

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Bentley Heath Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Widney Road
Bentley Heath
Solihull
B93 9BH

Diocese : Birmingham

LEA: Solihull

SIAS Inspection: 31st March 2006

Previous Section 23 inspection: January 2000

URN: 104088

Head teacher: Malcolm Evans

SIAS inspector: NS 135 Robert A. Cooke

Context

Bentley Heath Church of England Primary School is situated in a popular residential area in the outskirts of Solihull. Most parents are home owners. The school opened on its present site in 1979 as a one-form entry school. Further building took place between 1997 and 1999. In the year 2000 the school was officially opened as a two-form entry school with nursery. The school hall is shared with St. James Church and is used for Sunday services and for mothers and toddlers and other groups during the week. The hall has a movable screen for dual use. The Church has a separate entrance and facilities, but is part of the main school building. Recent changes to the school population are a small but growing number of pupils from differing cultural and religious backgrounds and a slight reduction in the number of pupils entering the nursery and Foundation Stage classes.

Summary Judgement

Bentley Heath School is a satisfactory Church school with a number of good features including a good, caring ethos based on Christian values.

Established strengths

- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes to the school and towards each other are excellent.
- There are very good relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff.
- There are some very good links between the school, the church and the local community.
- The views and backgrounds of all pupils are respected.

Focus for development

- Using recommended documentation such as the SIAS toolkit, evaluate the school's performance as a Church of England school and address any issues arising.
- Review and update the scheme of work for Religious Education with particular regard to developing the distinctive Christian character of the school and meeting the needs of all learners.
- Broadcast more widely the fact that the school is a Church of England school by displaying Christian symbols on documentation such as school policies and newsletters, in the display of work throughout the school and by including a comment on Christianity in the school's mission statement.
- Endeavour to restore the involvement of clergy or their representatives in school activities such as assemblies and Acts of Worship as it existed before the current interregnum.

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

The school, through its distinctive Christian character, meets the needs of learners well. Pupils feel valued and secure because teachers know their pupils well, their parents are happy with the school and all pupils' views are valued and respected. Pupils from ethnic minorities are respected and able to talk freely about their beliefs and cultures. Pupils say they are happy and secure. Incidents of unacceptable behaviour are rare and immediately dealt with. Pupils' individual successes are regularly celebrated in assembly. Pupil's behaviour is very good. Pupils show a high regard for politeness, helpfulness and respect for others. Schemes of work provide plenty of opportunities to study a range of beliefs and cultures. Pupils feel they can approach staff with any concerns and they will be dealt with sympathetically and effectively. Older pupils volunteer to help younger pupils during the lunch hour and to help around the school. The care and concern displayed for others by staff and pupils alike is excellent. While notice boards outside the school give a clear indication of the links between the school and the church, more could be done to broadcast the Christian nature of the school in the display of pupils' work, in the use of Christian symbols on school documentation and newsletters, and in its mission statement. The school council provides a good channel for children to express their views. The school Council has had a positive impact on the development of library

resources and playground equipment. Pupils' moral and social development are very good and spiritual development is satisfactory.

What is the impact of Collective Worship on the school community?

The impact of collective worship on the school community is satisfactory. The school meets its statutory requirements by providing an Act of Worship for all pupils each day. The significance of Worship could, however, be given higher priority in the school prospectus and in its mission statement. Although the Acts of worship Policy has been recently updated there has been no regular support for worship by the Church or the LEA for some time. Pupils respond well to Worship and listen well during prayers and reflections. Singing is tuneful, though not particularly robust. Some worship is led by members of staff. The number of pupils who attend Sunday worship is very small despite the Church sharing the school premises. Pupils have considered issues such as "death" and "relationships." They show a very good understanding of moral and social issues and are able to articulate how they have been helped by the attitudes of others. Some pupils are very clear about the importance of prayer and have a good understanding of what it means to be a Christian. By Year 6 pupils have learnt the Lord's Prayer and have studied the Ten Commandments. Learners from other faiths indicate their beliefs are recognised and respected. Major Christian festivals are given a significant emphasis during the year.

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

The leadership and management of the school as a church school are satisfactory. Despite the current interregnum there are some strong links between the church and school such as after school clubs and mother and toddler groups which are run by church members. The church is well represented on the governing body with three regular attenders at governing body meetings, two of whom are PCC members. The church provides summer holiday activities which are well attended by pupils from the school as well as members of a wider community. These activities are supported by other local churches. Church activities are well publicised in assembly and through letters to parents. There is, however, a lack of church involvement and support during school hours at the present time. The governors are aware of this and hope the involvement that existed before the present interregnum will soon be restored. The staff and head teacher provide good role models and good moral leadership in their relationships and conduct and in their care and concern for the pupils. The head teacher effectively promotes Christian practice and principles through assemblies and Acts of Worship. A Church member and former teacher has taken assemblies at Christmas and Easter and there is good involvement of the church and local community at Harvest and Christmas festivals. These events are well attended by parents. The school has identified "fostering positive Christian values" in its "vision of the school." There is a strong emphasis in the School Improvement Plan on personal, social and moral issues, but as yet the school has not yet fully evaluated its ethos as a Christian institution and how it could promote its Christian character in the future. This is an area for development.