

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### **St George's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School**

Westwood Road

Broadstairs

Kent

CT10 2LH

**Diocese: Canterbury**

Local authority: Kent

Dates of inspection: 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> March 2008

Date of previous inspection: 30<sup>th</sup> October 2000

School's unique reference number: 118919

Headteacher: Mr Keith Rumblo

Inspector's name and number: Mrs Pamela Draycott 161

#### **School context**

St George's is a large secondary modern Church of England foundation school with business and enterprise specialist status and a small but growing sixth form. Many students come from Thanet where there are areas of significant deprivation. There is a higher than average proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Standards on entry are below the national average, with very few higher attaining students coming into Year 7. Most students are from White British backgrounds. Many achieve admission through some degree of link to a church.

**The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St George's as a Church of England school are satisfactory**

#### **Established strengths**

- the good quality of relationships evident between staff and students and between students themselves;
- the emphasis placed on supporting both the academic and personal development of all students;
- the students' good response to opportunities for spiritual development.

#### **Focus for development**

- address how the school's distinctive Christian character, summarised through its mission statement, explicitly supports its established strengths and drives all aspects of its life and work;
- review the worship policy and practice;
- meet statutory requirements with regard to the entitlement of students in the sixth form concerning worship and religious education.

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

St George's mission is to 'enable all students to achieve their full potential within a Christian environment based firmly on Church of England principles'. In line with its specialist status it summarises its shared purpose as 'striving for excellence through enterprise'. The school takes its responsibility towards meeting the learning needs of all students seriously. Recent changes have been made to curriculum organisation and to pastoral structures that are beginning to raise standards and promote achievement further. A wide range of policies and procedures helps the school to consistently support the learning and personal needs of all students. The school has not recently considered how the distinctive Christian character of St George's applies to these policies and practices except in a general, implicit way. It is beginning to do so through, for example, the recent use of the Diocesan self-evaluation toolkit (provided by the Canterbury Diocese in 2005). This is not yet widely shared or

explicitly guiding school policies and practice.

Students know they are part of a church school identifying good relationships and the way in which people try to respect each other as being the main way in which this is shown. Students feel that their views are being taken seriously and they know where to turn to if they need help. They appreciate the vertical tutor groups. Younger students say it helps them to feel safe and older students think it helps them take responsibility for others. Students speak appreciatively of the school being 'like a family'. One student said, 'In school I feel safe and cared for. I like it here and I'm doing better at school now than I used to.' They also point to going to church for special services and the involvement of local clergy, which they appreciate, as being important to the school's Christian nature. Fund raising, much of it directed and organised by students, for various charities are another way in which the school's implicit Christian foundation is supported and developed.

Students' spiritual development is good and promoted well through worship opportunities. Students speak of RE helping them to think through a range of religious and spiritual issues and relate these to their own lives. The newly introduced project-based learning which currently takes place in Year 7, with plans to extend into Years 8 and 9 over the coming two years, also provides satisfactory opportunities for students to consider issues of spiritual, moral and ethical concerns in appropriate ways. There is a long-standing Christian club held weekly, which currently only a very small number of students attend. It enables those students to consider matters of belief and practice in fitting ways. A staff prayer group, attended by a small number, prays regularly for the needs of the school, the students and the local community. This appropriately underpins the Christian ethos of the school.

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

The school provides a satisfactory range of opportunities to meet the statutory daily act of worship entitlement for all students in the main school. Students in the sixth form take part in one act of worship per week supplemented by attendance at other main school assemblies and church services. They do not however have a daily act of worship to take part in and consequently the school does not comply in providing this entitlement for those in the sixth form.

In the main school worship takes place in various groupings well complemented by attendance at services held in church for special festivals. Opportunities for prayer and reflection are satisfactorily built into the worship programme held in larger school groupings. Voluntary attendance at a termly communion service led by members of the local clergy appropriately extends the main provision. Account is appropriately taken in the programme of key times in the Christian year, such as Christmas and Easter and given the dedication of the school, St George's Day. Local clergy also make a significant and valued contribution to the worship life of the school. The majority of students are respectful during the worship and play an active part when given opportunity to do so.

The quality of the delivery of larger group acts of worship is good and good use is made of outside speakers, clergy and others, to explore different aspects of Christian teaching and values. Explicitly Anglican forms of worship are mainly seen in the special services at church which draw on the Anglican liturgy and in the termly voluntary communion service. The quality of the acts of worship based on the 'thought for the week' in tutor groups is less successful. Based around general moral and ethical themes and based on a wide range of quotations, the 'thought for the week' is displayed in classrooms and in the majority of tutor groups, discussed. However, it is not always extended into worship by for example allowing time for reflection or prayer. There has been no staff training in recent years on the purpose of the 'thought for the week' and how to support it as an opportunity for worship.

The provision and quality of worship, is not routinely monitored by governors and school leaders, although the school leaders are heavily involved in the delivery of the programme in larger groups. The student voice group has begun to be proactive in discussing worship, especially how to more fully involve all students in the voluntary termly communion service. They have spoken recently with a member of the local clergy who is a governor and they are beginning to think about using a prayer box for students and staff to put requests in which could then be offered at the communion service. The collective worship programme has not been reviewed since 2005 and is based on legislation for community schools. It does not explicitly take into account the Christian foundation of the school or recent thinking and guidance with regards to worship in church schools.

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

The senior leadership team of St George's is well-organised, energetic and committed to leading the school's further development for the benefit of all students. Included in their vision is a new school building to significantly enhance the learning environment. Plans are well advanced and include a large reflection room to be used for communion and other worship services, as a quiet space for students and staff and for other discussion and reflective experiences and opportunities. This shows that senior leaders and governors are aware of the importance of the school's Christian foundation in its future development. A small group of senior leaders has begun to use the Diocesan self-evaluation toolkit to reassess the school's Christian ethos and values. This has not yet been widely shared or used to influence further planning and development. Its impact to date is therefore limited.

Links with the local church are good. A member of the local Anglican clergy team has become more active during this academic year in leading worship and in the general life of the school and his involvement and enthusiasm is beginning to have a positive impact and is appreciated by students and staff. Governors take their 'critical friend' responsibilities seriously. The governing body has not recently received any training in considering the school's Anglican character. Governors and particularly the foundation governors have not asked sufficient questions about the explicit nature and purpose of the Christian basis of the school. The legal entitlement for a daily act of collective worship for students in the sixth form is not met and the sixth form curriculum offered for all students does not include sufficient explicit religious education based on the requirements of the Kent Agreed Syllabus.

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