

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Brigstock Latham's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Latham Street

Brigstock

NN14 3HD

Diocese: Peterborough

Local authority: Northamptonshire

Dates of inspection: 12 January 2012

Date of last inspection: 4 March 2009

School's unique reference number: 122011

Headteacher: Tim Leah

Inspector's name and number: Nigel Pett 157

School context

This is a smaller than average rural primary school. Almost all the pupils are of White British heritage, and very few are eligible for free school meals. The number of pupils identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average. The school holds the Healthy Schools status award.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Brigstock Latham's as a Church of England school are good.

There is a distinct Christian ethos and because of the pupils' response to the high expectations they have outstanding personal development and very good achievement and standards. Standards and provision are good in religious education but there is still room for even further improvement in collective worship. Leadership is very good but aspects of monitoring to make sure that the school plans relating to its church status are implemented can be sharpened.

Established strengths

- Learners' attitudes and behaviour are outstanding and supported by very good Christian ethos and the respect shown by all members of the school for one another.
- The differing personal and academic needs of learners are very well met.
- The presence of some very effective Christian symbols and the very good use of the whole school environment enhance learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Parents, carers and the church community are very supportive and have confidence in the leadership and management of the school.

Focus for development

- Improve the consistency in monitoring and evaluating collective worship, including by the pupils, and extend the opportunities for them to plan and lead collective worship and prayer.
- Improve the recording by foundation governors of their visits to show that they are effectively involved in the partnership for monitoring the school's effectiveness as a church school.

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

The school has maintained its Christian mission and ethos very well since the last inspection. This ensures that all children from the Foundation Stage onwards are proud of their school, enjoy coming to school and many learners are reaching high standards in their academic work. These standards are achieved in religious education and, in a lesson on the creation, younger pupils showed the capability to explain and question well. Pupils enjoy their learning, and parents consider that the needs of all groups of children are consistently met. Pupils' personal development is outstanding, aided by their positive attitudes and very good behaviour, and not least supported by the strong relationships between them and with all of the adults in the

school. They feel safe in school and are very confident in seeking support and supporting each other through a clear code of Christian values and rules, some of which they have helped to design. The school council members respond to their responsibilities very well and those who are not in such roles are challenged in house and class roles which help to develop their understanding of good citizenship. Very good use is made of the school environment, both inside and outside, in supporting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. Some excellent displays provide a stimulating learning culture and outside very good use is made, when the weather is good, of a drama area in the grounds. Across the whole curriculum Christian values consistently encourage, nourish and challenge the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all learners. Good examples of Christian symbols are in evidence and not least a superb nativity scene to illustrate the Epiphany season.

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

The worship patterns are effectively planned, being well-guided by an effective policy which helps to affirm the Christian faith. The parish priest regularly conducts worship with good opportunities taken in using the church to extend the understanding of Anglican practice. Themes reflect the key times in the church year as well as recognising the festivals and beliefs of other major faiths. During the one act observed it was clear that the learners understand that worship takes place in a special environment and the significance of lighting a candle to show Christ as light of the world is respected. When it was extinguished at the end of worship the point was very well made that whilst the candle was out Christ was still in all that we do. The pupils behaved well throughout and willingly responded when given the opportunity. Learners sing hymns and religious songs, which are effectively chosen to support the worship, very well. Prayer is effectively used in collective worship and some opportunities are taken at other appropriate times in the school day but children are not adequately involved in writing and saying these prayers. However, Year 6 sing grace exceptionally well and through it they recognise that they are praising God. Although there are many strengths learners still need to be more involved in planning and conducting worship and prayer and in evaluating its impact. Because they are not this limits the growth of their prayer life and understanding of Anglican practice. Progress in developing a systematic approach to monitoring and evaluation is still only satisfactory and relies far too much on verbal comments which are not always recorded. Nevertheless, talking to pupils shows that the opportunities which they experience do exert a good influence on developing their attitudes and beliefs, a point strongly made by staff and parents. There is a good impact on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. A really effective aspect is the 'Question of the week' which is well used in class discussion, religious education and in collective worship. Pupils really enjoyed explaining what they would do if 'they landed on a planet where nobody had heard of God'. Through this activity they have the opportunity to share and reflect on their understanding and attitudes. Their approach to prayer is increasingly well supported through the prayer tree where they hang their concerns and requests.

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

The school has a very clear Christian vision and mission. It is very well led and well managed but it needs to sharpen up aspects of its formal management processes. Governors know their school and are very supportive but as a governor expressed it – we still need to accelerate our formal work! Even so, the overall evaluation of the school's effectiveness by staff and governors is accurate. The learning, teaching and pastoral care are very well managed and very successful. There is an excellent relationship with parents and the wider community. The children endorse this view and are well involved in a range of extra-curricular and responsible activities, through school council and house offices. They are encouraged to be responsible participants in school life. During the recent time that the parish was without a priest the links with the church slightly diminished, but the new priest is making good strides in recapturing this aspect of school life, which was highlighted as a focus in the last inspection. The progress in addressing the focus to formalise the the whole-school process for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the school as a church school is sound. The overall school development plan rightly incorporates aspects specific to the school's religious status but there is not sufficient clarity as to how the development of collective worship and religious education are to be approached or indeed good enough measures to judge if the plan is working. Nevertheless, policies for collective worship and religious education are well structured and the latter is very

well implemented to ensure that pupils' progress and standards reflect very well against the overall standards in English and mathematics. Opportunities are taken to use the Diocesan links and partners in the local church and other faith communities in the village are helpful in developing learners' understanding of Anglican practice.

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