

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

### Northbourne Church of England Primary School

Coldharbour Lane, Northbourne, Deal. CT14 0LP

**Current SIAMS inspection grade**

**Outstanding**

**Diocese**

**Canterbury**

Previous SIAMS inspection grade

Good

Local authority

Kent

Name of federation

The Downs and Northbourne Church of  
England Primary Schools

Date of inspection

10 March 2017

Date of last inspection

10 February 2012

Type of school and unique reference number

Voluntary Controlled Primary 118689

Executive Headteacher

Catherine Karunaratna

Inspector's name and number

Canon Linda Burton 462

### School context

Northbourne is a smaller than average rural primary school drawing pupils from a wide area. The proportion with special educational needs is above the national average. The small number of pupil premium pupils make good progress from their starting points. Since 2011 it has been part of a federation of two schools led by an executive headteacher and with one governing body. It was judged as good in Ofsted inspections in January 2012 and September 2016. It is a Forest School. It has strong links with Northbourne church. Its incumbent and those of the churches in Walmer are members of the federation's governing body.

### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Northbourne as a Church of England school are outstanding

- Strong, insightful and effective school leadership enables all pupils to fulfil their individual potential.
- Christian values are at the heart of school life and shape, support and sustain achievement at every level.
- Outstanding care and support by the staff team for all pupils, especially those experiencing any kind of difficulty, means that any potential barriers to their success are minimised.
- Collective worship is engaging, inspirational and inclusive, offering pupils opportunities to participate and reflect on the Christian messages they encounter.
- Standards of teaching and learning in religious education (RE) are of a very high quality. RE makes a significant contribution to the school's Christian ethos and to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

### Areas to improve

- Provide opportunities for pupils to take part in creating and leading acts of collective worship on a regular basis so that they take ownership of and responsibility for this aspect of school life.
- Make use of the opportunities provided by the new spiritual garden to develop the prayer life of pupils.

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

Northbourne's clear and embedded Christian ethos is at the heart of its life and work. The federation's core Christian values of respect, love, faith, compassion, kindness and forgiveness, based on biblical teaching, are displayed prominently throughout Northbourne school. They are lived out day-by-day by the school community. Most pupils are able to root the school's values in biblical stories and relate them to their own lives. The outworking of these values has ensured that good standards of pupil attainment and progress have been sustained over a number of years. Disadvantaged pupils make good progress: achievement gaps have closed over time and are continuing to diminish. Relationships at Northbourne are shaped by the school's core Christian values. Pupils feel happy and enjoy going to school. Their behaviour and attitudes throughout the school day are exemplary and they show great support and concern for each other's wellbeing. The school forum encourages pupils to care for each other, to take responsibility for their own and each other's actions and to enrich school life for all. Adults act as Christian role models for pupils in their behaviour and positive relationships, showing forgiveness, helping others and 'going the extra mile'. High quality systems of pastoral care and support are well established. There is a strong commitment towards meeting the needs of any who are vulnerable or experiencing a wide range of challenges. Parents readily describe the positive impact of the school's loving concern and effective support. The school has a broad and creative curriculum. Through a range of creative learning opportunities, pupils are encouraged and enabled to reflect on the school's Christian values and to explore and develop their spirituality. For example, forest school outdoor learning experiences support pupils' development of empathy and perseverance. Creating and responding to their own 'big questions' in RE, such as, 'Can you be happy and sad at the same time?' encourages pupils to reflect and think. Involvement in local, national and international initiatives confirms the strength of spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development in the school. There is strong evidence of shared understanding among staff and governors and of planned provision in each curriculum area. Pupils show love in action through their engagement locally with the Deal Food Bank. They show compassion and kindness for children less fortunate than themselves across the world through their charitable activities. One example of this is their support over a number of years for the Mustard Seed Relief Mission, in conjunction with St Augustine's church community. Pupils can talk confidently about the impact of this work on their own lives. The teaching of RE makes a significant contribution to the Christian character of the school because pupils learn how to relate events in Jesus' life and Jesus' teachings to their own lives. Pupils speak with enthusiasm about RE and are excited and engaged by their learning in the subject. Lessons ensure that pupils have a very good knowledge of Christianity and very good awareness of other faiths through highly effective teaching, enhanced by field visits. For example there have been trips to Walmer Baptist church, Rochester Cathedral, and the Gurdwara in Gravesend. Northbourne has links with its federated school, with the Deal Learning Alliance - a group of eleven primary schools in the Deal area - and with schools in London and Africa. These enable pupils to explore the lives of others around the world as well as the different communities found within the locality and country.

