

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Nonington Church of England Primary School

Church Street
Nonington
Dover
Kent
CT15 4LB

Diocese: Canterbury

Local authority: Kent
Dates of inspection: 28.04.2011
Date of last inspection: 22-23. May 2008
School's unique reference number: 118688
Headteacher: Tobin Wallace-Sims
Inspector's name and number: Anne-Marie Trustram 635

School context

Nonington Church of England School is a small village primary school with 75 pupils on roll. The school admits about one third of its pupils from the village and the remainder come from surrounding villages. The school is currently oversubscribed. The number of pupils identified with special educational needs is almost double the national average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Nonington Church of England Primary School as a Church of England school are good.

Established strengths

- The positive impact of Christian values on relationships and behaviour throughout the school
- The commitment of the head teacher and the governors to leading a school based on strong Christian principles of faith, hope and love
- The strong links with the local church and the community
- The school's distinctive Anglican character

Focus for development

- To provide a wider variety of 'child friendly' songs for pupils to sing in acts of Collective Worship
- To plan Collective Worship so that it meets the needs of all age groups
- To involve all stakeholders in the process of self-evaluation with the Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools
- To explore ways for staff and governors to expand the school's vision of Christian values into a more explicit mission statement

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

The Christian ethos in the school is very strong and pupils feel a sense of belonging to a caring community. Christian values greatly impact on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development. Individuals feel valued as unique children of God. Pupils are able to identify ways in which the closeness of the school community strengthens their feeling of self-worth. As one pupil said, 'We are helped to be true to ourselves. We can't all be the same because everyone is an individual.' Pupils can articulate how Christian values impact on their own lives through caring for one another and giving each other advice and support. The care they show for one another is firmly based on the teachings of Jesus. The

relationship between staff and pupils is based on a culture of mutual respect. This is evident by the way they interact with each other and consequently the general behaviour of the pupils is very good. The signs and symbols around the school and in the classrooms serve as a reminder to pupils that their school is a Christian school. Pupils are given many opportunities to think, pray and do something about issues that do not necessarily directly impact upon them, thus preparing them for responsible citizenship. For example, they have contributed to the repairs to the village war memorial and raised funds for the charity BLISS which provides support for babies in special care. A member of staff leads the Christian Club which meets at lunchtime on a weekly basis. At the club, pupils enjoy learning new songs, listening to stories and having fun whilst simultaneously learning about Christian discipleship. Christian values underpin the 'Good relationships, Good choices' policy and it is well understood and exemplified in pupils' behaviour. Pupils value going to church with the school on a weekly basis because their collective presence affirms their strong spiritual contribution to the life of the small community. Parents have commented on the improved behaviour of pupils as a result of the strong Christian leadership of the headteacher. As one parent said, 'The Headteacher strongly promotes Christianity in the school and this makes a difference to all children in the school'.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good.

Collective Worship is central to the daily life of the school. All pupils are involved in Collective Worship, except those who are withdrawn for religious preference reasons. However, their families are very happy that Collective Worship instils Christian principles across the school. Children are actively involved in every act of worship, leading prayers and readings. Special services involve a great deal of pupil involvement. In one act of worship seen, the pupils were involved in lighting the fire to re-enact the Easter vigil as well as holding candles, leading their own prayers and reading from the bible. There is an open invitation to parents and members of the community to join in the weekly Collective Worship in church and invitations are issued for special services. Worship group meetings allow children time and space to discuss and evaluate worship. Worship was the starting point for the Good Relationships, Good Choices Policy. Collective Worship is based on the liturgical calendar and the school strongly promotes its Anglican status through special services in church to mark the greater Christian festivals. Anglican symbolism is used in a range of ways, including candles and processions, and Anglican responses are used during times of prayer. Although pupils are strongly encouraged to become involved in acts of worship, the over emphasis on liturgy prohibits the inclusion of all pupils, particularly younger ones. The exploration of more 'child friendly' resources, including worship songs, is an area of development for the worship leader.

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

School leaders and governors have a vision of how Christian values influence most aspects of the school's life. For example all policies begin with the Christian values of faith, hope and love. There is additional scope for expanding the vision into a mission statement for the school. The governors are aware of the importance of succession planning and are fully committed to Christian leadership in the school. Pupils can articulate how the school's Christian values influence attitudes and behaviour. Thus they exemplified their understanding of 'new beginnings' with the prayer, 'Thank you for new beginnings so that we can start again when we have done things wrong'. From observing lessons, looking at examples of work as well as discussions with pupils, it is evident that the RE curriculum contributes significantly to pupils' social, moral, cultural, and spiritual development. There is a strong sense of community cohesion where the church and school are mutually interdependent. The school supports the church through the weekly school services and the church members support the school by contributing to weekly worship. There are strong links with the local Roman Catholic school in a nearby village, sharing a site for a time and contributing to a joint service. There are links with other schools in the diocese and other communities, including St John's Hospital in Canterbury. The school has responded to the areas for development recommended in the last inspection. There are now displays in the hall, including a worship board and a selection of prayers by pupils. The cross placed at the front of the school clearly promotes its Christian character. There is an outdoor space provided for quiet reflection and

prayer, but the school would like to further develop this area. The self evaluation undertaken by the head teacher and the staff has been rigorous but it has not yet involved governors. This process now needs to be widened to involve all stakeholders.

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