened to, supported and their views taken seriously. They cooperate well together and can empathise with each other. They behave well because, in the ethos of respect, tolerance and compassion, they feel safe and cared for. This gives them a sense of pride in their school; as one pupil remarked, "you feel a lot happier at Kingsnorth than other schools".

The school building is bright, welcoming and maintained to a high standard. The cross, candle and school creed in the entrance lobby present the visitor with immediate confirmation that this is a Church school, while a mixture of changing and permanent

displays throughout the building proclaim its Christian identity.

The staff and governors monitor the school's ethos and know that this is a good Church School. Their self-evaluation was that this aspect of the school was good but, because of the good impact of Worship and the school's leadership, its ethos is judged to be outstanding.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Worship is central to the life of the school and has a huge impact on the lives of the children and their families. Parents speak very warmly of the assemblies they attend and the discussions generated with their children around the dinner table. Pupils say that "assemblies are good and we all enjoy going." They join in excitedly, and sing tunefully and enthusiastically, whether the worship takes place in the school or in the nearby church. Their singing is especially good, whether they are in their early years at Kingsnorth or older pupils. One pupil remarked that she "loved singing practice" and others agreed.

Most worship takes place in the school hall although there is sometimes a separate assembly for the very youngest children. Very good use is also made of the church and, because of the excellent partnership that exists between church and school, the regular acts of worship that are held there are simply an extension of the school. These occasions are well-managed, and always attract a large number of parents. Parents say how much they enjoy sharing this expression of Christian worship.

The last denominational inspection report recommended that the act of worship was distinct from the whole assembly and this is now done by lighting a candle before worship and extinguishing it at the end. Its lighting is signalled by pupils declaring together that "Jesus of the Light of the World" .This is effective but would be enhanced by being in the context of a bidding and response. A further improvement since the last inspection is the good use of pupils' prayers and The Lord's Prayer.

Those who regularly lead Worship work hard together to ensure that it is of a consistently high quality. Staff attend two Acts of Worship each week, which is less frequently than Diocesan recommendations, and sometimes the leader is alone with all of Key Stage 2, which is unsafe practice. Although they carry out some informal evaluation of worship and correctly judge it to be good, this evaluation does not yet meet the expectations of the recommendation made in the last inspection report because it does not sufficiently measure its impact on pupils.

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

Parents agree that the headteacher, school leadership team and governors are united in promoting a distinctive Christian vision for the school. The school's leadership at all levels underpins its work and identity as a church school and there is a serious and ongoing determination to be self-critical and evaluative in order to drive improvements. The inspector agreed that they were right to judge this aspect of the school to be good.

The governors play an active role in determining the strategic direction of the school while the incumbent and other foundation governors build on the good relationship with the parish church in the support of the school and its families. This is appreciated by the whole community. Governors and school leaders ensure that newly appointed staff are in sympathy with the school's Christian ethos and this helps to maintain a united commitment to their vision. Staff are comfortable working in this setting and many have good biblical knowledge which they share with their pupils. Religious Education is given core subject status, which emphasises its importance in a Church school

The positive relationship between the school and the parish church ensures that they stand together as a Christian influence in the village. Although only around ten percent of the school's parents are active members of the parish church, such is the combined work of the church and school that there is, as the incumbent reported, "low Sunday attendance but high weekly engagement".