## **The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding**

The daily act of collective worship has a high profile in the life of the school. Pupils are very positive about it and speak about it as a time to be calm, to reflect, to learn more about the Christian faith and to pray. Parents recognise its importance in promoting pupils' spiritual development and their knowledge of the Christian faith. Imaginative planning and well thought-out presentation ensure that collective worship marks the seasons of the Church's year, is rooted in the biblical teachings which underpin the school's Christian values, and meets the needs of all. The worship programme is enhanced by the rector of St Augustine's church leading worship weekly. Christian festivals are celebrated either in school or in the church. Very many parents attend these, as they do Friday afternoon celebration worship in school. Collective worship follows a four-fold structure and reflects Anglican liturgical practice. It engages all pupils. This is evident in their thoughtful responses to challenging questions posed, their offering of prayers they have written and their joyful singing in two part harmony. Pupils, however, have limited opportunities to develop and lead their own acts of worship. This is an area of development for the school. Through worship, pupils have a good understanding of biblical material and Christian teaching. This includes the importance of Jesus for Christians, as well as an age-related understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. They are able to articulate clearly how they can put the moral messages from worship into action in their lives. There is strong evidence of a well-established system of monitoring and evaluation of collective worship by governors, leaders of a group of local church schools called the Deal Ethos Company, and pupils. The

impact of this is ongoing improvement of practice in all aspects of collective worship. Pupils understand the value of prayer in their spiritual development. There is a range of opportunities for prayer in the daily life of the school. These include taking home the school's special prayer book and writing their own prayer to add to it and contributing to prayer areas in classrooms. Pupils also say a prayer at lunchtime and the end of the day. Pupils have been fully involved in planning and making the school's spiritual garden, which is nearing completion. The creative use of this new resource to further enhance opportunities for reflection and prayer is an area of development for the school.

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

The executive headteacher has a clear, inclusive Christian vision for the school in her focus for developing the whole child. She brings considerable energy, purpose and commitment to ensuring that each has the maximum opportunities to fulfil their individual potential. The governing body shares this vision and provides highly effective and committed support. School leaders and the whole staff team regularly review the school's Christian vision. This was seen most recently in the executive headteacher undertaking a research project with a local university and Canterbury diocese on putting into practice Christian values in church schools. School leaders' shared moral purpose drives the school's commitment to sustaining good standards of attainment and progress, providing continuous personal development and giving wholehearted support to individuals and groups. The governing body is fully involved in the process of ongoing school self-evaluation, including of its Christian character, and this leads to effective plans for improvement. Governors undertake focused monitoring and evaluation activities across both federation schools. By monitoring across the federation, governors are able to moderate standards and gain a more realistic picture in support of their judgements. Collective worship is very well led by the executive headteacher, who actively seeks opportunities to develop and improve worship provision. The profile of RE in the school is high. The RE leader is well supported by school leaders to undertake diocesan training and attend professional meetings. She leads RE training for all teachers in the school and, as a result of the training and support they receive, they feel confident in teaching RE to their classes to a high standard. The school has a well-established effective and mutually supportive partnership with the Deal Ethos Company. Through it the RE leader works with others to monitor teaching and learning, marking and assessment practices in RE. Creative learning opportunities, provided through special activity days, such as the recent Lent rotation and labyrinth day, enrich the teaching of RE. These steps form part of the school's movement towards the gold RE quality mark. The statutory requirements for RE and worship are met. All focus for development points from the previous SIAS inspection have been addressed. There are strong links with parents, St Augustine's church and its rector, the local Walmer churches and the local community. These considered and thoughtful opportunities and partnerships have clear benefits for all groups. The school is aware of the issue of the future leadership of church schools and also of the importance of career progression for all staff. In response, the executive headteacher has been proactive in sharing staff and opportunities for promotion across the two federation schools. She has also strengthened church school leadership skills through the creation of a programme of staff secondment and exchange placements with other schools.

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