

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Bromham Church of England Lower School

Grange Lane
Bromham
Bedford
MK43 8NR

Diocese: St Albans

Local Authority: Bedfordshire
Dates of inspection: 12 September 2011
Date of last inspection: March 2008
School's unique reference number: 109611
Headteacher: Mrs Virginia Gilks
Inspector's name and number: Ms Chris Westgarth 44

School context

Bromham Church of England Lower School is a larger than average sized lower school. The majority of pupils come from white British backgrounds. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is low. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs is below national averages. It occupies buildings on two separate sites which are separated by a field but joined by a footpath.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Bromham School as a Church of England school are good.

Bromham is a good school with many strong features. There is great commitment from all to ensure pupils have a caring and secure learning situation based on Christian values. This allows them to develop academically and personally in a Christian atmosphere.

Established strengths

- The excellent relationships that promote respect throughout the school community
- The Headteacher's leadership and commitment of Governors to the ongoing development of the Christian character of the school
- The range and quality of acts of worship and links to values and RE
- Core Christian values which contribute effectively to the whole curriculum and underpin the outstanding quality of pastoral care

Focus for development

- Formalise the processes for monitoring and evaluating worship
- Further embed pupil led/participation in worship and integrate liturgical greetings

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

Christian values are clearly evident in the daily life of the school and they impact on the lives and routines of the school. The welcome to visitors from adults and children alike shows the love, respect, and care that underpin the ethos of Bromham School. The head takes time to greet and talk to individual children as they arrive at school each day. The outside area is special and includes Sheri's garden in memory of a pupil who died. This garden offers a delightful space for reflection, worship and learning. The path leads you on a spiritual journey and pupils are also able to visit Sheri's grave at St Owen's church. There is a strong family feel within the school, with older pupils readily supporting younger ones and all staff acting as excellent role models for the children. Behaviour observed was good and learners were polite and showed respect. This results in new pupils quickly becoming established in the school and pupils helping each other when there is a need. Displays are effectively used to make links between everyday life, Christian values, and areas of the curriculum. The signs and symbols of the Christian religion are clearly displayed in key locations throughout the school. The values tree has leaves added when pupils demonstrate different values and these are written on the leaves. Pupil's spiritual awareness is deepened through the use of the school 'growing' gardens to understand cycles of growth and change, with each class being responsible for a particular area. Pupils speak enthusiastically about helping others in this country and overseas. Community cohesion (a focus for development in the previous inspection) is strong locally and internationally. The school and the churches in Bromham have been involved in a project to build a school in India. The school opened in the summer and will have strong links with the school as it will be named after Bromham and the uniform will be the same colours. This allows pupils to show their understanding of less fortunate people by their support of the school. The reflection day for year 4 pupils at St Owen's is unique and pupils are excited by it. Recently pupils created guide books for St Owen's and these were dedicated by Bishop Alan in March of this year. Pupils still speak positively about his visit and the candle prayer he left, 'Living God's love'.

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

Worship is seen as an important part of the school day and as such pupils and staff benefit. Pupils and staff are involved in feedback through questionnaires and surveys, however there is no formal system of evaluation in place at present. Pupils listen well and offer willing responses. Pupils explain the value of worship as a time 'to learn how to behave and respect other people. They understand how stories, particularly from the Bible, have powerful moral messages. Pupils know many stories from the Bible but sometimes confuse the timings or characters involved. Philosophy club enables pupils to meet and ask 'big questions'. Pupils have a good understanding of the right and wrong and forgiveness. They have a good awareness of the value of prayer as '*when we talk with God and ask for help or say sorry*'. The importance of the Lord's Prayer is seen in the confident way everyone recites it and Grace is said or sung before lunch. Collective Worship themes are based on values and care should be taken to ensure that there is a clear and obvious link between the value and Christian values. Following the last SIAS inspection the school has worked hard to provide a good balance of outside led, pupil led and staff led worship. The school plans to introduce simple liturgical greetings at the start of Collective Worship, such as *The Lord be with you and also with you or The peace of the Lord be with you and also with you*. Pupils enjoy visiting the churches for special services and this gives children a good sense of belonging to a worshipping community. This is further strengthened when pupils lead worship themselves, either in school or church.

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

Governors are effective in monitoring the distinctive Christian character of the school and are eager for new governors to undertake further training. The head, leadership team and Governors are keen to develop further the evaluation of the impact of collective worship. The school council take their role seriously and enjoy being involved in decision-making. As a result, pupils are able to voice their desires and concerns. The headteacher and staff make a good evaluation of the school as a church school. A small group of governors meet with the RE coordinator to support, challenge and monitor the distinctive character of the school. Reports made by this group are fed back during governors meetings. However this is not yet fully embedded. Parents are rightly proud of the school and the impact of the Christian ethos. The school has strong links with the local community through both churches. The school has a good capacity to continue to develop. Furthermore the prospectus, policies, website and other documentation promote the school as a church school and are underpinned by the school motto which is based on Christian values.

SIAS report September 2011, Bromham Lower School, Bromham, Bedford MK43 8NR