

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Bishop Bridgeman Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Rupert Street,
Bolton,
BL3 6PY

Diocese: Manchester

Local authority: Bolton

Dates of inspection: 6th December 2006

Date of last inspection: 30th September – 3rd, 4th & 11th October 2002

School's unique reference number: 105216

Headteacher: Mr. Graham C. Burrows

Inspector's name and number: Reverend Maureen Read 451

School context

Bishop Bridgeman C. of E. Primary School serves an area with high levels of social disadvantage and economic deprivation. It is a large school with 328 children on roll, 51 attending the Nursery part time. The majority of children are from minority ethnic backgrounds, mainly Pakistan and India. Children represented at the school practice in their daily lives, the religions of Islam, Hinduism, Christianity and none. Many children enter the Foundation Stage with underdeveloped social and speaking and listening skills. The percentage of children receiving free school meals is over one third, well above the average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Bishop Bridgeman as a Church of England school is outstanding

The school's Christian values of service, welcome and inclusion, supported by the 'Every Child Matters' agenda, underpin all its work. The school offers a supportive, caring, healthy environment where learning and respect for one another go hand in hand. The distinctive Christian philosophy leads the children to make good progress in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Established strengths

- The school's strong commitment to Christian values at the core of its life and work.
- The long term stability of staff members which has led to mutual trust, dedication, confidence and support.
- The vibrant role of the 'School Council' in the school's self-evaluation and decision making process
- The exceptional standard of behaviour and enthusiasm for learning displayed by all.

Focus for development

- To provide suitable assessment and evaluation procedures for R.E.
- To consider 'open days' to encourage those wanting to explore the role of Foundation Governor

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

There is a very strong Christian ethos within the school, which has a positive impact on all involved with the life of the school. The atmosphere on coming into the building is that of warmth and welcome, with a practical consideration of the needs of all people. Displays around the school are all of a very high standard, giving added emphasis to the quality of teaching and learning. Discussions with the children show that they feel valued and secure. Members of the School Council realize that they make a positive contribution to the school, they meet every fortnight with time for seeking the views of their peers in between. They have a section on the school web site where anybody can make their views or suggestions known. It is very well used. The children have the opportunity to take part in a wide range of out-of-school activities, they value the chance to meet socially with friends from other year groups.

Children in Key Stage 2 have set up links with children in Hong Kong. They communicate through e-mail, learning about the different cultures. The children at Bishop Bridgeman enjoy this link and see it as yet another way of building trust and respect for other people. Within the whole school community there is a deep respect for the views and beliefs of those of other faiths and cultures. All are brought together, and held together, within the love offered by God for all people. The excellent quality of relationships between all members of the school community has a positive impact on the children's achievements and their sense of self worth.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

The school provides high quality collective worship that enriches the lives of the whole school community. Everybody has a positive attitude towards worship. The philosophy of worship at the school is outlined in a very clear and detailed policy document. Collective Worship is held later in the morning, thus allowing everybody in school to join together. Late-comers no longer make a disturbance. Everybody involved in the daily life of the school attends and joins in enthusiastically. This demonstrates to the children that it is a very important feature of school life. There is a high level of pupil participation through drama, music and dance. The singing is very enthusiastic. Within acts of worship there is time given for individual reflection and prayer. The hall is arranged sensitively, using the hand-sewn backdrops as a focal point. Suitable Christian artifacts are used to highlight the theme of the day. Children and adults use a variety of prayers including the Lord's Prayer regularly, both in collective worship and in classes at other times throughout the day. This provides a high quality of spiritual development. Considerations are being made regarding the adoption of the prayer of St. Francis as the school prayer as its words are inclusive to all people.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Religious Education is seen as a very important feature of the school's distinctiveness. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic about her work. She has undertaken an audit of the Diocesan Scheme of Work and is in the process of adapting it to reflect the needs of the children. This has included adding a section on Sikhism into the Upper School curriculum. This, she feels, will enhance the variety of faiths represented within the school and give a wider understanding of other World faiths to the children in Year 6. The high expectations shown by all teachers lead the children to make very good progress despite the low level of attainment and the lack of basic skills on entry. Imaginative and challenging teaching provides some excellent learning. Interactive white boards are used very creatively to link prior knowledge with new targets. Teaching based on the Bible within the Foundation stage enables children to explore well feelings and emotions, whilst also developing the sense of right and wrong. Many opportunities are given for the younger children to deepen their understanding through role play experiences.

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

The leadership and management of the school is promoted excellently through a distinctive Christian vision offered by the headteacher and foundation governors. The whole Governing Body gives both valuable support and challenges to further improvement. The school is very good at gathering and responding to the views of all stakeholders, including the children, through the excellent work of the School's Council. The results of all the surveys show a high level of satisfaction with the school. The surveys themselves show to members of the school community that their views are valued. The links between the church and school are very good, even though the church building is far from the school. Local clergy, including the Parish Priest, are very involved with the school not only through leading assemblies but also by having a presence in the daily life of the school. The Parish Priest works closely with the leaders of the local Mosques and Temples. Their discussions have led to a coherent, united approach to the Christian foundation both in the school and in the local community. The school Governors work very effectively alongside the headteacher to ensure that the Christian distinctiveness of the school is maintained and this helps children and parents to understand that they belong to a caring Christian community which values and respects them as individuals. Governors are regularly seen in school. Parents, teachers and children spoke in complimentary terms of their appreciation of the level of both love and care shown by all in the school community.