

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### **Bradwell Church of England Voluntary Controlled Infant School**

Church Street,  
Bradwell,  
Hope Valley,  
Derbyshire,  
S33 9HJ

**Diocese: Derby**

Local authority: Derbyshire

Dates of inspection: 30<sup>th</sup> January, 2013

Date of last inspection: 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2008

School's unique reference number: 112803

Headteacher: Mr Geoffrey Wharton

Inspector's name and number: Mr Kerry Palmer (60)

#### **School context**

Bradwell is a significantly smaller than average infant school serving the children of the village and surrounding area. Pupils come from a range of social backgrounds with attainment on entry broadly matching expectations. There are fewer than average children receiving free school meals or with significant additional needs. The current headteacher has been in post since autumn 2009. The school has achieved Healthy Schools and International Schools awards in recent years.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Bradwell C of E (Controlled) Infant School as a Church of England school are good.**

Bradwell C of E Infant School actively promotes and encourages Christian values which flourish in a caring and supportive environment. Because each individual is valued and considered special in this very good school high achievement and enthusiasm abounds.

#### **Established strengths**

- Leadership and staff team who are committed to providing the best possible education for each child.
- Confident, creative and caring children who enthusiastically explore the wonders of God's world.
- Actively supportive parents, carers and village community.
- Pro-active relationship between school and parish.

#### **Focus for development**

- Develop systems, involving all stakeholders, which embed the regular evaluation of each aspect of the school's Christian distinctiveness and contribute to development planning.
- Consider ways of involving pupils more actively in the planning, delivery and evaluation of collective worship.
- Review the content of school prospectus and other key documentation as it is transferred to the school website so as to better reflect the school's distinctively Christian foundation.

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

Bradwell Infant School is very successful in achieving its mission to develop children who are confident, creative and caring in a Christian environment. Pupils of all abilities flourish and make excellent progress. Sensitive, professional support encourages those with particular needs whilst challenge and enrichment opportunities stretch the more able. Currently topics and activities planned reflect the high ratio of boys on roll. This continues to be a school where every child matters. Christian values of mutual respect, forgiveness, tolerance and trust are modelled by all staff and evident in relationships between children at work and play.

They underpin behaviour management policies and are displayed in all aspects of school life. However, the Christian foundation of the school's ethos and values is not made sufficiently clear in school documentation. Great emphasis is put on widening horizons. The school has active links with schools in four European countries through the Comenius project and has welcomed visitors from each. This successfully ensures that children growing up in this small rural community are aware of the diversity of cultures, faiths and ways of life throughout this country and beyond. Children develop empathy for the needs of others reflected, for example, in generous giving to the Sheffield Archer project at harvest time, commitment to Fairtrade and lent 'sacrificial' giving for charity. The school plays a significant part in community activities such as the village carnival, vicarage garden party and remembrance day parade. Personal, moral, cultural and spiritual development is enhanced by a wide range of school activities. Religious education includes teaching about other world religions, encouraging tolerance and understanding. Lessons observed were lively and stimulating. A lesson which began with the prodigal son led to reflection on happy or sad personal feelings and 'the love of God who always forgives us'. In another, the wonder of creation was expressed through dance and art. Children reflected on their own experiences impacting positively on spiritual development. The RE policy correctly highlights the importance of this subject in a church school as a core subject. However, this fact is not always evident in classroom displays or other documentation.

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

Most children enjoy collective worship and recognise it as an important feature of the school day. The regular worship pattern establishes a liturgical setting appropriate to the age of the children. Talking to children, it clearly has a positive impact and enhances spiritual development. Candle, cross, displays of children's prayers and music effectively establishes a worshipping atmosphere. Older children are excellent examples and pass on routines, expectations and enthusiasm to the little ones. The worship observed began with a sharing of 'Peace', children listened attentively to the story of the wise man who built his house on a rock, then went on to explore the love that turns a house into a home. 'Kindness, care and love,' came from the children, as they spoke of their families. Planning takes account of the church calendar and topical issues; children are gradually building an understanding of key church festivals. It links appropriate Bible stories, through children's own experience, to promoting the Christian ethos and values evident throughout the school day. The recently appointed coordinator for RE and collective worship has begun a review of current provision and is eager to improve the impact of the worship experience further with a values based programme. There is currently no structured feedback by pupils or governor evaluation of collective worship to inform development. Regular festival services in neighbouring St Barnabas Church are open to all in the community, are well attended and increasingly engaging all ages. Children play an increasingly active part in these celebrations which they enjoy and gain much from. This is clearly appreciated by parents in their feedback. However, these are the only occasions when children share worship with their families. The local Methodist church is also used for worship and other local schools and the pre-school regularly join with Bradwell Infants at Harvest and Christmas. A group of European teachers were visiting at Harvest time, one from Italy wrote 'A very special experience for me...a breathe of fresh air..'. School worship is led by the vicar from time to time. He also supports teaching, such as that leading up to the annual 'Sharing of Bread' service and welcomes classes into church for RE lessons, such as a 'baptism' when the children were learning about 'welcoming'.

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

The headteacher, supported by a committed and skilled staff team, supportive governors and parents, successfully promotes a drive for continuous improvement that ensures the best possible education for each child. The school is justifiably proud of its Christian values, however, its church foundation and the centrality of Gospel teaching is sometimes understated. The school prospectus is one example of an opportunity missed of making parents aware of the implications of a church school ethos. Governors, like all stakeholders, are very supportive of the school. However, there is currently no structured system of governor monitoring of the school's Christian distinctiveness or involvement in the self-review process. There are mutually supportive links between the school and parish; the vicar and

headteacher regularly meet to discuss matters of mutual interest and actively seek ways to strengthen the partnership further. This is reflected in a section of the school improvement plan. Parents and carers speak highly of the school and its staff, 'It's just brilliant!' one said. Sentiments liberally expressed in regular questionnaires and feedback slips. They believe that queries are answered promptly and openly; parental feedback has resulted in a number of beneficial changes. The school fully addressed areas for development following the last inspection and the potential for future improvement is excellent.

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