

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Bramford Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Duckamere

Bramford

Ipswich

IP8 4AH

Diocese: St. Edmundsbury and Ipswich

Local authority: Suffolk

Dates of inspection: May 23rd 2008

Date of last inspection: May 2005

School's unique reference number: 124723

Headteacher: Mr. Jon Eden

Inspector's name and number: Ann Williams 573

School Context

Bramford voluntary controlled primary school is situated in the village of Bramford on the outskirts of Ipswich. There are 197 learners aged from four to eleven years, the vast majority of whom are from white British families. Most live in the village, but approximately 25% are from out of catchment. The total number of children with special educational needs, including those with a statement, is slightly above average. The number eligible for free school meals is below average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Bramford Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School as a Church of England school are good.

Christian values are the basis on which the daily life of the school is founded. All members of the school community are valued and there is mutual respect between adults, adults and children and the children themselves. The learners are confident and feel secure in an environment where they are nurtured and encouraged to strive to do their best. A Christian ethos permeates the life of the school and there are visual reminders to which the community is able to relate.

Established Strengths

- The leadership and management teams are committed to basing the daily life of the school on Christian principles and value the close links with the local church community.
- The efforts made to ensure every child is included and valued instil a sense of self-worth and mutual respect.
- The strategies employed to encourage learners to achieve well enable them to feel happy and to have the confidence to respond positively to all situations.

Focus for Development

- To update and rewrite the policy for collective worship, to include 'Reflective Story Telling' and to include a sub-heading for collective worship in the school prospectus.
- To give a greater prominence to the importance of prayer in the daily life of the school.
- To make provision for quiet, reflective areas within the school.

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

The Christian principles which give the school its distinctive character are evident both visually and intrinsically. The statement of aims is displayed at the entrance to the school, as are examples of the pupils' work about and understanding of aspects of Christian life. Of particular note is the present display explaining Pentecost to all who go into the school. The children are known as individuals and steps are taken to ensure that the work is

understood and can be accomplished. To broaden the learning opportunities and widen the perspective of the pupils, the school is using the International Primary Curriculum. Lessons are varied and stimulating, involving staff in much intricate preparation for the benefit of their pupils. One such lesson in Year One saw pupils accessing prior learning about Judaism after which they were treated to snack time in the style of a Jewish meal. To enrich their experience of the Anglican faith, pupils regularly walk to the local church for lessons about the sacraments of baptism and marriage, which they enact enthusiastically.

Teaching assistants are supportive of those with needs, as are pupils of one another. Special provision has been made to accommodate a child with severe cerebral palsy within the reception class on one day a week, to the mutual benefit of all concerned. There is in place a 'buddy' system, where older pupils work with and help pupils in younger age groups; a 'friendship stop' is manned by Year Five that ensures no child ever feels left out or lonely, and games are led at break by trained sports leaders from Year Six to structure the play of the younger ones.

The School Council meets regularly and discusses issues raised via a suggestion box. Members are aware of their responsibility and take their role very seriously.

Various strategies are in place to support all learners. These include nurture groups for the less confident, which involves eating lunch together once a week, and small groups or individual help for those who need it. There are also well-attended homework groups and revision groups at lunchtimes and after school for any child. Parents and pupils appreciate the dedication of staff and comment that such groups help children to realise their potential.

In addition to academic clubs, there is a host of other activities to cater for all interests and abilities ranging from music and drama, through many different sports to chess and the environment. To be commended here is the involvement of parents and members of the local church and community who give their time to help with these extra-curricular activities.

Success both in and out of school is celebrated publicly and pupils are justly proud of being selected for the weekly 'Roll of Honour' for their helpfulness, kindness or hard work.

Supporting those less fortunate throughout the world is an important aspect of Christian giving at Bramford and all members of the school community appreciate the opportunity to raise funds for a variety of local and world-wide charities. Pupils' awareness of the needs of others is raised by a personal link, through the local Methodist minister, with a Christian charity working with street children in Bolivia, and the support of local good causes through the harvest festival and at Christmas.

The school is an Eco-school and encourages pupils to eat healthily. They maintain an organic vegetable garden, from which produce is used by the school kitchen, and other areas, where the environment is cared for, are used for quiet reflection as well as study.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is given prominence in the school day, with whole school assemblies held in the school hall. To the visual focus of a lighted candle, one pupil commented 'It makes you feel different inside.' Pupils enter and leave to reflective music, and are attentive throughout. Pupils and staff appreciate using the Christian greeting 'Peace be with you' as a more appropriate opening to worship than the more common 'Good morning everyone'. Singing is joyful and enthusiastic and pupils say that they 'enjoy singing to God' and thinking about the words they sing. Pupils participate regularly and the collective worship observed was conducted in its entirety and most thoughtfully by members of the School Council. Pupils welcome the opportunity to discuss, during RE and PSHE lessons, issues raised in collective worship.

A variety of styles enriches worship and gives pupils the opportunity to experience different approaches to faith. Staff lead on a rota basis and, in addition, worship is regularly led by the local Anglican incumbent and by the local Methodist minister. Worship is further enhanced throughout the year with major Christian festivals celebrated in the local church. At Christmas, there are two celebrations in the church, one in the afternoon for the whole school and a second in the evening for pupils, parents and the local community. The Harvest Festival is an opportunity to consider the lonely and the housebound when the gifts are distributed to the local care home, where residents are also entertained by carol singing at Christmas.

Collective worship is monitored and evaluated and a member of staff has taken on the role of collective worship co-ordinator. A foundation governor also attends regularly. The views of children and parents are sought and considered, and, as a result, a working party which

includes a foundation governor, is involved in the writing of a new collective worship policy. In order to enhance the spiritual development of learners, 'Reflective Story Telling', which has been trialled successfully with one class, will be introduced as part of the new policy. Prayer, however, is not given sufficient prominence either in collective worship or during the school day and is recognised by staff and governors as a focus for development.

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

The leadership and management of the school are fully committed to its standing as a church school and work to ensure that Christian values underpin its daily life.

The headteacher is valued and respected by the whole community and governors commend the progress the school has made under his leadership and the vision he has for its future. Staff work tirelessly for the good of their pupils, recognising that they are highly valued and supported by the headteacher and governing body. That the school has twice achieved the Investors in People award bears this out. Parents welcome the inclusive policy of the school and the way in which issues are resolved. They find the staff open and approachable, and value the time devoted to preparing lessons and extra-curricular activities. They see the headteacher and staff as good Christian role models for their children.

The governing body is aware of its role and each governor has a responsibility for a class and for a curriculum area. They are closely involved in the 'extended schools' project' which will embrace the whole community; a foundation governor is a member of the collective worship working party and attends weekly to monitor collective worship. The views of parents and pupils are sought both formally and informally, and the results acted upon appropriately.

The school is an active supporter of the local church, with a stall at its annual fête and advertising on its behalf to the school community. The school keeps the local community informed of activities by a report to the Parish Council and in its building programme, the school has planned for a community room which will be available for use by the local community. This will be a source of information and of practical use. In return, local residents support the school in their fundraising activities.

The SEF shows that the management team has a clear insight into the school's strengths and issues for development. Approximately 25% of pupils are from out of catchment and attend Bramford school because of its Christian ethos and because 'it is such a good school'.