



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Borden Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

School Lane
Borden
Kent ME9 8JS

Diocese: Canterbury

Local authority: Kent

Dates of inspection: 20 May 2013

Date of last inspection: 10 June 2008

School's unique reference number: 118733

Headteacher: Mr Simeon Corfield

Chair of Governors: Mr Peter Smyth

Incumbent: Father John HG Lewis

Inspector's name and number: Mrs Virginia Corbyn (86)

School context

Borden Church of England Primary School is a smaller than average primary school situated in a village on the outskirts of Sittingbourne. There are 131 pupils on roll, arranged in five, mainly mixed-age classes. The pupils are mainly White British. The percentage of pupils with SEN is below the national average and the percentage entitled to free school meals is well below the national average. The present headteacher took up his appointment in September 2011.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Borden Church of England Primary School as a Church of England school are good

Borden Church of England Primary School is a good Church school which makes use of accurate and realistic self evaluation in order to identify where it needs to focus its efforts in order to drive improvement.

Established strengths

- Deeply rooted implicit Christian values which underpin pupil attainment and relationships between all members of the school community
- Biblical and engaging collective worship which encourages quiet and thoughtful spiritual reflection in pupils
- Strong partnerships with all stakeholders which make an important contribution to the personalised support offered to all pupils

Focus for development

- Develop explicit, shared Christian values with input from all stakeholders
- Monitor and evaluate collective worship regularly and consistently
- Ensure coherence in teaching, learning and assessment in RE
- Consult with all stakeholders in order to build a self evaluation which is as accurate as possible

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

The school's website describes the Christian values of the school as 'love, friendship and forgiveness'. These values are evident in implicit ways throughout the life of the school, especially in the supportive and close relationships which exist within and between all staff

and pupils. Pupils and staff model these values well in the daily interactions of school life. Governors and parents describe, with great appreciation, the ways in which the school community embodies these values in knowing each pupil by name and meeting their individual needs. Such detailed knowledge of each individual pupil contributes to effective personalised learning and support. As a result of this, attainment exceeds national expectations at Key Stage 1 and at Key Stage 2. Support for pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and for vulnerable pupils ensures good or better progress, but this is not yet the case for middle and high ability groups. Christian values are not made explicit in the life of the school and are not clearly articulated by members of the school community although their impact is apparent and much valued. Spiritual development is nurtured through regular opportunities for prayer during the school day. Pupils speak of praying at other times also, especially before going to sleep, to ask God to be with them. Using their knowledge and understanding from RE, pupils were able to articulate the importance of being able to understand the beliefs and practices of those of other faiths, both in terms of similarity and of diversity.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is Biblical and focussed upon the person of Jesus Christ. Stories about the life of Jesus and the meanings drawn from there are told and explored in engaging ways. Pupils are encouraged to spend time reflecting on what they have heard, and then committing this to God in prayer. The focus of the act of worship observed was that of prayer and pupils were able to explain how they could apply this message to the 'prayer net' in the school. This strand of prayer is apparent within worship, as part of school life and in the pupils' wider lives. Praise through Christian hymns and songs is popular and enthusiastic. Each class visits the local church on a termly basis to participate in a Eucharist service. The priest of the parish encourages pupils to explore Christian teaching with him during the service. He describes how pupils ask spiritually challenging and deeply thoughtful questions about Christian beliefs and teachings during these sessions. He also leads an extra-curricular Confirmation class for Years 5 and 6. Other Christian groups, including the Salvation Army and the Church Army, lead worship regularly. Informal feedback from parents indicates that they enjoy worship to which they are invited and value the opportunities given for their children to contribute to worship for festivals and special occasions. There is some leadership of worship of pupils. Monitoring and evaluation of worship are not regular or consistent. Therefore, improvement is not driven by formal feedback from stakeholder groups.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Attainment in RE is in line with national expectations, with some pupils attaining a higher standard in their knowledge and understanding (Attainment Target 1, learning about religion) than in their learning from religion. Pupils understand why RE is important. Their speaking and listening in RE shows skills of enquiry, interpretation and reflection. This is particularly evident in times of paired discussion which is a regular feature of RE lessons. The two lessons observed were good in terms of teaching and learning about religion. Teacher subject knowledge was good, showing confident use of subject specific vocabulary and understanding of ideas and concepts such as faith and symbolism. There is some evidence that pupils engage with and reflect upon big questions which enhances their spiritual development. Both RE and collective worship contribute to pupils' understanding of and higher questioning about aspects of Christianity. Pupils enjoy drama and cross curricular links, such as the exploration of religious art. There is some inconsistency in the planning and delivery of RE across the school. Written evidence is mainly focussed upon learning about religion. Some progress is demonstrated but the lack of formalised assessment, which was recommended in the previous report, means that this is difficult to evaluate and to demonstrate.

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

The headteacher has worked well with his senior teachers and with the governing body to produce a self evaluation which is both detailed and accurate. Governors, staff and parents are proud of the implicit Christian foundations of their vision for the school which impact

positively upon relationships, behaviour and attitudes. Discussions with all stakeholder groups demonstrate the capacity to re-shape the vision of the school to include explicit Christian values. Religious Education is well led and managed in that planning for coherence and effective assessment in RE is one of the current priorities for school development. However, the recommendation in the previous report that the school develop the use of levelling in RE to enable pupils to know the progress they are making has not been addressed. Partnerships with the local church and the local community have grown under the leadership of the current headteacher. Pupils understand the importance of supporting local charities such as Demelza House for terminally ill children and the Pulse Café for disabled adults, as well as raising money for national appeals such as Red Nose and Comic Relief. A governor was recently appointed from the parish council to further strengthen local links. Systematic feedback from parents and pupils is not included in to the school's current self evaluation. Training for the development of future school leaders for Church schools has not been formally addressed.

SIAMS report, May 2013, Borden Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, School Lane, Borden, Kent ME9 8JS