

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Saltwood Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Grange Road,
Saltwood,
Hythe,
Kent,
CT21 4QS.

Diocese: Canterbury

Local Authority: Kent

Dates of inspection: 19th and 21st September 2007

Date of last inspection: 2nd and 3rd November 2001

School's Unique Reference Number: 118744

Headteacher: Mrs Elizabeth Petterson

Chairman of Governors: The Revd. Roger Martin

Inspector's name and number: Miss Judy Bainbridge, 328

School context

Saltwood is a one form entry voluntary aided primary school situated to the north of Hythe on the south Kent coast. Most pupils are drawn from the village of Saltwood, with a few coming from further afield. The school is popular and regularly oversubscribed. The great majority of pupils come from White British families. Very few pupils are in receipt of free school meals. The percentage of those with special educational needs is below average. In recent years, standards in the national tests in English, mathematics and science have been well above the national average.

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

Established strengths

- Warm and caring relationships among all members of the school community are explicitly rooted in Christian values.
- The daily act of worship fully engages all pupils and is an integral part of the school day.
- As a result of very effective subject leadership and outstanding teaching, pupils achieve very high standards in Religious Education.
- Inspirational leadership by the Headteacher is supported by strong teamwork on the part of dedicated staff and governors.

Focus for development

- Extend current developments in marking in the core subjects to Religious Education in line with the school's programme for Assessment for Learning to enable all pupils to improve their work and develop their thinking even further.

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

This is a school where the Christian belief in the worth of each individual is expressed in warm, respectful and mutually supportive relationships amongst all its members. For parents, it is primarily the high quality of the care shown to their children which exemplifies the school's Christian character. Pupils also highlight this care as a valued feature of their school. They demonstrate it in the concern they show for one another as they co-operate and support one another in class. Staff also speak appreciatively of the support they receive from one another. The Christian values underpinning these relationships are made explicit in the school's stated aims, and in important documentation such as the prospectus and the behaviour policy. Christian symbols are prominent at key points throughout the school. The stimulating learning environment is enriched by displays which promote spiritual and moral

values, such as friendship and the importance of prayer. Other displays celebrate pupils' work and their individual 'specialness'. Within this environment, pupils' personal development is fostered exceptionally well. For example, there is planned reflection time in worship, and the use of 'Thinking Books' enables pupils to respond to spiritual and moral issues as they arise during the school day. 'Every Child Matters' is high on the school's agenda and is at the heart of the School Improvement Plan. Pupils thoroughly enjoy learning, and speak warmly of their teachers who encourage them to research and discover things for themselves. They are also keen to care for others and to take responsibility, for example through membership of the School Council, acting as monitors and librarians, or working to raise funds to support charities both locally and internationally. Prayer is embedded in the life of the school, in worship, in classroom prayers, and in a parents' group which meets specifically for prayer.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

The daily act of worship is of a very high quality and is integral 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. Parents greatly enjoy attending Friday assemblies and services in church. Music, visual images, story and artefacts are all used to develop the weekly theme. Careful planning and imaginative delivery ensure that each act of worship engages pupils of all ages, and enables them to apply its message in practical ways. For instance, in an act of worship on the theme of 'Friendship', pupils listened to a dramatised story about the use of 'friendship tokens' to create and sustain positive relationships. They were then invited to exchange signs of friendship, such as kind words, with a neighbour. Later in the week, each class was given two tokens for pupils to pass on whenever they performed kind or helpful deeds during the day. Pupils respond enthusiastically to such opportunities for active involvement. They are also eager to contribute their own prayers, and to join in the singing and responses. They say that they value the times of prayer and silence which encourage them to reflect on the meaning of what they have heard. All teaching staff attend worship. Monitoring and evaluation are securely embedded, and involve pupils as well as staff.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

Teaching in RE is lively, well-paced and challenging, ensuring that pupils make very good progress. Standards significantly exceed those laid down in the current Agreed Syllabus. Pupils have very positive attitudes towards the subject. They are appreciative of the good teaching, the resources available to them, and the many opportunities for discussing their own views and for independent learning. They speak articulately about what they are studying and its relevance to their own lives. They also value the way in which learning about other faiths helps them to understand those whose beliefs and way of life are different from their own. The very effective subject leader has produced clear plans which ensure that there is balanced coverage of both attainment targets. She has used monitoring very effectively to support colleagues and build their confidence in teaching RE. Assessment is securely in place. However, marking could be developed further in line with whole-school initiatives in the core subjects so that pupils are enabled to improve their work and extend their thinking even further.

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

The Headteacher exercises inspirational and dedicated leadership. She is supported by a committed staff and strong governing body. All work together as a very effective team, as seen in their collaborative approach to the school's self-evaluation. This is both thorough and accurate. While the school recognises its strengths, it is never complacent. RE and worship are very well led, and there are clear and realistic plans for the development of both areas. There is an excellent partnership with the parish church, and the school makes a major contribution to the life of the village and the wider community. There are well-developed links with other local schools, including a strong commitment to the local Cluster. Pupils have a strong voice through the School Council, and parents are very supportive of the school.