

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Parish Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

London Lane,
Bromley
BR1 4HF

Diocese: Rochester

Local authority: Bromley

Dates of inspection: 2nd & 3rd July 2007

School's unique reference number: 101644

Headteacher: Mr. Hilary Richardson

Inspector's name and number: Ms Jan Thompson (NS 92)

School context

Parish Church of England Primary School is Bromley's oldest educational establishment, founded as a Charity School in 1717. Nearly three centuries and two locations later, the present school is situated in an elegant, late eighteenth century mansion set in extensive grounds. The school is successful and oversubscribed. It has 415 pupils, drawn mostly from within a half-mile radius, three quarters of whom are from White British families. Only a small percentage of the school's families are regular church goers, and a small number of pupils are from other religions. Ofsted judged the school to be good overall.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Parish as a Church of England school are good

Parish Voluntary Controlled Church of England Primary School in Bromley is a good Church school with a strong Christian ethos.

Established strengths

- The strong Christian ethos of the school, supported by the close link between Religious Education (RE) and Christian worship.
- The Christian commitment of the headteacher and other significant teachers.
- The support of the nearby St.Mary's Church, Plaistow and Bromley Parish Church (after which the school is named).

Focus for development

- Make much fuller use of the school environment to promote spiritual development, especially in individual classrooms.
- Develop school worship in terms of the Anglican elements and opportunities for reflection.
- Ensure that all pupils attend daily Collective Worship unless withdrawn by their parents.
- Follow Diocesan advice on self-evaluation as a Church School, involving all stakeholders, especially Foundation Governors.

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

A strong Christian ethos permeates the life and work of this school. It is accurately summed up in the school prospectus, which tells parents 'We endeavour to teach our children about the Christian faith through knowledge of the Bible, through the teachings of Jesus Christ and through the way we live and work together.' Behaviour in lessons and around the school is outstanding, the calmness befitting the beauty of the surroundings. Relationships are very good at all levels, based on genuine respect for all. Adults and pupils are friendly, courteous and helpful. Christian teaching and learning is particularly strong in RE because the school's scheme is closely integrated with Collective Worship and reinforced in weekly 'class

assemblies'. Christian spirituality is also promoted through the weekly 'Bible is Fun' club, where 20 to 30 Key Stage 2 pupils share together and pray about the good and bad things that have happened to them in the past week. Pupils show care and concern for each other and for those they help through local and international charities. However, the school environment is not yet well enough used to promote Christian education and spirituality, particularly in classrooms.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Christian worship is fundamental to the life of the school and pupils value prayer and the belief that God is with them. A great deal of effort is put into the planning and preparation of Collective Worship, including pupil involvement through drama and music. Pupils enjoy worship, are fully engaged and participate well. In particular, their singing of Christian songs is excellent. They understand the meaning of worship, for instance a young child explained "When we sing the songs, we are actually singing to Jesus." Older pupils explained how the candle represented Jesus as the Light of the World and said that it helped them to worship but regretted that they did not have more time for quiet reflection. Not enough is done to make the setting and atmosphere in the gym conducive to worship; and sometimes the difference between 'assembly' and 'worship' is blurred. Despite considerable support for school worship by ministers from two Anglican churches, pupils are not yet benefiting from many aspects of Anglican worship. For example, special school festivals take place in church, but pupils do not have a secure grasp of Pentecost. Also, pupils know the Lord's Prayer among other Church prayers but do not use Anglican greetings and responses.

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

Although some structures for monitoring and evaluation are in place, the governing body and senior leaders have not conducted the self-evaluation of this school as a Church school adequately in preparation for this inspection. Not enough use has been made of Diocesan advice and training. This is partly due to the fact that the head teacher was new last September and there have been significant changes in the governing body. The head teacher is a committed Christian who supports the school's well-established distinctive Christian character. However, he has not always made this a priority, for example, allowing individual pupils to miss some acts of worship for extra tuition. Many of the staff are very committed to the Christian life of the school, especially the leader of RE and Collective Worship who is particularly gifted in promoting use of the creative arts. Parents have not been involved in the self-evaluation process, but those questioned during the inspection from a variety of backgrounds were very supportive of the Christian teaching of the school and attended worship when parents were invited. Strong links exist with the two parishes connected with the school, particularly through church workers and both vicars who are Foundation Governors of the school. Visitors are also welcomed from other Christian denominations. The school has a good tradition of taking part in the annual Church Schools Festival at the Cathedral.