

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### **St. Katharine's Knockholt Voluntary Aided CE Primary School**

Main Road, KNOCKHOLT, Sevenoaks, Kent TN14 7LS

**Diocese: Rochester**

Local authority: Kent

Date of inspection: 13 December 2012

Dates of last inspection: 2-3 July 2008

School's unique reference number: 118713

Headteacher: Sarah-Jane Tormey

Chair of Governors: Doreen Jones

Incumbent: Rev. John Benson

Inspector's name and number: Jan Thompson No 92

#### **School context**

St. Katharine's Knockholt is a Voluntary Aided Church of England Primary School. It is situated in the small Kent village of Knockholt, opposite the parish church. Recent new building work has provided the school with spacious, attractive accommodation. The school is successful and oversubscribed, with numbers having increased recently to 178 pupils, enabling the school to be one-form entry. Pupils are mostly White British, drawn from Knockholt and surrounding villages. About 10 percent are from committed church families.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St. Katharine's CE Primary School as a Church of England school are good**

St Katharine's Knockholt continues to provide pupils with a good Christian education.

#### **Established strengths**

- Religious Education (RE) and collective worship strongly support pupils' spiritual and moral development.
- Pupils gain a good knowledge and understanding of Christianity.
- Supportive relationships exist between the church, school and local community.

#### **Focus for development**

- Improve the self-evaluation process by involving all stakeholders in systematic reviews of the school as a Church school.
- Rewrite the RE policy statement for accuracy and include more information in the collective worship policy statement.
- Raise the profile of the RE leadership and allocate more time for monitoring and training.
- Expect teachers to attend daily collective worship with their classes.

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

A range of Christian values permeate all aspects of school life. These values are related to Christian teaching, particularly through collective worship and RE. The government values for Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning are linked to Bible Stories; and the Olympic values are displayed under the Christian song 'Be brave, be strong, for the Lord thy God is with thee.' Morals are taught in a Christian context of 'What would Jesus like us to do?' Forgiveness has a particularly important influence on behaviour, encouraging pupils to be generous in their attitudes to others and to consider other people's points of view. Caring for others is seen by many as the defining value of this Church school. Consequently, this is a happy Christian community where relationships are excellent at all levels throughout the school. The school also looks outwards, raising money for national and international charities in response to pupils' suggestions. The school environment is well used for spiritual development. Classrooms are bright, attractive and stimulating, with attractive RE displays that include pupils' work. Prayer areas also feature in all classrooms, and pupils' prayers are used as grace before lunch. At the time of the inspection, all classes were using Advent calendars in preparation for Christmas.

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

School worship evokes a willing participation from pupils and a positive response. Pupils enjoyed the worship during the inspection when a Year 6 boy acted out the story with good humour as it was told by the headteacher. Pupils demonstrated a good knowledge of Christianity, and were able to make the link between the story and the incarnation. Singing plays an important part in school worship. Pupils have a wide repertoire of religious songs and sing superbly. Pupils say that they particularly like the prayer at the end of worship because it makes the theme personal to them. They also like the quiet, reflective time at the beginning when recorded music is played. They have a good understanding of the importance of worship and know that it is a time 'to be with God and to follow God's way', 'to talk to God' and 'to bring problems to God'. They also appreciate this opportunity to 'learn more about God.' Pupils like going to church for the special festivals of Harvest, Christmas and Easter. The Rector also takes collective worship in school once a week. This, together with the use of an Anglican greeting and response, gives pupils some experience of Anglican practices. Year 6 pupils also attend a Eucharist at the annual Church Schools Festival in Rochester Cathedral. The headteacher organises the worship on weekly themes, based on the Church's year and drawing on a wide range of resources. The school's policy statement on collective worship states clearly that worship is Christian and Anglican but fails to give parents enough information on content and organisation. Some attention has been given to pupils' views, as suggested at the last inspection, but there is no formal and regular system for doing this. Teachers are only required to attend collective worship on two days a week with their classes, which detracts from its importance and impact.

**The effectiveness of Religious Education (RE) is good.**

The governing body has opted to use the local Kent Agreed Syllabus for RE, supported by the Canterbury Diocesan scheme of work, but this is not in the policy statement. This syllabus is now well established and resourced, enabling pupils to make good progress across the school and to attain above average standards at Key Stage 2. Teachers assess each pupil's work, recording this against level descriptions stuck into their books. Marking is thorough, often with extension questions given for pupils to reflect on. Lessons are creative and interesting, with the result that pupils behave well and work hard. Pupils work well together and enjoy discussion, talking openly about belief and asking some profound questions. Teachers ensure that the religious content of the subject always relates to pupils personally, and this has a strong impact on their spiritual and moral development. A Year 6 pupil, for example, in some extended writing on the meaning of the Parable of the Good Samaritan, explained how it had encouraged her to help someone who was being bullied. Teachers' own subject expertise results in pupils' good knowledge and understanding of Christianity. Pupils also understand the importance of studying other religions in order to show respect for people with different beliefs and practices. RE lessons on Hinduism have been enhanced with first-hand information from a parent visitor. Lesson time for RE is often extended by linking it with other subjects. For example, Year 4 produced some stunning artwork on symbols for the Holy Spirit and Year 2 lit up stars in science to illustrate the Nativity story.

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

The governing body has addressed the issues for development from the 2008 report. Most successful has been the use of levels by teachers to raise standards in RE. The National Society toolkit has been adopted for self evaluation as a Church school, but not all stakeholders are involved in the process of evaluation and consequently there is insufficient objective evidence for some of the judgements. The headteacher is very capable and a committed Christian. She knows the staff and pupils very well and keeps the governing body well informed. She is supported by a dedicated staff, many of whom are active in their own churches. However, RE is not treated as a core subject. The RE leader is part-time and has not been given enough opportunity to monitor her subject. She has had little external support, even though regional meetings for RE subject leaders are regularly available through the Diocese. There is a strong relationship between the school and the parish church, particularly through the governing body. Parents like the Christian education that their children receive and the close links with the church. The Rector is well known in the village and a regular visitor to the school. However, his role as link governor for RE and Collective Worship is not clearly defined and does not involve formal monitoring or time with the subject leader.