

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### Selsted Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Stockham Lane,  
Selsted,  
Dover,  
Kent  
CT15 7HH

**Diocese: Canterbury**

Local authority: Kent

Dates of inspection: 23 July 2007

Date of last inspection: December 2001

School's unique reference number: 118683

Headteacher: Catherine Taylor

Inspector's name and number: Virginia Corbyn 86

#### School context

This is a small village school serving a rural area. It is arranged in three classes. The Foundation Stage is taught with Years 1 and 2. Pupils come from a broad range of socio-economic backgrounds and nearly all are of White British heritage. All pupils speak English as their first language. An above average number of pupils have learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Having faced possible closure in the last year, it is now becoming an increasingly popular school. The present acting headteacher was appointed in September 2006. A new substantive headteacher takes up his post in September 2007.

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

#### Established strengths

- Positive relationships based upon Christian values which are of great importance to parents.
- Collective Worship which conveys a clear Christian message to the pupils.
- The vision of the current acting headteacher shown in the impact of the Church school self evaluation process and in the leadership of Religious Education.

#### Focus for development

- Develop as fully and explicitly as possible the distinctive Christian character of the school, through its policies and practices.
- Work with pupils, through monitoring and evaluation, to ensure that their ideas for worship are implemented as fully as possible.
- Review the arrangements for the attendance of staff at whole school worship.
- Continue to improve learning and teaching in RE, with particular reference to assessment.

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

The relationships between the members of the school community are an outstanding feature of Selsted school. The staff team is strong, and supports the headteacher in promoting the Christian values which underpin the school's aims. Parents highlighted relationships as the most significant means by which their children are 'nurtured'. One parent was especially impressed by the improvement in her child's self-esteem since joining Selsted from another school. Governors spoke of the clarity with which the school's values are expressed through collective worship. Pupils described the basis of their relationships with staff as 'trust, kindness and friendliness'. They pointed out that it was rare to hear staff raise their voices. It was evident that pupils' high expectations of each other's behaviour and attitudes are important in maintaining a calm and safe school environment. Older pupils care for the younger ones in a natural and supportive manner. Displays around the school encourage

pupils to think about attitudes in a Christian way, for example by 'Shining as lights in the world'. The Christian character of the school is evident in the entrance where clay crosses, designed as part as part of an Art Club competition, have been mounted and displayed. Pupils' spiritual development is fostered in a variety of ways. Prayer is a regular feature of school life, for example when Grace is said before lunch and by use of an end of school prayer. Prayer monitors choose a prayer for each day and place it in the reception waiting area. There are prayers displayed in the outdoor environment to encourage pupils to think about the wonder of creation. A newly created quiet garden has incorporated a cross and prayers. It is here that pupils said that they could go to 'calm down'. In order to celebrate and share the importance of their Christian character as fully as possible with all stakeholders, the school should make sure that this is explicit in all its policies and practices.

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

A clear Christian message is given through collective worship. Pupils are encouraged to think in depth about what they see, hear and experience. The worship observed was led by the headteacher and the incumbent together. The message about 'being stronger when we work together' was related to Jesus working in collaboration with the disciples. Pupils were able to explain this in the context of their everyday lives. The incumbent spoke about the pupils' good level of Biblical knowledge in worship. They sang enthusiastically, and they explained that the purpose of their time together is that 'We worship God'. The recently appointed incumbent plans to re-establish regular church services to mark major Christian festivals. He also wants to explore the possibility of a termly Eucharist held in the hall next to the school, to which parents will be invited. Other local Christian ministers lead worship as part of a rota. This enables the pupils to understand different ways in which Christians express their faith. The school should review the attendance of staff in collective worship so that pupils see that this is important for all members of their community. Although pupils' comments about worship are generally positive, they express a desire to be more actively involved. Regular use of monitoring and evaluation, particularly with pupils, would enable the school to develop this aspect of their worship. Pupils would also like to 'pray together like with the Lord's Prayer'. This is an aspect for which the incumbent has offered support, and through which the school's Anglican character might be enhanced further.

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

The current acting headteacher has continued to move the school forward in its thinking and in its practices as a church school. She has used the Church school self evaluation toolkit to identify those areas which need improvement. She has then worked with the Governing Body to implement appropriate strategies for this. This has built upon the work of the previous headteacher. The staff and the Governing Body are supportive of her vision and her energy. Links with the local churches are growing and developing following the appointment of a new incumbent. Pupils enjoy the worship which he leads and the RE lessons to which he contributes. The leadership and management of RE by the acting headteacher are very good. She has ensured that pupils enjoy their RE lessons and understand the importance of the subject. Pupils explained that RE helps them to learn about other cultures, to listen to each other and to understand the practices of people of different faiths. Staff INSET training has taken place and plans made to support the implementation of the new Kent Agreed Syllabus in September 2007. Particular attention should be given to assessment in order to further develop learning and teaching in RE. The school has moved forward as a church school in recent years. In order to continue this process through rigorous self-evaluation, the active involvement of all stakeholders should be sought.