

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Trottscliffe Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Church Lane,
Trottscliffe,
West Malling,
Kent
ME19 5EB

Diocese: Rochester

Local authority: Kent

Dates of inspection: 1st February 2007

School's unique reference number: 118630

Headteacher: Mrs. Stella Sudds

Inspector's name and number: Mrs. Virginia Corbyn (NS 86)

School context

Trottscliffe Church of England Primary School is a small Voluntary Controlled school situated in a village close to West Malling. *It has 64 pupils on roll and 25% of the pupils live in the village itself.* A small number of pupils and their families regularly attend Church. The number of pupils with learning difficulties is well below average. Almost all pupils are from White British families. A recent OfSTED inspection found that standards in Year 2 and in Year 6 are above average. The report also stated that the school provided a good level of care and support which contributes well to the pupils' personal development. This inspection is the first since the school was removed from Special Measures in June 2004.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Trottscliffe as a Church of England school are satisfactory

Trottscliffe Voluntary Controlled Church of England Primary School in Kent is a satisfactory church school with some good features.

Established strengths

- The impact of the school's positive key values on the attitudes and behaviour of all members of the school community.
- The reverence demonstrated by pupils during worship.
- The strong links with the church which continue to enhance the life of the school.

Focus for development

- The school should ensure that its key values are made more explicitly and distinctively Christian, particularly in the school prospectus.
- Worship should be evaluated and monitored using the input of all stakeholders.
- The physical space used for worship should be improved when that area of the school is developed.
- The school's self evaluation of its distinctiveness and effectiveness as a church school should be re-visited with the involvement of Governors, staff, parents and pupils.

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

Governors, staff, pupils and parents spoke about the special ethos of the school which is always welcoming and which nurtures independent and responsible individuals. There is an emphasis upon inclusiveness and there are clear and high expectations of behaviour which must be kind, considerate and respectful. This produces a community in which all members care very deeply about each other. This is demonstrated, for example, by the practical support of younger pupils by older ones. The staff work as a strong team and are described by pupils as always friendly and kind. They deal sensitively with behaviour which falls below expectations, giving time for quiet, personal reflection when this happens. Pupils spoke

about the benefits of increased confidence inspired by the praise which they receive about their work, achievements and attitudes. Prayer is an important part of the life of the school, being used at the beginning and ending of Governors' meetings, for Grace at lunchtime and led by pupils of all ages during Collective Worship. Religious Education also makes a positive contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development. Pupils recognised that it was learning about Jesus and God that was distinctive about their church school, and parents expressed the belief that their children were given a Christian grounding by attending the school. However, insufficient emphasis is given to the distinctive Christian values that define the life of the school, especially in the prospectus.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is satisfactory

Worship is satisfactory overall, with a number of good features. There is a high expectation of pupils' behaviour, a stillness in prayer and reflection and an enthusiasm for praise through singing. However, not all teachers attend worship on a daily basis. During the inspection, pupils' responses to the questions were thoughtful and clearly expressed and Key Stage 2 pupils led the prayers. The input of church members to worship ensures the inclusion of Anglican belief and practice, Candlemas being the theme during the inspection. Pupils were enthusiastic about those acts of worship in which there is drama and role play, and would like more opportunities for this. Celebration assembly each Friday is attended by many parents and includes an element of worship. Major festivals are marked by church services, and pupils talked about their enjoyment of preparing their own material for these occasions. Parents think that the church services are a key part of defining the school as a church school. The school recognises that the physical environment for worship in school could be much improved, and this is an element that will be a priority in planning the improvement of this area of the school. Pupils have much to say about ways in which worship could be made more interesting, but their views and those of others have not been asked by governors. At present, pupils do not have any direct experience of the Eucharist. The Headteacher and Foundation Governors intend to visit the Rochester Diocesan Schools Festival this year in order to judge whether this might provide an appropriate opportunity for this.

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

The Headteacher and the Governors work hard to maintain and develop strong links with Trottiscliffe Church, including the provision of pastoral support. All members of the school community speak highly of these links. It is shown in many practical ways: through the use of banners in the church that were made at school, the well-supported school services and the regular reports about the school in the parish magazine. The church was described as being at the centre of the village, and the life of the village as being focused around the school. Religious Education is well led and managed, and plans are in place for the implementation of the revised Kent Agreed Syllabus in September 2007. The Headteacher and the Foundation Governors are able to articulate an implicit Christian vision for the school that describes outcomes in terms of the pupils' attitudes and behaviour. However, this vision does not yet include explicit and distinctive Christian values. Also, the self evaluation process has been undertaken by only a small group and does not yet represent a strategic view by the governing body as a whole.

SIAS report February 2007 Trottiscliffe Church of England Primary School Voluntary Controlled Church Lane, Trottiscliffe, West Malling, Kent ME19 5EB