

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Bredhurst Church of England VC Primary School

The Street, Gillingham ME7 3JY

Current SIAMS inspection grade

Outstanding

Diocese

Rochester

Previous SIAMS inspection grade

Outstanding

Local authority

Kent

Date of inspection

13 January 2017

Date of last inspection

12 January 2012

Type of school and unique reference number

118619

Headteacher

Michelle Cox

Inspector's name and number

Anne Southgate 820

School context

Bredhurst is a small, oversubscribed school on the Kent Medway border. Most pupils live close to the school and are of White British heritage. The headteacher has been in post since January 2016. In the year prior to her appointment, there were three temporary headteachers. Many staff and governors are new to the school. The proportions of disadvantaged pupils and those with special needs or English as an additional language are below national averages. Less than 10% of pupils are from families who regularly attend church.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Bredhurst as a Church of England school are outstanding

- After a period of turbulence in leadership, the headteacher and governing body have acted swiftly to re-establish a very strong Christian ethos in the school.
- The revitalised Christian character of the school is clearly driving improvement.
- Pupils are confident to lead collective worship and they do so regularly.
- All stakeholders are included in self-evaluation, and so they all feel very much part of the school community.
- Pupils reflect deeply on the school's Christian values, and they apply these to their learning and to their behaviour.

Areas to improve

- Increase pupils' appreciation of social and cultural diversity by providing more visits to places of worship and by relating learning more often to current events.
- Ensure that the excellent learning in Religious Education (RE) is recorded in books and is displayed around the school.

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

Bredhurst is a very close-knit and inclusive Christian community where everyone feels valued. The 'Spirit of Bredhurst' Christian values of self-control, perseverance, inclusion, respect, inspiration and trust are owned and used by all stakeholders. These values are based on biblical teaching, and this is displayed effectively around the school. This means that pupils recognise the Christian basis to the values. For example, a pupil said, 'I persevere with maths because Jesus persevered when he was in the wilderness'. Pupils frequently apply the values to their learning and to their behaviour without prompting from adults. Pupils enjoy nominating and celebrating others who fulfil the values, including adults. This results in a community focused on a clear set of Christian values, which drives pupils to achieve their best, to behave very well and to care about others. Consequently, achievement is above national averages and attendance is high. Classroom and other reflection areas are freely available and are interactive. As a result, pupils are helped to reflect in depth and to pray if they want to. This means that pupils develop very well spiritually, whether they have a faith or not.

RE often challenges pupils to think very deeply. Pupils display a mature understanding of complex and abstract concepts in their discussions, such as whether one should believe in something, which cannot be seen. They enjoy learning about people who hold different beliefs from themselves and can ask sensitive and pertinent questions. RE, therefore, makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. However, the depth of pupils' learning is not always recorded in their books, nor displayed around the school. Pupils learn about different Christian traditions, such as how Advent is celebrated around the world, although there are limited opportunities to experience religious or cultural diversity within the school community.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is varied and inclusive. It allows all members of the school community to reflect on their lives and to think deeply about the significance of the school's Christian values. Worship frequently relates the values to biblical stories and to Christian teaching. Pupils, therefore, understand the links between Christian teaching and the school's values, and they apply these to their own lives. Pupils are highly involved in planning and leading worship. Groups of pupils lead an act of worship each week, and pupils lead aspects of worship every day. Many pupils contribute prayers to worship, whether written or extemporaneous. Pupils show tremendous respect for the beliefs of others. The high degree of pupil involvement in worship means that pupils are fully engaged, and that the family feel of the school is enhanced. This is strengthened by the attendance of parents at school worship every week. Pupils apply the messages of worship to their daily lives. This often results in the desire to help others, both inside and outside of school. As a result, the school community supports a range of charities, such as the NSPCC, the RSPCA and Mary's Meals, which provides food for some of the poorest children in the world.

All teachers lead worship, as do local clergy and representatives of the Family Trust. This means that pupils experience a range of styles of worship. Major Christian festivals are celebrated, with parents, in both St Peter's and St Matthew's churches. Pupils lead Anglican responses during worship, and offer each other the peace. Colours reflecting the different seasons of the church's year are used in school, and pupils have a good understanding of the reasons for their use. Leaders teach pupils about key Christian beliefs in worship, including that God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Pupils of all ages have an impressive understanding of this. Visual symbols, such as a plait of different coloured ribbons, are used to help pupils to understand that God is three in one. Acts of worship are monitored regularly by governors. Feedback is also gathered both formally and informally from pupils, staff and parents. This feedback has contributed to the increased pupil leadership, as this helps pupils to have greater ownership of worship.

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

The headteacher and governing body have worked together to re-establish a very strong Christian vision for the school. The vision, which is based on how Jesus demonstrated the chosen values, is shared amongst the whole school community. As a result, pupils and adults alike use the school's Christian values to reflect on their work and on their behaviour. Adults and pupils understand how these values enhance achievement, and how they create a harmonious, nurturing community. Self-evaluation as a church school is rigorous and regular. It involves all

stakeholders, including the very effective governors' SIAMS committee. This means that leaders have a very accurate understanding of progress within the school, and it enables them to act swiftly to make improvements. The action point from the previous denominational inspection to identify the Christian values in the mission statement and prospectus has been addressed. The headteacher has acted very quickly to deepen the Christian character of the school, recognising that this will secure improvements in all areas. She has communicated this effectively to all members of the school community.

The relationship with the local church has been considerably strengthened by the new headteacher and governors, many of whom attend the church regularly. There are several joint enterprises, such as 'Little Stars', messy church and community lunches. These enable the church and the school to work together to serve the community. Parents feel part of the school community and they are welcomed as frequent visitors to the school. School leaders and governors attend diocesan training. They share this with staff at school and act on what they have learned. This, together with direct support from the diocese, has resulted in rapid improvement. The RE leader is supported well, and RE is monitored as a core subject alongside English and maths. Statutory requirements for RE and collective worship are met. Teachers new to church schools attend diocesan courses to help them understand what it means to work in a church school. This, together with the support they receive from colleagues and leaders in school, has resulted in everyone contributing very well to the Christian distinctiveness that Bredhurst offers.

SIAMS report January 2017 Bredhurst Church of England VC School, Gillingham, ME7 3JY