

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Belmont Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Buckinghamshire Road,
Belmont,
Durham,
County Durham.
DH1 2QP

Diocese: Durham

LA: Durham

Dates of inspection: May 19 2006

Date of last inspection: 3rd, 6th & 7th March 2000

School's Unique reference number: 114227

Headteacher: Alison Keddie

Inspector's name and number: Andrew Lumsden 12

School context

Belmont C. E. Junior School serves an area of social and economic advantage with only a few pupils entitled to a free school meal. In most years pupils enter school with above average overall standards. It shares a campus with an infant and secondary school, neither of which have church school status. Belmont has 163 pupils and the school educates a small number of pupils with visual impairment as host to the local authority's sensory unit. The majority of pupils are of white British origin.

Established strengths

- Belmont C.E. Junior School provides a secure, happy and effective learning environment for all its pupils, including those with various disabilities. All feel valued and special within this caring, Christian community
- The Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher bring a strong Christian vision for Belmont C.E. Junior School which is strongly supported by the Religious Education subject leader and Foundation Governors
- Collective worship is important in the life of the school
- Pupils' moral, social and spiritual development is good
- There is a significant emphasis on implicit Christian values

Focus for development

- Increase participation by worship leaders drawn from different strands of the school community.
- Improve the monitoring, evaluating and recording of collective worship so that its impact on the school community is more clearly judged.
- Make more explicit the Christian values which implicitly underpin the strong ethos of the school through more consistent practice in the use of religious symbolism, related classroom displays and prayer boxes.
- Provide and use more artefacts to support the Anglican tradition in collective worship
- Develop opportunities for multicultural aspects of the Christian faith to be more strongly emphasised.

How well does the school, through its distinctive Christian character, meet the needs of all learners?

Belmont C.E. Junior School, through its distinctive Christian character, is good at meeting the needs of all learners.

Belmont C.E. Junior School provides a secure, happy and effective learning environment for all its pupils, including those with various disabilities. Pupils feel valued and special and are nurtured within this caring, Christian community. Pupils from different backgrounds of faith or none, are properly respected and valued and this is a strength of the school.

Christian values are generally implicit although these are becoming increasingly explicit and impact well on all learners. They are seen through recent charity fund raising for Christian Aid which pupils have strongly supported and through their own personal development.

These values are supported by the buddy system which plays a significant part in encouraging pupils to value each other and to be safe and by good modelling of appropriate behaviours by the Headteacher, senior staff and governors as well as by older pupils. Christian values are very clearly seen in relationships between staff and learners and amongst the pupils themselves and between staff. The school council makes a meaningful contribution so that pupils know that their views are taken into account and acted upon in the best interests of the school as a whole. Pupils are confident and talk enthusiastically of their enjoyment of the opportunities offered to them.

Pupils' moral, social and spiritual development is good. Cultural development is recognised through self evaluation as an area for further enhancement. Pupils are given opportunities to understand concepts of beauty, love, justice, hatred and conflict and their responsibilities for social and environmental issues. The Christian concepts of forgiveness and reconciliation are evident in behaviour guidelines.

Distinctive Christian symbolism and Biblical references are seen in parts of the school but this is a mixed picture with some inconsistencies. The hall provides examples of good practice but only a few classrooms and corridor areas have strong evidence through such things as prayer boxes and relevant displays. There are no obvious places for reflection apart from the central garden area, which is underused at present.

What is the impact of collective worship on the school community?

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

Collective worship is important in the life of the school. It is carried out daily and led by the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and occasionally by governors. The worship planner explicitly reflects the Anglican church year and gospel values. These acts of collective worship are also well supported by the Baptist minister as governor, who is a regular contributor.

Pupils are engaged in some of the responsibilities for organising collective worship such as Thanksgiving in autumn and provide prayers for use in acts of worship on a regular basis. They enjoy singing and know the school prayer and their talents are recognised through providing music for worship. For example one pupil played the piano at the start and end of the Celebration Assembly.

The atmosphere provides for an inclusive form of collective worship with open prayers although, when observed, a corporate supplication, "O Lord, hear my prayer" also affirmed the general Christian ethos of the school. A time of reflection also rightly provides for those of other faiths or none to feel part of the occasion. Learners' attitudes are very positive throughout.

All staff are present at the celebration assembly on Fridays but not on all other occasions. There are few artefacts specific to the Anglican tradition and currently the range of staff involved as worship leaders is limited.

Good use is made of the local parish church on a termly basis for shared worship and for major Christian festivals which reinforces effectively the Anglican elements of worship.

Evaluation of collective worship is underdeveloped. The process is not rigorous enough and does not sufficiently tackle the issue of its impact on the school community.

How effective are the leadership and management of the school as a church school?

The leadership and management of Belmont C.E. Junior as a church school is good.

There is a significant emphasis on implicit Christian values. These are clearly

developed by the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher who bring a strong Christian vision to Belmont School supported effectively by the religious education subject leader. Foundation Governors are very committed to and effective in developing this vision. This is exemplified through their previous work on the mission statement, the school aims and prospectus and their ongoing involvement and close interest in the school's life. The Christian ethos is made explicit by the Headteacher at induction meetings for new parents which purposefully set the tone and direction of the school for new entrants.

Staff are recruited where possible, with empathy for the Christian faith and all are valued as members of the school community.

Pupils' and parents' questionnaires provide positive views of the school. At present the level of staff understanding, involvement and contribution is variable in developing the Christian ethos of Belmont C.E. Junior School so that practice between classes in relation to faith issues is inconsistent. It is judged however that the leadership and management of the school has the capacity to move Belmont C.E. Junior School further forward in its journey of faith.

The school council, within its remit, plays a significant and positive role in influencing the pace and direction of the school.

Through circumstances the current involvement of the church is less well developed. In the past the education worker from the Parish Church was regularly involved. A replacement is eagerly anticipated in order to provide a similar service. The Parish profile provided for the incumbent emphasises strongly the need to have effective links with the school.

SIAS report May 19 2006 Belmont C. E. Controlled Junior School, Buckinghamshire Road, Belmont, Durham, County Durham DH1 2QP