

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

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

Horn street

Folkestone

Kent

CT20 3JJ

#### **Diocese of Canterbury**

Kent LEA

Inspected on 2<sup>nd</sup> & 3<sup>rd</sup> April 2008

Date of previous inspection 24<sup>th</sup>, 25<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup> June 2002

URN 118675

Headteacher: Mrs. Kate Love

Inspector: Mrs Pamela Eccles (NS number 17)

#### **School context**

St. Martin's Voluntary Controlled Church of England Primary School is a primary school of 196 pupils on the outskirts of Folkestone. About 14% of pupils are Nepali nationals whose parents are garrisoned at the nearby army barracks. The school experiences higher than usual pupil mobility, but the majority of Nepali pupils are fluent English speakers. The number of pupils with learning difficulties is broadly average.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St. Martin's as a Church of England school are outstanding**

St. Martin's Voluntary Controlled Church of England Primary School is an outstanding Church school where the school's Mission Statement "Faith and Endeavour - We believe and do our best", is fully exemplified in the day to day life of the school. This is reflected in the raising of standards across the school.

#### **Established strengths**

- The very strong links between the school, the church and the local community
- That every child matters is integral to policy and practice in all areas of school life
- The very high quality acts of worship which significantly impact on pupils' spiritual development
- The strong focus on RE display throughout the school which provides an added dimension to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

#### **Focus for development**

- To further develop the monitoring and evaluation system for Collective Worship
- To establish levels of pupil attainment in RE so that standards are monitored more effectively

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

The school is proud of its Christian foundation and exploits every opportunity to reinforce the Christian values of love, kindness, tolerance and forgiveness to all pupils, staff and parents. The development of SMSC is implicit within the school culture as well as within the internal and external environments. Parents speak highly of the school and are pleased that their views are actively canvassed. They also value highly the support of the Family Liaison Officer. Many parents for whom English is an additional language attend the language classes run by the school during the day. The school has a dedicated Prayer Room, deeply spiritual and predominantly Christian, but which also includes multi-faith opportunities, in which prayer requests can be written and placed in the Prayer Basket and where prayer meetings for pupils and parents are organised. The RE displays in classrooms and corridors are vibrant and stimulating as is the welcoming Entrance Hall. Each classroom has an RE

area and the Christian cross is displayed in classrooms, the hall and other public areas. There is a strong pupil voice through the democratic School Council and pupils are pleased that their suggestions are acted upon. The "Friendship Stop" in the playground is an example of this. They are knowledgeable about what it means to be part of a Church school and enjoy the "Buddy System" whereby the older pupils support the younger pupils. They show sensitivity and empathy to the beliefs and feelings of those from other cultures. They feel safe and know they are valued by their teachers. The school is a regular contributor to the Parish Magazine. There is a strong and regular focus on Christian charity, such as Harvest gifts for the elderly of the parish, and "Oxfam Unwrapped" at Christmas. The school recently participated in "Schools' Day" at the Cathedral.

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

Worship is central to the life of the school, underpinning as it does the Christian character of the school and the ongoing development of pupil spirituality. All staff attend worship and provide strong role models for the pupils. Daily worship is very well planned by the Headteacher as co-ordinator, together with the incumbent, and is distinctly Anglican in format. The headteacher and incumbent together with the Deputy Head regularly monitor and evaluate worship. Children enter very quietly to music, listen attentively and focus on the Christian symbols of a cross and candle. They look to the candle which is lit for the period of reflection. Pupils enjoy the experience of Christian prayer during worship as well as praying at lunchtime and the end of the school day. The major Christian festivals of Christmas, Easter and Pentecost are celebrated and the Worship display board in the hall is enhanced by the use of the appropriate liturgical colour. An act of worship takes place in the church each week, conducted by the Rector or her curate, and the children walk to church with their buddies. The pupils are well used to visiting the church for worship and for RE studies, and their behaviour is exemplary.

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

The headteacher's Christian vision for the school, to "open the school to faith", is reflected in all aspects of her leadership and management. She is well supported by strong and enthusiastic governing body, and the foundation governors in particular, in their role of "critical friend". Highly effective spiritual and pastoral links have been developed between the parish and the school and there is a positive relationship with the local community. The school is highly inclusive in its evaluation of itself as a Church school, and all staff members and governors were involved in the self evaluation process. The School Improvement Plan demonstrates the centrality of RE and Collective Worship to the ongoing development of the school. The headteacher and incumbent recognise the need to adopt a more formal approach to monitoring and evaluating Collective Worship, so that opportunities for spiritual development continue to be identified and planned. The school is well served by a strong RE co-ordinator who is well focussed on bringing about continuing improvement and raising standards. The development of a pupil tracking system would facilitate this. The new scheme REACT has been fully implemented and there is sound coverage of both attainment targets so that SMSC is fully embedded in the life of the school. All pupils have a very good, age relevant, knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith.