

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### **Newington Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School**

School Lane,  
Newington  
Kent,  
ME9 7LB

#### **Diocese: Canterbury**

Local authority: Kent

Dates of inspection: 1<sup>st</sup> -2<sup>nd</sup> April 2008

Date of previous inspection: May, 2003.

School's unique reference number: 118649

Headteacher: Mrs. Jacqueline Darling

Inspector's name and number: Mr. David Vannerley NS No. 329

#### **School context**

This voluntary controlled Church of England School serves a village in an increasingly urbanised part of Kent. There are 187 pupils on roll. The majority of the pupils are from Newington but some travel in from surrounding towns and villages. They are largely of White British origin but come from a wide range of social backgrounds, including some Traveller children. Newington is recognised as an area of deprivation and the school has a nursery unit because of this; the nursery has 26 sessional places. The Head and Acting Deputy have only been in post since January, 2008 and there have been other significant staffing issues. The recent Ofsted Section 5 inspection found the school to be satisfactory and recovering from a recent period of turbulence.

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

Newington Church of England Primary School is a satisfactory Church school.

#### **Established strengths**

- Acts of Collective Worship are good, or better, and contribute significantly to the moral and spiritual development of the pupils.
- The pupils are well cared for in a safe and stimulating environment which they enjoy and speak of with enthusiasm.
- The leadership team and governing body have a clear understanding of the tasks involved in restoring the school to its previous distinctive Christian character.

#### **Focus for development**

- The Christian values and foundation of the school need to be made more explicit in its policy documents which should also relate to a concise vision statement.
- Record keeping for worship, including a clear process of evaluation, must be further developed.
- Further development work is needed to embed prayer in the life of the school; the Foundation Governors need to have particular regard to this area of the school's life.

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

Pupils say that they enjoy their school and feel safe to express their opinions about it in an open and friendly way. They are positive about learning opportunities and opportunities for break-time and after school activities. They are concerned that poor behaviour seems sometimes to be left unresolved. They speak well of the efforts of the adults in the school to give them positive learning experiences in a Christian context. They say that they enjoy their learning across a range of curriculum areas. The school site is well cared for with attractive

grounds. Classrooms are interesting and stimulating. Display work relating to faith themes is prominent and there are prayer resources in classrooms. The Religious Education makes a positive contribution to the pupils' moral, spiritual and cultural development; work is well presented and shows the pupils engaging with their own ideas and feelings. Circle Time is regularly used although more times of quiet reflection are needed, especially to meet the needs of those without a faith background.

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

Three acts of Collective Worship were observed; the standard was good and one was outstanding. The pupils were engaged and their integrity is respected. Worship has a secure and developing place in the school's life. The school's worship reinforces its values and aids pupils' moral and spiritual development. The scheme for Collective Worship takes account of the important times in the Christian Year, some of which are also marked by the school going to the parish church for major festivals and a Leavers' Service. Parish clergy regularly lead worship in the school. The worship is broadly Christian year in character and the policy acknowledges the school's Anglican heritage. Teachers and Teaching Assistants are ordinarily present at Worship. Worship takes place in class groups once a week but differentiated Key Stage worship does not take place. The legal requirements for school worship are clearly being met. The RE/Worship co-ordinator has a clear focus on the areas for development and the school is well placed to continue positive developments in this area. Record-keeping is not sufficiently developed and in particular lacks evidence of evaluation. Pupils speak positively of worship and take part enthusiastically, singing well and valuing the opportunities to participate. Opportunities are provided for pupils to write prayers but prayer is not yet embedded in the life of the school through, for example, the saying of Grace before lunch.

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

The school's self-evaluation is realistic with a clear understanding of the areas that require further development. The new leadership shows a determination to rectify the present problems and are well placed to re-establish the breadth of practice that is to be expected in a Church school. Significant changes in the day-to-day running of the school have taken place in the last three months which have caused some disturbance to pupils. However, the pupils say that they continue to feel well cared for and are happy with their school experience. The pupils were seen to be generally well behaved and considerate of each other. The School Council feel that they have sufficient opportunity to discuss things that are important to them but are concerned that they do not always see the outcomes for which they had hoped. The Christian foundation of the school is clearly stated in the Prospectus but is not adequately reflected in policy documents, such as those bearing on relationships within the school. A clear vision statement needs to be developed to give coherence and clarity to the policies. The present School Improvement Plan does not contain references to worship or the enhancement of the distinctive identity of the school. The Foundation Governors need to reassert their role in relation to the Christian heritage of the school and in particular to monitor developments concerning its distinctive identity. The school continues to address the issues raised in previous denominational inspections.