

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Bapchild and Tonge Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

School Lane,
Bapchild,
Sittingbourne,
Kent ME9 9NL

Diocese: Canterbury

Local authority: Kent

Dates of inspection: 4th and 5th December 2008

Date of previous inspection: October 2004

School's unique reference number: 118730

Headteacher: Mrs Teresa Homan

Inspector's name and number: Mrs Julia Watts 466

School context

Bapchild and Tonge Church of England (Aided) Primary School is a single entry primary school on the outskirts of Sittingbourne with 193 pupils currently on roll. Standards on entry are average and pupils achieve broadly average attainment in Year 6. The majority of pupils are white British with approximately 25% from worshipping Christian backgrounds. Ofsted recently judged Bapchild and Tonge to be a satisfactory school with good personal development of pupils.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Bapchild and Tonge as a Church of England school are satisfactory

Bapchild and Tonge Church of England (Aided) Primary School is a satisfactory Church school with a good capacity for improvement.

Established strengths

- The Christian family ethos of mutual care and respect;
- The good provision for pupils' personal development within the context of Christian values;
- The contribution of Religious Education (RE) to pupils' spiritual and moral development.

Focus for development

- Ensure that the ongoing process of denominational self-evaluation involves all stakeholders, and is securely linked to the School Improvement Plan;
- Monitor and evaluate collective worship for distinctiveness and effectiveness;
- Implement effective approaches to assessment in RE.

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

Bapchild and Tonge Church of England Primary School is a friendly school with a Christian ethos where all regard themselves as a family and consequently care very well for one another. Pupils are happy, they flourish and enjoy school. Relationships are good at all levels, and pupils behave well within a relaxed atmosphere where adults treat them and one another with kindness. Pupils' moral development is reinforced in both collective worship and Religious Education. Pupils are enthusiastic in raising money for charities and older pupils can link the motivation for this with Christian teaching. Pupils believe it is important to share and give help to those who don't have what they have. They find out what's right and wrong from the Bible stories they know, such as the Parables of Jesus. Their spirituality is less well developed than their understanding of right and wrong. For example, when pupils were recently asked what they find helpful about worship, not all responded confidently with reference to God or prayer. There are notable Christian elements in the school environment,

such as the Christian symbols in the hall and a cross in each classroom, but other areas are not used sufficiently to encourage reflection on Christian beliefs and practices.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is satisfactory

Collective worship is organised by the headteacher and the Priest in Charge (part-time). It incorporates the major Christian festivals and broadly follows the Church year. Many of the teaching staff take part in leading worship across the week and the teaching staff attend collective worship twice a week. The daily act of worship is important in the life of the school and is seen by pupils as time to learn about God and sing to Jesus. Pupils recognise the importance of saying Grace before lunch and enjoy the weekly act of worship led by the Priest in Charge and the twice termly visits from a Church Army officer. However the school has not yet begun to evaluate its provision and planning of distinctive Christian worship. Neither does it yet involve pupils in the monitoring process. Worship held in the church is enjoyed by pupils and parents and seen as a special occasion. Links with the parish church are supportive. Pupils talk with knowledge and understanding of the Christian festivals of Christmas and Easter, but not Pentecost. Pupils have some knowledge of Anglican traditions such as the Lord's Prayer.

The effectiveness of the religious education is satisfactory

Most learners reach standards in RE as high as in other core subjects. Lessons observed were satisfactory or better. In the best cases, good questioning and creative task-setting stimulate a lively response to learning. However assessment for learning in RE is not consistently applied across the school and inhibits pupils' progress. This issue has been identified by the school. Most pupils enjoy RE. They show a positive attitude and are confident to share their own ideas and beliefs. Younger pupils can recall some key Bible stories and older pupils are able to interpret Jesus' stories and apply simple meaning to their own attitudes and behaviour. Pupils' learning in RE enables them to grow morally and spiritually, although opportunities for learning from religion (Attainment Target 2) are not as strong as those for learning about religion (Attainment Target 1). The teaching of Christianity is enriched with visits to the parish church and visits from the Priest in Charge, but other places of worship are not visited. Adequate time is given to RE and the current scheme of work is well resourced.

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

The Christian ethos of the school is clear in all documentation. The headteacher and governors are committed to developing the school as a Church school, but purposeful, strategic Christian vision led by the Foundation Governors does not underpin and direct the life of the school. The Governing Body as a whole has not taken responsibility for monitoring and evaluating the school as a church school, and this process is not embedded in the School Improvement Plan. Governors and staff maintain good communication between the church and the school and ensure that pupils are invited to church services at Christmas and other times during the year. The Priest in Charge, who is relatively new in post, is an encouragement to senior leaders and provides good support and direction for collective worship and RE. Foundation governors have attended some training led by the Diocese. Parents speak positively about the school, especially its caring ethos and opportunities for pupils to develop morally within a Christian framework. Parents praise the family atmosphere of the school, but senior managers have not involved parents or pupils in the evaluation of the Church aspects of the school.