



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

St Bridget's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

St Bridget's Lane
West Kirby
Wirral
CH48 3JT

Diocese: Chester

Local authority: Wirral
Dates of inspection: 26 April 2013
Date of last inspection: 22 September 2008
School's unique reference number: 105062
Headteacher: Neil Le Feuvre
Inspector's name and number: Gail Fullbrook 530

School context

St Bridget's CE School is a larger than average primary school with 410 children on roll. Most pupils are White British with a small number coming from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. The school serves the south area of the town of West Kirby. The leadership team has completely changed since the last inspection and a new rector took up post in 2012.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Bridget's School as a Church of England school are outstanding

This is a school where Christian values lie at the heart of the learning that takes place and the day to day experience offered to the children. Children, staff, parents and governors share their experience of the school with enthusiasm, and staff and governors are constantly seeking ways in which the school can further develop its already outstanding practice.

Established strengths

- The strength of the relationships between all members of the school community
- The school's openness to the viewpoints of others
- The partnership between the school and its governors in developing the school's Christian ethos

Focus for development

- To involve a wider range of stakeholders in the evaluation of collective worship
- To increase the involvement of children in the planning of worship

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

The school's core Christian values of respect and reverence are reflected in all aspects of its work. Children recognise the distinctive nature of the welcome offered by the school and

they in turn, show friendship towards visitors and children new to the school. Parents spoke of the openness and availability of staff, particularly at the end of the school day, and of the invitation regularly offered by the school to join in events involving their children, including an increased range of worship activities. Children work hard and reach standards at the age of 11 that are well above average in English and mathematics. The school's approach to identified issues and concerns expressed, has at its foundation a commitment to careful listening and fairness. The Christian character of the school underpins the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the children. Children develop a sense of personal spirituality and of God as teacher, Father and Holy Spirit. They are confident communicators and by the age of 11 are able to share their views sensitively whilst listening to and reflecting on the viewpoints of others. Children hold to strong moral values. During the inspection they discussed a recent media story involving a footballer, backing up opinions with a well thought out rationale based on Christian values. Children recognise their own strengths and those of their peers, and are eager to learn about and understand why things happen as they do. They apply these skills to issues of faith showing a high level of respect for the thoughts and opinions of others. The school has recently received a Recognition of Commitment in working towards becoming a UNICEF (United Nation International Children Emergency Fund) Rights Respecting School. This commitment is evidenced in the school's focus week by week on particular rights. Following a focus on the right of children to have access to clean water, pennies were collected by a year 2 class for donation to Water Aid and Cafod. Children behave well and talk with pride of how they 'look out for each other' and of their response when children are upset or have no one to play with. They show a high level of courtesy towards each other and to visitors and staff members. The school's code of conduct, based on Christian values, is given prominence throughout the school and is known and adhered to by the children. Religious Education makes a good contribution to the Christian character of the school and is enjoyed by the children. Older children eagerly shared their knowledge of other faith traditions and the ways in which faith influences day to day life. Younger children reflected on ways of finding peace both within themselves and during busy playtimes. Displays with themes such as, 'What is precious to you?', 'Olympic values' and 'Rights of the Child' encourage reflection on important and relevant issues as well as reinforcing Christian values and teaching.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Worship follows a regular pattern and most acts of worship include a greeting, time for prayer and personal reflection, singing and a story from, or referenced to, scripture. Worship is central to the life of the school and all appreciate the time it offers to learn, think and pray. Children recognise that values important in the life of the school are informed by Jesus, his story and his teaching. They can recall particular acts of worship that have encouraged reflection and sometimes a change of behaviour. For example during Lent children were given a booklet by the church and encouraged each day to reflect on an aspect of their life. The current focus on the rights of the child is led through worship and informed by scripture. Children regularly visit and worship in the adjacent church whose name the school shares and are familiar with some Anglican worship traditions such as the use of candles and the centrality of prayer to worship. Worship planning is rooted in Christian themes and is sometimes linked with subject matter being explored by children in other curriculum areas. Liturgical seasons and Christian festivals are celebrated, usually in church. Individual acts of worship are planned by the worship coordinator and by year group teachers. Children are involved in planning special acts of worship which are shared with parents and the school recognises that there would be benefits from including children more widely in worship planning. Some evaluation of worship has been implemented since the last inspection but this needs to be widened to include a range of stakeholders. Members of the ordained and lay ministry team of St Bridget's church regularly lead worship and visit the school. Members of the congregation visit regularly to read with children ensuring that

children view the church members as part of the school family and strengthening links. The centrality of prayer and reflection in the life of the school is evidenced through the display of class prayers, the school prayer and the Lord's Prayer in every classroom. These prayers are usually said each day. Staff meet to pray each week and children are encouraged to make a response to prayer by the invitation to 'find a still place within themselves'. Children who wish to request prayer for someone they are concerned about complete prayer cards which are used as a focus for prayer within whole school worship and children use this opportunity regularly. The children's experience of worship, Religious Education and the prayer life of the school, all make strong contributions to their spiritual development.

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

At all levels the school's leadership team model distinctive Christian values and the gospel values of reverence and respect permeate the life of the school. All classrooms include an area designed to encourage personal thought and reflection that reflects the Christian nature of the school. Standards are carefully and regularly monitored as is the personal and social development of each child. Attainment in religious education is monitored alongside all other curriculum areas and is subject to similar scrutiny. The school's curriculum is rich and varied and children respect that their teachers plan lessons to be interesting and interactive as well as being challenging. Indeed, they cite learning as being one of the key reasons that they enjoy coming to school. The school seeks the views of stakeholders in a variety of ways including through a parent panel, where parents are invited in turn to support the school as it develops its response to issues such as behaviour and bullying, transition arrangements and the ways in which the school shares information about children's achievement and attainment with parents. The professional development of staff as members of a church school is encouraged through school training on key issues. Two teachers have recently completed the diocesan Christian Leadership Course indicating the importance placed on developing Christian leaders within the school. Governors have established a Christian ethos committee which reports back to all governors ensuring that the life of the school as a church school is considered and regularly reviewed. Key areas of development of the school as a church school are included in the school's development plan. Links with the local church are strong with occasional events being jointly planned and supported in addition to congregation members working with children on a daily basis. To further these links the church offers an opportunity for coffee and chat one day each week as parents drop their children off for school. Children smile as they share Father John's greeting, 'God is good..... all the time' and clearly value his contribution to the life of the school. Leadership of RE and worship is effective and has a good impact upon the children in terms of knowledge and experience. Children enjoy a wide range of responsibilities, particularly during their last year at the school. These include becoming prefects, eco warriors, librarians and the 'bike it crew'. The School Council is influential with recent actions resulting in a change in the availability of drinking water and developing the school's approach to children cycling to school.

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