

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

<b>Bredgar Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School</b>	
Bexon Lane, Bredgar, Sittingbourne, Kent ME9 8HB	
<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Canterbury</b>
Previous SIAS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Kent
Name of collaboration	Unitas
Date of inspection	28 March 2017
Date of last inspection	March 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	VA Primary I 18732
Head of School Executive Headteacher	Madeleine Gower David Whitehead
Inspector's name and number	Melanie Williams Quality Assurance: Lizzie McWhirter 244

### School context

This is a small school with 104 pupils arranged in four classes. It is in the new Unitas collaboration of four local schools, two being voluntary aided church schools. A third of pupils come from Bredgar village and the rest from the surrounding area. Most are of White British heritage, with English as their main language. The proportion of pupils eligible for pupil premium funding is below the national average. Those with SEND are above the national average. The headteacher and executive head have progressed into their positions from within Bredgar school since the last inspection. Church links are well-established.

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

- Reciprocal care and support between the school and church community enriches the lives of all in this Christian community, making a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- School leaders and governors share a clear Christian vision, helping pupils develop holistically which results in good achievement.
- Embedded Christian values of respect and thankfulness lead to pupils enthusiastically initiating acts of service and fundraising within the community.

### Areas to improve

- Broaden pupils' understanding and experiences of Christianity as a worldwide faith and extend the programme of visits and visitors to further enrich pupils' cultural and social development.
- Help pupils grow in their understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit to enrich their experience of worship in a church school.

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

The school's Christian values of respect, community, thankfulness, hope, forgiveness and endurance are clearly stated in documentation and around the school. Their Biblical basis is widely understood. Governors, staff, pupils and parents contributed to the formation of the vision statement. Consequently, adults and pupils can talk about how these have a positive effect on their relationships and work. Mutual respect and hope for the best outcomes for all create an atmosphere of trust and perseverance in which pupils thrive. As a result, behaviour is excellent and pupils' academic achievement is in line with and often better than national expectations. Parents express thankfulness for the support they have received personally and for their children. The school promotes good attendance so that children can gain full support in reaching their potential. It works hard in collaboration with parents to avoid excluding pupils and is usually successful.

A clear framework for developing spirituality is set out in the school's policies. There are occasions for pupils to express their thoughts through talking, art, singing and prayer however there is potential for exploring other media. Labelled mirrors around the school encourage pupils and staff to see themselves as special to God. There is a board in the playground displaying the Bible story of 'The Good Samaritan' as an example of caring for one another. Pupils know that they should try and forgive one another if there has been any conflict. They express thankfulness for what they have and show generosity in support of others and charitable fund-raising. The older children demonstrate care for their 'Bear buddies' in the Reception class and fondly remember their own experience.

Pupils have a growing awareness of the multi-cultural nature of the Christian faith and knowledge of other faiths. For example, they have benefitted from a church link with Rwanda. There are embryonic links with other groups and places, helping their respect for and understanding of diverse communities. However, the school acknowledges this should be developed further. Religious education [RE] is taught with enthusiasm and teachers provide engaging experiences for the pupils. This challenges them to think deeply, express their beliefs and feelings and explore those of others. It makes a good contribution to the school's Christian character.

The school has a wide range of extra-curricular clubs, holistically providing opportunities for pupils' development. These include the arts, sport and music as well as their spiritual development in King Squad, a club run by a local Christian organisation.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding**

Collective worship is central to the life of the school, drawing the community together and 'centring people'. It takes place in a range of groupings and settings across the week to capture the interest of learners and manage the physical constraints of the premises. As a result, worship is included on residential trips and star-gazing evenings and plans to make more use of the outdoor environment are underway.

Worship is personalised from the diocesan scheme to ensure relevance, regularly exploring Bible stories and Christian ideas. Pupils relate stories to values, such as forgiveness and endurance, that are relevant to their own lives. One pupil said, 'The story of Noah's Ark teaches us about endurance – to keep going when things are hard'. Learning about Jesus has an impact on relationships, 'Jesus died for our sins; we should forgive people'. It also inspires fundraising for those less fortunate than themselves. Children have an emerging understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. However, the school recognises there is room for further development.

There is a strong representation of parents attending special acts of worship. There are well-established services to welcome new families, celebrate festivals and mark key events, such as pupils leaving the school. A good number of pupils from the school are confirmed each year. Families are kept informed about worship themes and services in the local church via the weekly newsletter, thus promoting the shared life of the school and church community. Worship is led by staff, clergy and a range of visitors such as The Family Trust as well as Excite, a group from within the parish church. Pupils appreciate the variety of approaches. Film clips, games and practical demonstrations, such as the washing of feet, interest pupils and encourage reflection. Pupils think about not acting as if you are better than others and of those who serve us.

