

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Bridstow Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Bridstow,
Ross-on-Wye,
Herefordshire
HR9 6PZ

Diocese: Hereford

LEA: Herefordshire

Dates of inspection: 2 May 2006

Date of last inspection: 2/3 October 2001

School's Unique reference number: 116869

Headteacher: Mr Paul Sockett

Inspector: John Chapman

School context

Bridstow School is a 4 class village school of around 100 pupils serving a rural area and part of Ross-on-Wye. It moved into new buildings in 1997 where it has created an imaginative environment. It aims to offer "education in a Christian atmosphere".

Summary Judgement

A coherent and unified school with many strengths. Pupils are happy and value highly their school experience, particularly the level of care they receive. The school has a clear, well-articulated vision, and pupils have good opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. The school makes effective use of its attractive environment. There are several recognised areas for future development.

Established strengths

- A hardworking, unified and well-led staff team all of whom contribute to the ethos and success of the school
- Outstanding care of pupils, by each other as well as by adults leading to very good personal development
- A supportive, involved and robustly thoughtful governing body
- An imaginatively designed and creatively used external environment

Focus for development

- Use the National Society toolkit as a development tool with staff and governors over a period of 12-18 months
- Create a short Mission Statement for the prospectus which can also become through display a focal point in the school
- Enhance the provision of RE by making it a major school improvement topic with staff over the coming terms with emphasis on content, teaching method and INSET; also revise the statement on RE in the prospectus (to give more explanation) and place it before Science and Technology
- Give consideration of how pupils might further their understanding of prayer and reflection in worship

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

The school, through its distinctive Christian character, meet the needs of all learners in a good way. Through the care they are given all learners are made to feel unique individuals. The needs of all learners are well provided for with outstanding support for those with special needs. Christian values are explicit. These are shown by, for example, the statement of aims on the school door, effective displays of work and curricular material, and the Values Tree in the main hall. Parents and pupils alike comment on the pervasive sense of calm and goodwill that characterise a typical day. Relationships with the wider world are seen in many trips and visits, work for charitable causes and by visitors to the school. Relationships in the school are a strength evidenced by the care shown to pupils by each other as well as by adults. The tone for this is set by the head teacher who personally greets each pupil every morning creating a unique sense of family. Pupils are especially sensitive to and appreciative of the imaginative use made of the external environment.

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

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good. Worship plays a significant part in the life of the school and in the minds of pupils. It is carefully planned to a weekly pattern and evokes a warm and eager response from pupils. This is shown by their attentive demeanour, enthusiastic singing, the respectful silence and by the feeling that each pupil is taking part. Staff enter fully into worship. Pupils' achievements are celebrated each week in the context of worship. For many pupils –and now for parents too who are attending in increasing numbers –this is a highlight of the week. Good use is made of the local church and the team vicar, a governor, leads worship in school each Wednesday. Anglican festivals are celebrated. Pupils have some appreciation of the place of prayer in school life.

How effective is the Religious Education in the school?

The effectiveness of religious education is satisfactory. Much good quality religious education takes place evidenced by careful and relevant classroom displays, role-play of New Testament stories which showed empathy and understanding, some lively work on other faiths - a Sikh visitor was especially memorable - and an awareness of the need to care for God's creation. Not a great deal of written work is on display but there is stress on imaginative expression, art, drama, and discussions. Pupils can often see the relevance to their own lives of the Christian values being taught. The schemes of work comply with the local agreed syllabus. RE is a developing subject as the long-serving co-ordinator has recently retired and all teachers share in the teaching of RE which for some is new.

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 is good. The energetic and concerned Christian leadership of the school of the head teacher is fully supported by the staff, both teaching and non-teaching, and this contributes significantly to the school's ethos and success. Staff morale is high ("working here is the best thing I have done in years!"). The Christian purpose is demonstrated in the prospectus, written policies, and parental communications. The governors provide effective support and robust questioning and are well involved in school life. Teachers and ancillary staff feel involved in the running of the school. Parents are kept informed and show pleasure that their children are happy and do well, and that the school is easily accessible for them. The impact is shown by their high level of confidence in what the school can achieve with their children.