

Guston Church of England (Controlled) Primary School

Burgoyne Heights
Guston
Dover
Kent CT15 5LR

Diocese: Canterbury

Local authority: Kent
Dates of inspection: 21st March 2012
Date of last inspection: 19th – 20th November 2008
School's unique reference number: 118687
Headteacher: Miss Deborah Allen
Inspector's name and number: Mr Matthew Crick 758

School context

The school is a smaller than average primary school for children aged 4-11 years. It serves a diverse community which, unusually for the area, has a minority of children who have English as their first language. The significant majority of the children are from service families that generally move every three years. Most children are from non-Christian faiths.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Guston Church of England (Controlled) Primary School as a Church of England school are good

The school has a strong commitment to providing an inclusive provision in accordance with its Church status. It works proactively with key groups in the community and so is highly valued by those the school serves.

Established strengths

- Clear Christian motivation behind the strong commitment to the inclusion of all children and families served by the school.
- Strong spiritual development and well-being as a result of effective and imaginative outreach to families in challenging circumstances.
- The inspirational Christian leadership of the Headteacher engenders a prominent place for the school in the wider community.

Focus for development

- Ensure the further enhancement of the school's distinctive Christian character has a prominent place in the school improvement plan.
- Develop formal strategies to monitor the impact of Religious Education [RE] and collective worship in promoting the school's Church status.
- Enable the children to take an active part in the leadership of day-to-day worship.

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

This is an open and welcoming school that has a clear understanding of how its Church status enhances and enriches the lives and learning of all those linked with the it. The key Christian values of the school are well promoted and understood by children, parents, staff and Governors. Since the last inspection leaders have ensured that there is a range of Christian symbols throughout the school. Crosses of different styles from different cultures, RE displays in all classrooms and attractive places for prayer and reflection in prominent places can be found inside and outside the school building. The prayer station in Key Stage 2, prayer tree in the entrance hall and the memorial garden are particularly valued by the children who played a key part in their development. Use is now made of key policies and

the website to clearly promote the distinctive Christian character of the school. The school is very effective at reaching out to all the families it serves. Most of these are from other cultures, faiths and/or face the day-to-day challenge of including service personnel who are on active service. As a result of provision like the Bluey Club, which supports children whose fathers are on deployment, the spiritual and emotional well-being of the children is strong. Parents are very conscious of the work done to promote inclusion. One said, "Friendship comes naturally in this school." They also appreciate and understand the school's Christian motivation while recognising the status and value given to the understanding of value of other faiths. Children are proud of their school and the way, "everyone looks out for each other." They place importance on the contribution of RE and collective worship to their day-to-day lives and the input they have as to which charities benefit from their fundraising. Church links have developed since the last inspection with clergy involvement being widened on the Governing Body. Clergy have also been on hand at key moments when support was needed. The methods used to gather the views of stakeholders are informal. There is scope for these to be more systematic to ensure all members of the school community are able to influence the development of the school's distinctive Christian character.

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

Since the last inspection a system of monitoring has been established. It has resulted in changes of practice in worship that have enabled all children in the school to feel included and affirmed. The worship observed was engaging and thought provoking. It used a time when Jesus showed anger to address an important, complex and relevant issue in the lives of many of the children. The Headteacher skilfully wove this into the children's day-to-day life in school through the use of the question she posed as the children left the room. Children regard worship as a key part of their day. They place particular value on opportunities to pray, sing and share with friends. Children's input to worship includes sharing prayers and leading on special occasions. They have little involvement in planning or playing a leading role in day-to-day worship. Monitoring of collective worship has been carried out by one only person. All other feedback has been informal. There is clear scope for more formal structures to be established to ensure that the views of all stakeholders are taken into account and particularly to increase the role of Governors in monitoring. This will further enhance the well planned programme that ensures a distinctively Christian starting point and central theme for all worship. The introduction of prayers to open Governors' meetings has happened since the last inspection. More clergy and staff are involved in the leading of acts of worship. The worship display is prominent, attractive and promotes an appreciation of the theme. Since the last inspection, the school has established a ritual for worship which reflects both Anglican tradition and the cultural diversity of its pupils. It has plans to develop this further.

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

The school's leadership has taken advantage of a change in the staffing structure to widen the involvement of staff in the leadership of RE and collective worship. The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) now plans worship together and this has helped to promote a stronger shared vision for the school's Church status and stronger succession planning. As a result, the school has successfully addressed most of the key issues identified in the last inspection. This reflects the Headteacher's strong leadership with regard to the development of the school's Christian character. Governors play an active role in the life of the school, with Foundation Governors able to describe the impact of the Christian ethos and their role in supporting the SLT. An example of this is the effective way the school reaches out to community it serves. While productive use has been made of informal feedback to improve provision, formal procedures and strategies to assess the impact of the distinctive Christian character and its place in the school plan have yet to be established. Data from monitoring of lessons and books shows the children's progress and attainment in RE to be in line with other core subjects, which represents an improvement since the last inspection. The school's focus on language acquisition has resulted in children being increasingly able to access all aspects of the RE curriculum as they progress through the school. The new RE leader is being well supported and there are plans in place to continue to access support and training from the Diocese. The school has the capacity to develop strategies to ensure that both RE

and collective worship are more strongly represented in the school plan.

SIAS report March 2012 Guston Church of England (Controlled) Primary School Dover CT15
5LR