

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Bridgemere Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Bridgemere Lane
Bridgemere
Nantwich
CW5 7PX

Diocese: Chester

Local authority: Cheshire East
Dates of inspection: 18.05.09
Date of last inspection: 27.06.06
School's unique reference number: 111343
Headteacher: Jane Dickinson
Inspector's name and number: Gail Fullbrook 530

School context

Bridgemere Church of England Primary School is a rural primary school of 77 children drawing children from the surrounding villages and the outskirts of the nearby town of Nantwich. The number of children eligible for free school meals is low and the proportion of children with statements of special educational need is above average. The school is well cared for and set in attractive grounds.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Bridgemere CE Primary School as a Church of England school are good

The school has a distinctive Christian ethos which permeates all aspects of its work. The Christian character of the school is clearly exhibited through the relationships amongst all members of school community be they child, staff member, parent or governor. Links with the church community are strong and productive and have clear impact on the life of the school.

Established strengths

- Strong links between the school, the church and the local community
- The Christian leadership of the headteacher
- The family ethos of the school
- The use of questioning to develop the children's spirituality

Focus for development

- To develop procedures for consultation with parents and children
- To ensure due prominence is given to displays supporting spiritual development and religious education

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

This is a welcoming and happy school which lies at the centre of the local community. Children feel safe and are clear about who to turn to if they have concerns or are worried about anything. They understand the school's rules and respect them and are encouraged to exercise responsibility through roles such as 'table leader' at lunchtime. Children feel that they are treated fairly and that their opinions are valued. The School Council is rightly proud of its impact on the life of the school and the current focus on environmental issues has influence on children of all ages. Children enjoy their learning and appropriate questioning serves to encourage enquiry about the world in which they live. Children's individual needs are well catered for and additional support ensures equal access to the full curriculum offered. The many examples of charitable fund raising and the school's link with a school in Marongo, Uganda, all serve to nurture an understanding and awareness of the needs and daily

experience of others. Displays reflect the school's Christian nature, although impact is limited by lack of prominence in some areas of the school. Christian values underpin the work of the school and are fundamental in the care the children show towards each other. Currently children sometimes struggle to articulate these values. The school provides good opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through use of silence for reflection, prayer times during the school day as well as within worship, and the posing of questions that encourage children to think deeply about what they value and believe. Relationships between all members of the school family are positive and supportive. Children enjoy the weekly Healthy Living Clubs and recognise the importance of emotional as well as physical well being.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Worship is well planned and recorded and plans are in place to extend this process to include evaluation of the impact of worship. As the children enter the hall appropriate music, a cross and relevant artefacts serve to encourage an atmosphere of reflection. Worship begins with an opening sentence and a known response of the Anglican tradition. The clear rationale given for the choice of story, prayer and song serve to encourage those present to reflect upon the words and thus deepen their spiritual understanding. Children are able to articulate ways in which worship themes have impact upon their lives. They are familiar with key Christian prayers and worship is overtly Anglican. The children are appreciative that prayers written in school are regularly taken to church. Questioning is used effectively to encourage deeper thought and in worship often precedes a time of silence for further reflection. Acts of collective worship contribute significantly to children's spiritual and moral development. Christian festivals are observed, frequently in church, and despite the distance involved regular visits are made to the church to learn more about its function as well as for worship. Two children were keen to share their decision to be baptised which followed a lesson about Baptism. Regular visits from ministers of other Christian denominations broaden the experience of the children.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Learners, particularly within Key Stage 2, achieve expectations that are at least age appropriate. All children make good progress. The school is implementing the new Diocesan Religious Education syllabus supported by regular focused professional development. Well planned activities ensure that children are able to respond thoughtfully and with enthusiasm. Regular assessment tasks are used to inform future planning and 'I can.....' statements are used to record progress. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is planned for within each lesson and frequent opportunities are given for children to reflect upon issues of personal faith and belief. Older children spend time considering how Jesus' response to questions they would like to ask of him would inform their faith. Supportive marking values completed work and encourages deeper thought. Good quality resources support teaching and learning and the subject coordinator has good plans to address areas for growth that she has identified.

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

The school holds as its Mission Statement, 'A small rural school with a big heart' and all stakeholders, including the children, refer to the family nature of the school. The majority of documentation available to parents and the community makes reference to the school's Christian foundation. Governors value the detailed reports they receive each term and are well informed on all aspects of the life of the school. The strong Christian vision of the headteacher is seen as a driving force and governors comment on ways in which the school's faith foundation is lived out. Good links between the two parishes the school serves and the school itself, result in a strong sense of belonging to the church amongst the children. The school's development plan highlights the importance of developing community use of the school building and the nurturing of strong links with the parish. The headteacher regularly canvasses opinion amongst parents but monitoring and evaluation of the school as a church school is in its early stages and does not, as yet, include the views of parents or children. Ongoing professional development contributes to the improvement of the school as a church school, including its focus on religious education, worship and spiritual development. When

staff are recruited clear priority is given to the selection of staff who will support the school's Christian ethos. Staff and parents are supportive of the Christian nature of the school and parents join with the school when acts of worship are held in church.

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