

STATUTORY INSPECTION of ANGLICAN SCHOOLS

ROCHESTER DIOCESE

2010



**Platt Church of England
Primary School
Voluntary Aided**

St.Mary's Platt Nr.Sevenoaks Kent TN15 8JY

Unique Reference No: 118728

Kent LA

Acting Head Teacher: Mrs. Sonia Phillips

Chair of Governors: Mrs. Sarah Allewell

Incumbent: Revd. Liz Walker

Inspector: Ms Jan Thompson (NS 92)

Inspection: 29 June 2010

SUMMARY JUDGEMENT

How distinctive and effective is the school as a Church of England school?

Platt Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School has made good progress since the last inspection, particularly in Religious Education, and is now an outstanding church school. **GRADE 1: OUTSTANDING**

SCHOOL CONTEXT

Platt Church of England Primary School has 152 pupils, drawn from the Kent village of St. Mary's Platt and surrounding areas. Pupils are from White British backgrounds and the proportion with learning difficulties and those eligible for free school meals is below average. About twenty percent of the pupils are from active church-going families. The head teacher is currently on maternity leave, with the deputy as acting headteacher. Ofsted judged the school to be good, with outstanding features such as care, guidance and support. It also commented on the 'Christian ethos' of the school and pupils' 'spiritual awareness'.

ESTABLISHED STRENGTHS

- The prayerful nature of the school community.
- The strong spiritual and moral development of pupils.
- The excellent outcomes from the new Religious Education (RE) syllabus.
- The firm links with the parish church, particularly the influence of the Vicar and other governors.

FOCUS FOR DEVELOPMENT

- Articulate the school's Christian values better, particularly in the school prospectus.
- Share some of the Vicar's responsibilities eg. with other Foundation Governors.

How well does the school, through its distinctive Christian character, meet the needs of all learners? Grade 1: Outstanding

Everything that made this section outstanding at the last inspection still applies and in many cases has been strengthened. The motto 'Christian values and excellence' accurately sums up the ethos and educational drive of this school, because they believe 'God desires that each person should do their personal best'. Pupils' moral development is based on Christian principles, such as care for others, truthfulness and forgiveness. This results in a happy school where relationships are very good at all levels and pupils behave well. A governor said that every child matters 'because we all matter to God'. Another gave the example of how Traveller children had been welcomed into the school, which has had a positive influence on attitudes in the village. The school is a prayerful community for staff, pupils and parents. Pupils respond very well to the many excellent opportunities they have for prayer, in interactive prayer displays around the school and times for prayer throughout the day. Pupils also care for others less fortunate than themselves and understand the Christian motivation for this. One pupil said "God shows you the right way to go." For example, they recently raised money for earthquake victims in Haiti, which was sent to Christian Aid. The school is a Fairtrade school because it believes in justice for the poor. It is also an Eco school, where pupils care for God's creation.

What is the impact of collective worship on the school community?

Grade 1: Outstanding

Christian, Anglican worship continues to be central to the life of this school and has a strong influence on pupils' spirituality. Since the last inspection, the special certificate assemblies have been separated from the daily acts of worship so that pupils now understand clearly the divine nature of worship. The worship co-ordinator has monitored collective worship in every class and says "Children talk enthusiastically about worship." During the inspection, in an act of worship on The Lord's Prayer, pupils behaved respectfully and responded appropriately to music and singing, humour and silent prayer. They are familiar with a range of Anglican practices, such as liturgical greetings and responses, the use of symbolism, and commemorating the seasons and festivals of the Church's year. Nine school services are held in church each year, one of which is a Holy Communion service. Year 6 pupils regularly attend the annual Church Schools Festival in Rochester Cathedral and one said "It felt like we connected to God in new ways." Since the last inspection, a leaflet and planning sheet have been produced that give good support to teachers in leading their weekly worship in class. This is also encouraging pupils to take a leadership role.

How effective is Religious Education? Grade 1: Outstanding

RE is very well supported by an experienced and enthusiastic subject leader. Since the last inspection, the new Diocesan RE syllabus has been established, with very good outcomes. Staff have been supported on the effective use of the national level descriptions, in response to a focus for development in the last report. Consequently teaching is at least good and often outstanding, with some lively and creative lessons that engage pupils well and challenge them to think. Pupils therefore make very good progress across the school, especially those in the middle range. Pupils enjoy RE, with many saying it is their favourite subject. They talk about it at home to such an extent that some parents have asked the Vicar to give them classes so that they can keep up with their children. RE makes an excellent contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development because of the emphasis it puts on balancing learning about religion and learning from it. For example, the Year 2 class analysed the characteristics of Christian love from the famous New Testament passage in 1 Corinthians 13 and explored relevant examples of love in their own lives. The emphasis of the syllabus on Christianity leads to good knowledge and understanding. This starts in Reception, where pupils learnt a lot about Christian worship from a church role-play area. Other religions are also taught well, with some excellent displays around the school. This helps pupils to learn respect for all religions. However, because of its location, and the school has found difficulty in giving pupils first hand experience of other religions.

How effective are the leadership and management of the school as a church school? Grade 1: Outstanding

Senior leaders, governors and members of staff are all working together to make this an even better church school. Since the last inspection, the whole governing body is now fully involved in the school's self evaluation as a church school and there has been a focus on the school's Christian values. However, fitting this into the acronym of 'PLATT' has not been effective and the school's mission statement and prospectus do not yet reflect well enough the distinctive Christian values that make this such a strong church school. The governing body is very clear on the importance of Christian leadership in the school and has been successful in appointing effective Christian headteachers. The school and church are close partners and are an integral part of the village community. The Vicar gives good pastoral support to staff, pupils and parents. However, she is also the Diocesan Director of Ordinands and cannot give as much time to the school as she would wish, particularly in her role as link governor for RE and worship.