



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

St Margaret's Church of England Primary School,

Collier Street, Nr Marden, Kent. TN12 9RR

Diocese: Rochester

Local authority: Kent

Dates of inspection: 26 June 2013

Date of last inspection: 10 July 2008

School's unique reference number: 118636

Headteacher: Paul Ryan

Chair of Governors: Tom Stevens

Incumbent: Rev'd Paul Filmer

Inspector's name and number: John Viner (NS144)

School context

St Margaret's Collier Street is a smaller than average primary school located in the village of Collier Street but drawing its 117 pupils from a wide area. It is one of four schools in the Maidstone Rural Anglican Church Schools Collaboration. Almost all pupils are of white British heritage and a fewer than average number of pupils is in receipt of free school meals. Approximately twenty percent of pupils attend church. Pupils make good progress and consequently standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are around the national average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Margaret's as a Church of England school are outstanding

St Margaret's is an outstanding church school that is at the heart of its community. Its Christian and Anglican distinctiveness give its pupils a foundation for their future lives. The centrality of prayer and worship enables pupils, including the few from other faiths, to develop positive attitudes, respect and compassion for others. This ensures that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness is well developed and they leave the school well prepared both academically and in their personal development.

Established strengths

- Christian values underpin the school and are evident in all aspects of its work.
- Collective worship is at the heart of the school and is an important part of its daily life.
- Good Religious Education (RE) makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- There are excellent relationships between and amongst adults and pupils that make the school a cohesive, caring community.

Focus for development

- Involve all stakeholders in the school's self-evaluation of its Christian and Anglican distinctiveness.

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

The Christian values of friendship, fairness, respect and helpfulness lie at the heart of the school and are evident in every aspect of its work. They are known by the pupils and referred to by staff in their teaching. Their impact can be seen in the excellent relationships between and amongst adults and pupils, in good levels of pupils' achievement and in the high profile of the school's Christian character. Stakeholders have a clear understanding of the school's Christian distinctiveness. Irrespective of their belief, parents and carers overwhelmingly welcome the values which the school promotes and pupils say that this is a place where people trust each other. The excellent grounding that pupils receive in understanding faith and beliefs helps them to acquire values that they carry forward into their future lives. RE is an important part of the school's curriculum; it is well taught by knowledgeable teachers. Through it, pupils develop a confident awareness of spirituality that leads to excellent outcomes, such as the thoughtful and solemn vows of friendship that pupils wrote in a lesson about marriage. Pupils say that RE is exciting and that teachers make it fun. They are well grounded in Christianity and excited about learning about other faiths. RE makes an excellent contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral and social development because, although they are not themselves part of a diverse community, they understand Christianity in its context of a multicultural world faith. The school's regular attendance at the diocesan Church Schools Festival gives pupils a sense of the wider Anglican community. Parents agree that their children develop excellent attitudes of tolerance and respect. This is a cohesive community where pupils behave well, not because they are expected to, but because they want to. They are sensitive to the views of others, compassionate in their response to needs, locally, nationally and globally, and considerate to their peers.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is central to the life of the school. Pupils of all faiths understand that this is a time when God is honoured and faith is nurtured. Pupils enjoy worship; they recount those times when it has excited or moved them and say that they like to learn more about God and the life of Jesus. Worship is thoughtfully planned by the headteacher and staff as an opportunity to teach pupils about key Christian concepts such as the Trinity, which pupils can explain with surprising clarity. The range of leaders, including staff, incumbent and visitors ensures that worship is always fresh and interesting. There are many excellent opportunities for pupils to participate in worship; reading and leading prayers. Pupils are inquisitive and enthusiastic about worship. They are reverent, thoughtful and pay close attention. A pupils' worship committee contributes to the planning and carries out regular, independent and searching evaluations. Worship has a strong focus on Biblical teaching and contains many Anglican elements, such as the responses used when the candle is lit as worship begins. The church services, held four times each year, are popular with parents and carers, who attend in large numbers. Pupils become familiar with Anglican tradition and practice and are at ease in church. Prayer is of central importance and there are many times when pupils can pray, individually and collectively. Classroom prayers are used at lunchtime and the end of the day and there are well-used prayer and reflection areas in the classroom and hall. Pupils can add their own prayers to the prayer box for later use in worship and so understand the personal nature of prayer. Many pupils develop the confidence to lead extemporary prayers during worship. Worship and prayer inspire the whole school community and contribute to its spiritual development.

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

The headteacher provides strong Christian leadership and communicates an ambitious Christian vision for the school. Governors and key staff are united behind him and promote the school's distinctive character and values very effectively. As a result, pupils are nurtured, both academically and personally, and know that they matter as individuals. Governors say that they want pupils to feel connected to Christianity because this gives them a foundation and confidence for the next steps in their education. Governors and leaders know their school well because they exercise robust self-evaluation. This includes the robust evaluation of RE, undertaken with the headteacher. The partnership with three local Church Schools benefits all staff and ensures that governors are well prepared for the school's future leadership needs. The school's Christian character is kept under review by a committee limited to staff, governors and clergy. Pupils are given a voice through their worship committee whilst the views of parents and carers are collected through an annual survey. Leaders and governors have addressed the recommendations made in the last inspection by developing this review process and by ensuring that all teachers attend collective worship. These actions have further strengthened the centrality of faith and the way that Christian values underpin the life of the school. The excellent practices in RE and worship are evidence of this. There is a strong partnership with the parish church supported by the incumbent's valued contribution to school. Once a year, the school leads a Sunday service in church, which is well-supported by parents and valued by the congregation. The school plays an active role in the life of the village so that the whole community benefits from its Christian presence.

SIAMS report June 2013, St Margaret's CE Primary School, Collier Street TN12 9RR