

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Borden Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

School Lane

Borden

Kent

ME9 8JS

Diocese: Canterbury

Local Authority: Kent

Dates of inspection: 10th June 2008

Date of last inspection: March 2004

School's Unique Reference Number: 118733

Headteacher: Allan Ginman

Inspector's name and number: Richard Peers 125

School context

This is a small primary school serving a small village just outside Sittingbourne. Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average, although this includes a higher proportion with a statement of special educational needs than found in most schools. There are currently 124 pupils on roll.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Borden as a Church of England school are outstanding

Borden CE School is an outstanding Church school.

Established strengths

- The inspirational leadership of the Headteacher as school and worship leader
- The wide range of links with the parish church

Focus for development

- To develop the use of levelling in RE to enable pupils to know the progress they are making

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

This is a school where every individual is valued and feels significant. As one parent put it 'every child is treated as important'. Parents and pupils rightly believe that this is a school where every individual is cared for and their needs met. Extension for the most able and additional support for those with particular needs takes place throughout the school's life and is also supported when necessary by additional funding from outside sources. Everyone spoken to described this as a happy school that feels like a family. Pupils are confident and calm and behave with very high levels of courtesy at all times. Older pupils are able to exercise responsibility in organising lunchtime activities, pairing up with younger pupils on the way to church and in many other ways. Parents spoke very positively of the strong sense of the staff working as a team and the model of co-operative working that this gives their children. Displays around the school are exemplary and reflect a multi-cultural multi-faith society. They show the best of pupils' work and pupils are proud to have their work displayed. Very good use is made of the school's Victorian buildings and pupils know that they are well catered for.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Pupils know that worship is at the very heart of this school's life. They enjoy worshipping together with their teachers every day; they recognize its importance in making them 'feel like we belong together'. Pupils can explain that worship is a chance to get to know God in each

other, in the readings from Scripture and in prayer. Pupils and Governors have huge admiration for the spiritual leadership of the Headteacher and recognize that it springs from his personal faith, as one pupil put it 'he really believes it'. An outstanding act of worship seen in school was a wonderfully relaxed opportunity for pupils to be fully engaged in thinking about light and reflection. Pupils joined enthusiastically in the singing and there was opportunity for both formal prayer and quiet reflection. The whole staff were clearly engaged in the worship and there was a powerful sense of the school community worshipping together. An outstanding class Eucharist in the parish church used the Stations of the Cross as a vehicle for developing prayers of intercession. Pupils were able to explain the stations as the last journey that Jesus took and made excellent connections between the suffering of Jesus and people suffering in the world today. Pupils spoke very movingly of the place of God in the life of the school and have an outstanding understanding of the possibility of seeking God's help in times of need "He always understands you and never judges you" said one pupil.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

Pupils thoroughly enjoy RE and are enthusiastic to participate in the exceptionally well planned lessons. One outstanding lesson used drama very effectively to present the story of the prodigal son. Very high level vocabulary was modelled by the teacher and used by pupils. Pupils were enabled to empathise with each of the characters in Jesus' story and even to recognise the resentment of the older son as well as the forgiveness of the Father. Another outstanding lesson on the parish church again used high level vocabulary but always stressed the use of the building as the place where a Christian community meets; pupils were able to describe the Holy Communion as the central act of the community's worship and to explain that Jesus really makes himself present in the bread and the wine. Extremely good, properly interactive, use was made of smart boards during both lessons and the parish website was used particularly well as a resource. Pupils benefit from the outstanding contribution made to lessons by teaching assistants prompting answers, using good open ended questions and giving confidence to those who feel shy. Standards are well above average and planning in RE is effective and allows pupils to develop a good understanding not only of religions themselves but also of what they can learn from religions. Work in books is appropriately challenging and is well marked with indications of areas for improvement. Use of levels in RE has only just begun and pupils were not easily able to describe how well they are doing in the subject. Pupils value the time given to learn about other faiths and recognise that this is about welcoming others and treating them with respect.

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

The Headteacher is an outstanding Christian leader who has brought his faith and skills together to lead the school over a number of years to its current outstanding position. Pilgrimage is a key theme of the school's life and pupils, staff and Governors are aware of the journey of improvement that the Head has led. RE is very well led and good use has been made of the new Kent syllabus. The school has a good understanding of its own strengths and areas where further improvement could be made. Links with the parish church are very good. Pupils are very familiar with the parish church, they know that it is their church and they know that Father John is their priest. They enjoy visiting the church for both study and worship. They recognise that he is very skilled at making the Christian message and Christian worship highly accessible to them. Pupils recognise that church and school work together for their benefit and they recognise that together they are the heart of the village community. The school has an exemplary programme of liturgical worship throughout the year and as a result pupils have a thorough understanding of the liturgical year, greetings and what they would find in a church on a Sunday morning. The Governing Body have an excellent understanding of their school and they value its strengths. They value the work of the Headteacher and the very strong team of teachers he has built around him. Governors also highlight the importance of the parish priest's role both on the Governing Body and in the day-to-day life of the school.