In response to the last inspection, the school has appointed worship prefects who help to plan and lead worship each term and organise readers. There is scope to further broaden the range of leadership experiences, which the school recognises.

Pupils are familiar with some traditions of Anglican worship such as celebrating festivals in the church year, saying The Lord's Prayer, the grace and using responses. There are plans to enable pupils to learn and experience more about the Eucharist. Currently, this is not in place. Pupils write and lead insightful prayers in worship, encouraging one another to make a difference through small acts of kindness which parents say spills naturally into life at home. They also turn to prayer during significant events such as examinations. Requests for prayer are sometimes shared with the church. Worship is monitored regularly by pupils, parents, leaders and governors in this and the other church school in the collaboration. This has led to staff training giving an awareness of spiritual styles and to an understanding of what pupils enjoy and ways they may respond.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is good**

Children in the Foundation stage make a strong start and can talk impressively about events in the life of Jesus using visual images as prompts. Consequently, they are excited and engaged, developing a range of skills in creative ways through role play and craft activities. The teacher is skilled in drawing out pupils' knowledge and responses, such as, 'Jesus was like a servant', and 'Anyone can do something kind for you'.

Children in Key Stage 2 are given symbolic artefacts and encouraged to talk about their meaning. Good questioning and explanation of vocabulary supports the pupils in exploring beliefs and emotions, encouraging analysis and interpretation and making links with previous learning. Tasks are differentiated for a range of abilities but the school has identified this could be more finely tuned to provide suitable challenge and support. Some confusion was expressed about the difference between Jesus and the Holy Spirit and the school acknowledges this needs further exploration.

The RE leader has established clear expectations of the standards of work expected within mixed age classes. Assessment information is gathered and reviewed each term, giving a clear picture of how pupils are developing. This provides a structure in which the most able can be challenged, often by targeted questioning. Teachers are diligent in providing feedback and engaging children in improving their work. As a result, pupils make good progress and achieve well, in line with other core subjects. RE is currently taught by qualified teachers throughout the school, using diocesan plans based on the Kent Agreed Syllabus. Regular lesson observations and monitoring of pupil work has enabled the school to address a previous inspection point of pupils learning from religious beliefs.

Pupils study a range of different religions, with Christianity receiving two-thirds of curriculum time. Some learners are aware of differences in the way Christians celebrate and express their beliefs around the world. They occasionally visit places of worship, such as the parish church and Canterbury Cathedral, and meet people of different faiths. There is scope to broaden this to enrich understanding of different traditions and cultures. Pupils can talk about Christian values and some Bible stories that illustrate them, but this is not yet fully embedded. The RE leader keeps up to date through RE publications and by attending diocesan training. She has received training on new teaching materials and is passing this on to other staff in preparation for a September start.

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

School leaders and governors have established a clear, explicitly Christian vision for the school which informs academic and personal development. This enables pupils to reach their full potential knowing that they are loved by God and underpins the intensive effort to include and nurture all pupils. Consequently, the curriculum themes have been tailored to the particular needs of this community and have values embedded within them. The school has been invited by the diocese to showcase its values-led curriculum. Parents overwhelmingly acknowledge support for this approach.

The head of school welcomes the community each morning and clearly supports the wellbeing of individual families. Behaviour is generally very good and a range of measures are in place to promote excellent attendance. There are particular timetable arrangements for a few children with complex needs.

Leaders have a comprehensive understanding of the school's performance and distinctiveness over time, reviewing and evaluating new initiatives to address weaknesses in a timely manner. All governing body meetings begin with prayer. Regular surveys and forums gather the views of parents, pupils and staff to evaluate the work of the school, giving a robust collaborative approach to school improvement.

The head of school is the worship leader, giving central importance to this aspect of school life. She has ensured that worship meets statutory requirements and is well supported by foundation governors and local Christian groups. The school works closely with a lay reader in the local benefice as the incumbent recently retired. The RE leader has regular training and release time to monitor and support progress in teaching and learning and has a budget for resources. Increasingly, the school is able to share and draw on expertise within the collaboration. RE is regularly monitored by the governors ensuring the curriculum supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and RE meets statutory requirements. However, the school recognises the need to develop the curriculum to better support understanding of diverse cultures.

The diocese has supported the school with training on spirituality and 'Godly Play' while the executive head has contributed to a course for aspiring headteachers of church schools. All teaching staff lead worship and teach RE, with governors supporting their professional development, which includes the future leadership of church schools. Both the head of school and executive head have progressed into their current posts from within the school showing strong evidence for leadership development. Governors attend diocesan conferences and receive support while they are becoming established in the role.

Governors and the school leadership are working towards the formation of a diocesan multi-academy trust including both church and other schools. They are determined to establish a framework that preserves the Christian ethos of this school.