



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Brampton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Southwold Road
Brampton Beccles Suffolk
NR34 8DW

Previous SIAMS grade: Outstanding

Current inspection grade: Good

Diocese: St Edmundsbury & Ipswich

Local authority: Suffolk

Dates of inspection: 12 October 2015

Date of last inspection: 30 September 2010

School's unique reference number: 124724

Headteacher: Vicky Allen

Inspector's name and number: Gill Hipwell 480

School context

This small rural primary school has recently expanded to include pupils in years 5 & 6. It is federated with another Church of England school and they share an executive headteacher who has been in post for three years. The long-standing incumbent is about to retire.

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

- High quality religious education (RE) encourages reflection and enables pupils to explore their own faith and belief in a securely Christian context.
- A strong focus on the unique needs of every child enables the vulnerable to flourish.
- The governing body is committed to the development of the school's Christian distinctiveness through a strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation cycle.

Areas to improve

- Ensure that all acts of collective worship include time for reflection so that pupils have regular opportunities to make a personal response to the message.
- Make the links between the school's values and the teaching of Jesus more explicit so that pupils are secure in their understanding of how the values are distinctively Christian.
- Review the membership of the ethos committee to make it more representative of the whole school community.
- Devolve some leadership responsibility in collective worship and RE so that current and future leaders are more involved in developing the school's Christian ethos.

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

A belief in the intrinsic worth of each individual as a child of God is seen in the commitment of staff to providing personalised learning. Attainment is high for the majority and progress is generally good across all groups. Early intervention is effective and a newly created federation nurture group works on integrating those who are not coping socially. Pupils say that they enjoy school; one parent commented 'my children run in from the car because they can't wait to see their teacher'. Relationships are harmonious and respectful; pupils struggled to recall incidents of bullying and parents said 'it never gets that far. Issues are recognised early and resolved'. The headteacher's policy of working directly with struggling families has impacted on attendance which has improved from below to above national expectations. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC) is at the heart of the curriculum and is identified in subject planning. As a result pupils have a wide range of experiences. RE reflects multi-cultural Christianity, for example through the Flat Stanley Project, and encourages pupils to reflect on their place in an awe-inspiring world. Pupils know that they are all valued and say that adults 'listen to us and care what we think'. They are confident when talking about their own beliefs and how they may differ from other people's, identifying respect and kindness as important when listening to each other's ideas. The school's vision and values are distinctively Christian and clearly articulated as such by leaders. However, although pupils understand the importance of the school's values, talk about them at home and engage with them in school they do not readily relate them to the Christian values they hear about in collective worship. They know about compassion in the context of the story of the good Samaritan and identify it as important; they give examples of their own compassionate behaviour when talking about fundraising or supporting children who are struggling with something; they do not make a connection between those two things.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Pupils enjoy worship, especially 'the 65% where we join in'. Church services are a highlight for them and they have a special relationship with the incumbent, saying they 'don't want him to retire'. Key stage 2 pupils plan and lead worship regularly. They say that they focus on the value in a more secular way than adult leaders, who 'talk more about God and Jesus'. Older children demonstrated a good grasp of the Trinity, saying 'Jesus is God incarnate' and confidently explaining what that means. Pupils say that they pray together in collective worship and in some classrooms but would welcome more opportunities to pray for family and friends at times of illness or difficulty. Currently there is no prayer space; a year 6 pupil said 'I probably wouldn't use it but lots of people would'. Quiet reflection is not a regular feature in worship; pupils are not always given time to think about the message, its specific significance to Christians and how it relates to their own lives. When asked where Christian values are seen in school pupils were unsure and said 'in the hall'. However, it is clear from pupils' work in RE that they do have a good understanding of Christian values and pupils say that RE makes them think about their behaviour and decision making. Worship is monitored by a foundation governor and the headteacher, who evaluate content and quality of delivery. Pupil feedback is taken annually, shared with the ethos committee and acted upon. Parents are invited to worship at the church and say these are 'special times, even if you are not a believer'.

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

Governors say that the Christian narrative is 'the driver for the ethos and vision of the school'; with the headteacher and staff they work to ensure that Christian distinctiveness is 'not anecdotal but can be seen in practice and policy'. They are clear in their desire for a good church school which serves its community and has high aspirations for everyone. The strategic planning cycle identifies areas for development and the monitoring process is looking at

effective ways to measure impact. The ethos committee, comprising the headteacher and foundation governors, meets termly to discuss their monitoring of collective worship and RE but there is no formal process for hearing the views of others. As part of making high quality RE a key characteristic of the school, governors have joined staff for diocesan training. Staff are inspired by the example of the headteacher, who models relationships based on Christian love and respect for all. The incumbent has been actively involved in the school over a number of years and is on the point of retirement; pupils, staff, governors and parents all say how much he will be missed; 'He is a vital part of the school's identity'. The local church is making arrangements to ensure good support during the interregnum and governors are looking at ways to maintain foundation governor strength. Governors have made the deanery aware of the importance of the incumbent role in defining the school's Christian character. Although staff take on some operational responsibility for collective worship and RE it is currently the headteacher who leads these areas in both federated schools. There is a strong local 'hub' of church schools who, supported by the diocesan advisor, share ideas and provide mutual support and this network is highly valued. Governors are mindful of the need to keep abreast of developments affecting small schools and are well informed about all their future leadership options – including the diocesan multi academy trust. Parents praise the ethos of the school and say that their children are taught the importance of personal belief and choice and that 'it's not just about yourself'. They feel that their opinions matter to school leaders and say that although they receive occasional questionnaires they prefer informal conversations.

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