

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Tenterden Church of England Voluntary Controlled Junior School

Recreation Ground Rd

Tenterden

Kent

TN30 6RA

Diocese of Canterbury

Kent LEA

Inspected on 28 and 29 April 2008

Last inspected 9, 10, 11 February 2004

School Number: 118671

Headteacher: Mr Chris Dodge

Inspector: Revd Ronni Lamont, National Society Number 555

School context

Tenterden Church of England Junior School is situated in the Kent countryside in the triangle between Maidstone, Ashford and Hastings. There are 310 pupils on roll. Many of the pupils attended the neighbouring infant school, which does not have a Church foundation. A good proportion travel to the school from outside of the town. Only a small number come from Church families. Most of the pupils are from fairly affluent White British backgrounds. The present head has been in post for two years, following several years of rapid changes in senior management.

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

Established strengths

- The excellent working relationship between the Head and Chair of Governors which has led to evident improvement.
- The focus on developing the spiritual ethos within the school.
- The clear and focussed planning of worship across the school year.

Focus for development

- To ensure the provision for prayer in the classrooms is developed in every class.
- To include the pupils in the evaluation of worship.
- To continue widening the pupils' experience of other cultures and faiths.

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

There are very good relationships throughout the school community. Pupils, staff and parents spoke warmly about these as a strength of their school. They were maintained during the more difficult times, although the pupils recognise that they prefer life under the new Head. Behaviour throughout the school is respectful and helpful. When pupils meet high expectations of behaviour, positive reinforcement helps to promote a sense of mutual respect. Those falling short of these standards are dealt with patiently and sensitively. Older pupils are given the opportunity to become buddies for new pupils and to take responsibility for the care and welfare of younger pupils. Support for charities and good causes extends this care and concern beyond the confines of the school. The children take responsibility for many aspects of school life, such as gardening: maintaining and planting out all the beds around the school. Pupils show good levels of confidence and self esteem. Stakeholders express great pride in their school. One parent said the school was 'the best start he (sic) could have had'. While the accommodation reflects the Christian ethos, with Christian themed displays, the Anglican ethos would be strengthened by more specifically Anglican displays. Similarly visits and visitors from other faiths and cultures would greatly enhance the good

displays featuring stories from other cultures. The school is working on a herb garden to be a quiet place for children to use. The school council helped in the planning of this, as well as suggesting colour schemes for toilets.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

The pupils spoke with evident enjoyment about their experiences of worship in the school, particularly about the opportunities which they are given to participate, through leading worship in classes or by taking an active role. They enjoy the weekly Celebration worship, where achievement is recognised. Acts of worship are well planned around the Christian themes suggested in Diocesan guidance and these themes are developed by the visiting members of the clergy team. The pupils are able to articulate clearly what they have seen and heard. They participate with enthusiasm and are eager to answer questions and offer ideas. The worship co-ordinator has worked hard to make the worship area (school hall) into an environment where personal spirituality can grow. There are good displays (including a personal greeting card from Rowan Williams) and a focus consisting of a table, candle and lectern. This could be quickly enhanced with the addition of liturgical cloths, reinforcing the colours of the 'clock' display of the Christian year and some banners/posters. The co-ordinator is also working to develop the children's ability for personal reflection in the worship, facilitating growth towards spiritual maturity. This is particularly evident amongst the younger children, who entered the school as this was first being introduced. The worship includes greetings and the Lord's Prayer. The clergy team (Vicar and two Curates) contribute well to the life of the school, through weekly chaplain's worship. The school council were especially enthusiastic about the Curate's leading of worship, speaking of it as fun and exciting. Worship in the parish church is valued by both pupils and the parents who spoke of these occasions as memorable highlights of school life. One child said that praying in church 'made him feel special'. There are varied methods for children to write and then say prayers in class, although this needs to be monitored and enabled across the school. There is a need for increased evaluation of worship by pupils as well as staff. All staff usually attend worship.

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

The Chair of Governors took up the role as the new Head was appointed ('I saw the role as one of healing') and together they have worked hard to improve the management of the school in a methodical and conscientious manner. Under the leadership of the Head teacher, staff and governors work together with a sense of commitment and purpose in order to evaluate the school's effectiveness as a Church school. They have identified the strengths and areas for development and are working together to ensure that the distinctive Christian character of the school continues to be embedded within its policies and practices. The foundation governors are committed to their role, have undergone diocesan training, and are a clear voice at governor meetings. Regular prayers at governors' meetings help to underline this ethos. The self evaluation tool is being well used to challenge and promote change. The vision for the school is held increasingly in common by staff and pupils alike, with the Head and Chair driving the improvement. This vision is well communicated through school documentation, the prospectus and the school website. It is also evident in the staff room. The role of the ministry team in their chaplaincy role is very good, with staff and pupils alike recognising the parish's commitment and enthusiasm for the school. Children contribute to the local parish magazine. The involvement of the school council in the school self evaluation process needs expansion.