

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Bredgar Church of England VA Primary School

Bexon Lane
Bredgar
Sittingbourne
Kent
ME9 8HB

Diocese: Canterbury

Local authority: Kent

Dates of inspection: 1.03.2012

Date of last inspection: 19 and 2.11. 2008

School's unique reference number: 118732

Headteacher: David Whitehead

Inspector's name and number: Mrs Anne-Marie Trustram 635

School context

Bredgar Voluntary Aided Church of England Primary School is a smaller than average primary school. The school serves the small rural community of Bredgar as well as taking in some pupils from nearby Sittingbourne. Most pupils are White British, taught in mixed age classes apart from the Foundation class. About ten percent are from regular worshipping families. Since the previous inspection, the original Victorian buildings have been extended to provide an attractive and stimulating learning environment. OfSTED judged the school to be good overall, with outstanding pupil behaviour.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Bredgar Church of England Primary School as a Voluntary Aided Church of England school are outstanding.

Christian principles are firmly embedded in the ethos of the school and nurture all aspects of pupils' lives. The school provides a Christian environment where all pupils can aspire to reach their potential.

Established strengths

- The school environment which makes a very significant contribution to the spiritual development of all pupils.
- Christian values which have a very positive impact on relationships and behaviour throughout the school.
- Pupils' attitude to collective which offers them opportunities to be reflective and to develop their own spirituality.

Focus for development

- To link the school's strong Christian values explicitly to Bible stories.
- To extend opportunities for pupils to plan, lead and evaluate collective worship.
- To prioritise staff training in planning for AT2 (Learning from religion).

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

Bredgar Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School is a calm, happy and caring school where pupils experience the love of God from all members of the community. The school's vision statement, 'We believe that we should all show respect for God, each other and for ourselves', encompasses the school's expectation of pupils' behaviour and care for each other. This results in exemplary attitudes and a willingness to serve each other within the community. All stakeholders are committed to the school's Christian values which can now be linked to Bible stories to further enhance pupils' understanding of them. The Christian ethos of the school manifestly enhances pupils' spiritual development. They are able to articulate the impact of these values on their own lives. For example, one pupil said, 'They help us to lead our lives and follow in Jesus' footsteps.' Christian values significantly encourage and nurture the moral and social skills of all pupils. The behaviour trail and the ten Golden Rules serve as an agreed code of

conduct throughout the school. Through skilful mentoring, pupils are beginning to experience the concept of restorative justice as they learn to resolve minor conflicts independently, although from time to time they may need adult support. The reflective areas in the classrooms and the entrance hall make a major contribution to the spiritual development of all pupils. Each classroom has an area for reflection, there is a prayer tree in the hallway and a 'thinking chair' in the main entrance which is themed to Christian values. In addition to this there are reflective mirrors around the school to remind pupils of how God sees them and loves them.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding.

Pupils enjoy worship and they talk enthusiastically about the different special visitors who lead worship. These include the Family Trust, the Church Army and parents involved in training for ministry in the church. They feel included and affirmed by worship. For example, one pupil said, 'If we've done something wrong, our worship helps us to learn to forgive and make it better.' Collective worship serves as the heartbeat of the school whereby all stakeholders can 'grow together in faith as a family.' Regular evaluations take place which involve both pupils and parents. In discussion with pupils, and through their evaluations, they indicate that they enjoy interactive involvement in acts of worship, including drama related activities. Their intuitive understanding of the purpose and value of worship is an indication that they are willing and capable of planning and leading worship. This is an area of development for the school. Pupils value the prayer tree in the main entrance as well as the prayer boxes in the classrooms. Their prayers are offered up as part of class worship and whole school worship. As part of its commitment to community cohesion, the school invites members of the veterans and the wider community to join together in the Remembrance service. Since the last inspection pupils featured in the BBC Songs of Praise to commemorate this solemn occasion. They were featured with the postcards that they write to serving soldiers.

The effectiveness of Religious Education (RE) is good.

RE is clearly identified on a separate school improvement plan which shows aspirational tasks to systematically raise standards. Consequently, standards in RE are at least in line with national expectations and in some older pupils, standards are above average. Regular use is made of assessment to inform teaching and learning. Pupils enjoy RE. They say that lessons are fun and interesting. They enjoy RE because it is taught with enthusiasm, using a good variety of interesting approaches. Teachers' professionalism and commitment is also seen in their attention to assessment, with marking that helps pupils to reflect on their work. RE makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual development. For example, older pupils appreciate class discussions when they can say what they think and believe. One pupil said, 'Teachers don't tell us what we should think. They don't influence us about our opinions because we can make mistakes without being told we are wrong.' The subject leader ensures there is systematic monitoring of planning and resources. This results in a constant drive for improvement to raise standards. There is a clear emphasis on learning about religion but the school recognises that there is scope for a clearer focus in lesson planning on learning from religion. (AT2)

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

The governing body has addressed the issues since the last inspection and contributes very significantly to the Christian values of the school. For example, two members of the governing body are involved in leading whole school worship. They have a clear vision of how distinctive Christian values are central to school life and the importance of nurturing a spiritual dimension in young lives. Since the appointment of an assistant priest to the parish church, the school has been proactive in raising the profile of its Anglican status. Both governors and staff have been involved in the self-evaluation process which has led the school to continue its cycle of improvement. Governors are aware of the need for succession planning, acknowledging that in the rapidly changing education system, it will be even more important for them to assert and preserve the Anglican status of the school. Parents referred to the symbiotic relationship between home and school. One parent spoke movingly about the support she had received from the school after a recent bereavement. As one very young pupil said, 'The teachers are really good role models'.