

St George's Church of England Foundation School

Westwood Road,
Broadstairs,
CT10 2LH

Diocese: Canterbury

Local authority: Kent
Dates of inspection: 22 June 2011
Date of last inspection: 18/19 March 2008
School's unique reference number: 118919
Headteacher: Mrs Kim Stoner
Inspector's name and number: Tricia Martin NS105

School context

St George's Church of England Foundation School is a 11 - 19 mixed secondary modern school of above average size situated in an area where over 30% of all students attend local Grammar Schools. The school serves a large number of 'looked after' students. It has an increasing roll and is vastly oversubscribed for admissions. The school serves an area of significant deprivation. A new headteacher and leadership team have been in place for almost two years during which there has been rapid and rigorous change.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St George's Church of England Foundation School as a Church of England school are outstanding

Christian values lie at the heart of this school and permeate all areas of school life. Both the building and outstanding relationships contribute to its distinctiveness and effectiveness. The phrase "God's in here" best epitomizes the school.

Established strengths

- Care for the students and all members of the school community
- Very strong links with local churches and the community
- Very strong commitment of the headteacher, senior leadership team and all staff to the students

Focus for development

- Embed regular monitoring and evaluation of collective worship
- Involve governors in Church school self evaluation

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

"This school is brilliant", sums up how students feel about the school. This is because students feel valued and safe. They talk about the Christian values promoted in the school and the impact they have upon their lives. "They give us a stronger bond", explained one student. Another student talked of the respect in which her beliefs (which are not Christian) are held. Consequently all students feel included. Daily prayer unites the school community and when it had to be temporarily suspended because of external examinations taking place, a member of staff was asked if they could have prayer in their classroom instead which illustrates its impact. Opportunities for spiritual development abound. Students describe how their attitudes are challenged through collective worship. The design of the new school building with 'The Heart' at the centre enables social skills to be developed. This is supported by the system of vertically grouped tutor groups where older students mentor younger ones and help to raise their aspirations. Strategies are in place to support disaffected students and their success is evident in the drastic decline of student exclusions. Involvement in Global Challenge develops students' understanding of their role as global citizens. Excellent relationships are evident at all levels and this leads to such comments as "I wish I'd come to this school in Year 7", and, "everyone is welcomed", and "everyone is equal."

The impact of collective worship on the school community is Good

Collective worship lies at the heart of the school. The appointment of a Christian Ethos Coordinator who oversees worship has had a good impact on the school community. The inclusion of a Reflection Room in the new school building has increased opportunities for prayer. Students and staff use this room for private and group prayer and are encouraged to make use of a prayer tree on which they can hang personal prayers. These prayers are then offered to God in the Holy Communion service demonstrating community support and concern for individual needs. The whole school stops for a daily prayer immediately before the end of the school day. The prayer is led by a member of staff or a student and it is shared with the whole school via a loud speaker system. This unites the whole school community and, together with the other opportunities for prayer, provides outstanding opportunity for spiritual development. Students' attitudes to collective worship are good because worship is carefully planned, engaging and age appropriate. Consequently, all members of the school community feel included and affirmed by worship. One student explained how an act of worship about forgiveness led to him repairing a damaged relationship. This example demonstrates how worship influences the thinking and behaviour of the school community. Students experience the Anglican tradition of worship through the involvement of local clergy who both lead worship and pastorally support the school. Students understand the cycle of the Church's year as this forms a basis for worship themes. A service of Holy Communion is held once a month in school and participation is open to all. Through these services students gain understanding of Anglican tradition in worship. Students' worship experience is broadened by the involvement of other local church Ministers and Leaders who offer different styles of worship. The school has the capacity to become excellent in this area but is judged as good at present as some of the strategies need to be embedded and evaluation procedures developed.

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

The school has a great deal of which to be proud. The change since the last inspection has been rapid and rigorous. The strong Christian ethos permeates all aspects of school life. This is because core Christian values are actively promoted by the headteacher and senior leadership team. The values of Hope, Compassion, Forgiveness, Friendship and Wisdom are explored through worship, tutor group times and the curriculum. Consequently they are understood and lived out by staff and students alike. Students and staff readily articulate the impact of the school's Christian values and explain how these enrich attitudes and behaviour throughout the school. Stakeholders are consulted about the ethos of the school but this has yet to be fully embedded. Governors have yet to take ownership of Church school evaluation in partnership with the school Leadership Team. The school takes seriously its responsibility for succession planning. Teachers are identified and trained to take on greater responsibilities. Two excellent strategic appointments have been made – Christian Ethos coordinator and Lead Learner in RE - and this is helping to raise standards and awareness of the Christian vision of the school. The school has very good links with the local churches and the wider community. The presence of clergy and ministers in the school and their contribution to chaplaincy support to students, parents and staff is supportive and affirming. There are strong links with the local community and the global community which enable students to see beyond themselves and explore their personal responsibilities as a citizens. All areas of development identified in the last inspection have been addressed.