

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Brabourne Church of England School

School Lane
BRABOURNE
Ashford
Kent
TN25 5LQ

Diocese: Canterbury

Date of inspection: 6 March 2013
Date of last inspection: 13 March 2009
School's unique reference number: 118663
Headteacher: Vincent Chan
Chair of governors: Bruce Claridge
Incumbent: Rev. Richard Le Rossignol
Inspector's name and number: Jan Thompson 92

School context

Brabourne Church of England school is a small Voluntary Controlled primary school. Its 103 pupils are mostly White British, coming from several small villages on the outskirts of Ashford. About 10% are regular church goers. The school has a very good reputation in the locality. Since the last inspection, a number of long-standing members of staff have retired, including the headteacher and deputy. The current headteacher has been in post for nearly two years, and prior to that was acting headteacher for a year.

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

This school has made progress since the last inspection and is a good and improving Church school.

Established strengths

- The Christian commitment of the headteacher and the inspirational leadership of the Religious Education (RE) co-ordinator.
- The impact of Christian values on the ethos of the school.
- The impact of worship and RE on pupils' spiritual development.

Focus for development

- Establish a group, representing all stakeholders, including the parish church, to be responsible for the on-going self-evaluation and development of the school as a Church school. Ensure that the whole governing body is strategically involved in this and that parents and pupils are surveyed.
- Require teachers to attend daily collective worship with their pupils.
- Provide more opportunities for pupils to lead collective worship.

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

Since the last inspection, the school has identified these core Christian values: respect, responsibility, courage and hope. They are linked with Bible teaching and promoted through RE and collective worship, with the result that pupils think carefully about how they should behave. Parents comment on the more caring ethos of the school, which is welcoming and friendly. Relationships are excellent at all levels throughout the school. Older pupils care for younger ones and show respect to visitors. Pupils respond enthusiastically to the many

opportunities for spiritual development. All pupils experience this in RE and worship. For example, in a year 3/4 RE lesson on St Francis and the theme of peace, pupils designed a peaceful, spiritual garden for their school or painted a peaceful picture. The RE co-ordinator also runs a weekly lunchtime 'Golden Time with God', with different activities to help pupils pray. A weekly Christian Fellowship Club is run at lunchtime and after school to enable more pupils to attend. This does a variety of things, including community service, such as visiting a local home for the elderly. The school supports local charities as well as global ones, such as Christian Aid. The school environment has many Christian displays and symbols. The prayer tables in each classroom have recently been improved and pupils are given time to write their own prayers, some of which are used in class worship at the end of each day.

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

The headteacher, who plans and leads most acts of collective worship, has a natural gift for telling Bible stories and drawing out their meanings. Pupils respond very well to this, particularly when they are involved in acting out the story, as in the Parable of the Lost Sheep. This example, from the inspection, illustrates the spiritual and moral development promoted through collective worship. Pupils understood that God cares for everyone and also that they should be responsible for each other, following the example of Jesus the Good Shepherd. This reinforced one of the school's core Christian values. Pupils say that they enjoy all aspects of worship, such as singing prayers and praises to God. They particularly like the regular times of quiet reflection, to say their own prayers. They know that worship is to gather together to talk to God, to thank him and to say sorry for things they have done wrong. Pupils respond well to many other opportunities for prayer and worship that the school offers. For example, a monthly Agape Service has been introduced, in which everyone shares bread and water together in friendship. Adults participate well in this special service, but they only attend collective worship on two days a week with their pupils. This limits their own spiritual development and the impact that collective worship can have on the whole life of the school. Pupils gain some experience of Anglican practices, celebrating some major Christian festivals in the church and others in the course of daily collective worship. The Fellowship Club, with twenty pupils, organised and led an act of worship for Remembrance Day, but generally pupils are not encouraged to take leadership roles in collective worship. Pupils do not yet monitor and evaluate acts of worship, as recommended in the last report.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a Church school are satisfactory.

The headteacher is a committed Christian and has strengthened the Christian life of the school. He has done this particularly through his leadership of collective worship, through modelling caring relationships and through the school's focus on core Christian values. Staff and governors were helped to choose these values at a training session led by the diocesan director. The headteacher also appointed a very effective RE co-ordinator and encouraged her to attend the diocesan Aspire course for middle managers of Church schools. As a result, she is now also influential in the whole Christian life of the school. Parents who were interviewed commented positively on the strengthening of the Church aspects of this school. Two of the issues for development from the last report have therefore been achieved, in relation to Christian values and RE leadership. However, two important issues still remain to be dealt with, both of which concern the school's self-evaluation and the involvement of all stakeholders in this process. The governing body has not taken its responsibility seriously for the strategic management of the self-evaluation of the school as a Church school. Judgements have been made about the school which are not always accurate and have not been shared with the whole governing body. The parish church is not yet effective enough in supporting the school. This is partly due to the priest being in charge of five other parishes and one other church school.