

## National society Statutory Inspector of Anglican Schools Reports

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

Stowting  
Ashford  
TN25 6BE

#### **Diocese of Canterbury**

Kent LEA  
URN 118682

Inspected on 26<sup>th</sup> & 28<sup>th</sup> September 2007

Date of previous inspection 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> June 2003

Headteacher: Mrs Astrid Richardson

Inspector's name and number: Mrs Pamela Eccles 17

#### **School Context**

Stowting Voluntary Controlled Church of England Primary School is a smaller than average primary school of 95 pupils serving the local rural community with some pupils attending from surrounding small villages and towns. There are no statements of educational need, although the number of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is slightly higher than average. Few families attend church on a regular basis, although some belong to local faith communities.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Stowting as a Church of England school is outstanding**

Christian values of love, care and support are embedded in the life of the school. That every child is known by name and matters in the life of the school is fundamental to all aspects of school practice.

#### **Established Strengths**

- The very strong relationship between the school, church and the local community
- The strongly nurturing environment which enables all children to flourish as individuals
- Worship as a deeply spiritual experience for all members of the school community
- The impact of RE upon the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all pupils

#### **Focus for Development**

- Develop the school's Mission Statement so that its Christian message is more explicit and prominently displayed around the school.
- Present an annual written report to the PCC

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

The school aims to foster SMSC at every opportunity, actively promoting care for each pupil as an individual, and aiming to teach each pupil to care for others and the world in which they live. Parents speak highly of the school and its supportive approach to their children and themselves, one parent in particular saying how lucky she felt that all her children had been able to attend this school. Behaviour is always good and all staff have firm expectations of the pupils in all areas of school life. Pupils are happy and confident in school, speaking highly of their enjoyment of school, of worship and RE and the number of after school clubs available to them. Children are nurtured and their individual needs addressed so that they are able to move confidently to secondary education at the end of Year 6. Each Reception child is supported by a Y5 or Y6 buddy during worship, enabling the

youngest members of school to feel totally included in school life. A strong charitable emphasis exists within the school whereby they support the education of a child in India. In partnership with the village community the education of a child in Ethiopia is also supported. The school has an excellent choral tradition, having hosted several liturgical choral performances at the cathedral. As Friends of the Cathedral, it has positive links with the Diocese and to support the Cathedral Appeal once more hosted a choral service to which other choirs were again invited. School signage denotes a Church of England school and information regarding church services is displayed on the notice board.

### **The impact of Collective Worship on the school community is outstanding**

Collective Worship plays a vital role in the life of the school. It involves a high level of participation by pupils who are well focussed, listen attentively and sing with enthusiasm and obvious enjoyment. Worship is recognisably Anglican and is supported by the Christian symbols of a cross and candle. At the lighting of the candle, pupils recognise that "God is with us, our Worship can begin", and that the lighted candle symbolises "we are moving from darkness into light". Children compose individual prayers which are placed in a Prayer Bowl and offered up to God. The spiritual development of pupils and staff is enhanced and developed through prayer, silence and the period of reflection offered during this time. Opportunities to nurture and support SMSC were observed during one act of worship with the theme of harvest, when pupils were asked to consider harvest celebrations around the world. Worship is exceedingly well planned by the co-ordinator who is a lay reader and who attends regular Diocesan training. Pupils know the church well, given that theirs is a shared site. The church is regarded as a vital resource for the RE curriculum and all major Christian Festivals and special school services are celebrated in church. The school maintains a vibrant relationship with the church and local community. The school welcomes other clergy and visitors into school to conduct worship.

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

The leadership and management of this Church school are characterised by the headteacher's exceptionally focussed Christian commitment to pupils, parents and staff. She is highly respected within the community for bringing the school into village life at every opportunity and is regarded as the "backbone of the school". The headteacher is ably supported by the Chair of Governors who affirms his "passion for this school" and the foundation governors who both support and hold the school accountable for its ongoing development as a successful Church school. The PCC receives an annual verbal account of the school's progress, and it is planned to extend this in future to a written account. The school benefits from a strong Governing Body with a breadth of knowledge and experience, and whose guiding premise is the needs and welfare of the pupils. The recently completed school evaluation is constructive and fully identifies strengths and areas for development. Parents and pupils speak positively about the way the school actively seeks and listens to their views. RE and Collective Worship are prominent in school improvement planning and pupils speak with enthusiasm about RE being an enjoyable part of the curriculum. The strong focus on specific RE displays and areas within classrooms and the hall attests to the impact of RE on pupils' developing awareness within the focus of SMSC .

September 2007 Stowting VC Primary School Stowting Ashford TN25 6BE