



## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

### Bradfield Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Cock Lane  
Southend, Bradfield,  
Reading RG7 6HR

**Diocese: Oxford**

Local authority: West Berkshire

Date of inspection: Friday 7<sup>th</sup> February 2014

Date of last inspection: 7<sup>th</sup> March 2008

School's unique reference number: 110007

Headteacher: Kathryn Simmons

Inspector's name and number: David Shears (423)

#### School context

The school is smaller than average. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs is broadly average, although the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for pupil premium funding is below average. The school's overall effectiveness at its last inspection in December 2012 was judged to be inadequate and the school put into special measures. The present headteacher had only just taken up her duties in September 2012 and since then there have been a number of staff changes, including three new teachers this year.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Bradfield Primary as a Church of England school are satisfactory

- The headteacher has clearly identified the right areas for improvement and these are beginning to be addressed.
- The Interim Executive Board, along with the senior leaders and staff, have a passion to retain and further develop the school's distinctively Christian nature.
- Pupils are well cared for, behave well and have positive attitudes. They are becoming articulate young people, able to discuss well together and develop their own opinions.
- Pupils have a good knowledge of Christianity and are able to recall Biblical stories.

#### Areas to improve

- Re-visit the school's vision and aims with all stakeholders to develop a clear set of Christian values that are known, understood and lived out by all.
- Extend opportunities for reflection in collective worship and provide opportunities for pupils to respond to these in their everyday lives.
- Raise the attainment and progress of pupils in religious education (RE) by checking that assessments are accurate and used to plan effectively for pupils of all abilities.
- Ensure that the quality of RE and collective worship is rigorously monitored by managers, staff and pupils to inform further development in these areas.

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

Pupils say that they enjoy school. Relationships between staff and pupils are highly positive and pupils are treated as individuals and well cared for. In particular, pupils with specific needs are given helpful support which increases their confidence and enables them to make progress. Consequently, pupils have a good sense of self-worth and are respectful of others. Parents are clear that this is because of the school's Christian ethos that is worked out in action. Parents themselves feel able to come into school should they have any concerns, knowing that they will be welcomed and supported. The school had identified values, which were known as the 'fruit of the Spirit'. However, although parents are aware of these, they have not been explored by pupils and so are not effective. Nevertheless, pupils are aware of the importance of caring for each other and behaving well. They are able to relate these attributes to specific Biblical stories. As a result, pupils say that behaviour is good and that teachers deal effectively with any concerns. Pupils work well with each other and are being taught how to discuss learning together, making good use of their effective speaking and listening skills. Pupils have a good understanding of right and wrong. Together, this means that they make good progress in their social and moral development. Although there are opportunities to enhance pupils' spiritual development, information about these is not collated in order to show how effective they are. The school has rightly identified the need to develop pupils' understanding and experience of other cultures and provision in RE is beginning to address this. While pupils' academic achievement has been judged to be inadequate, the latest monitoring visit reports that this is improving.

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

Collective worship is a routine part of every day, pupils saying that this is because it is an important part of being a church school. While pupils say that they sometimes enjoy the experience, this is not consistent. This is because it does not always enable pupils to participate and pupils say that when they just have to sit and listen they find it less interesting. Nevertheless, there are high expectations of good behaviour and pupils demonstrate their respect for the worship leader and other pupils by being courteous and polite. There is a clear plan for collective worship that is based on a weekly theme that spans four years, although this does not always give pupils enough time to explore themes in enough depth. Nevertheless, planning ensures that all acts of worship are distinctively Christian, demonstrated through the singing of Christian hymns and songs and daily prayer, including the Lord's Prayer. There is an appropriate focus on God and Jesus and pupils particularly think about the Holy Spirit when celebrating Pentecost. The other main Christian festivals are celebrated either in the school or in the local church and these occasions are attended by many parents. Both parents and staff say that they enjoy opportunities for participating in worship. Staff all have opportunities for leading worship, which they enjoy. While there are opportunities during collective worship for pupils to reflect these do not always challenge pupils enough to think about what difference it is going to make to their everyday lives. There is currently no formal evaluation of collective worship. Pupils in Year 6 are starting to lead collective worship on a weekly basis. Currently, this is mostly being planned for them but the collective worship leader is beginning to help them to plan acts of worship for themselves. The local priest in charge is a welcome visitor to the school and regularly leads whole school worship, providing a helpful link between the school and the local church. This has led to the church beginning to use the school hall on occasional Sundays for family worship.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is satisfactory**

Pupils make satisfactory progress in RE and so reach average attainment. Their attainment in learning about religion is a strength within this, although their attainment in learning from religion is weaker. Consequently the leadership of RE is currently satisfactory. However, there

is evidence to show that the progress of pupils so far this year is improving. This is because the RE leader has ensured that the locally agreed syllabus for RE has been adopted and is now beginning to be implemented in the school. This has a good focus on learning from religion and is beginning to have an impact on the learning of pupils, particularly in Key Stage 2. There is an appropriate emphasis on the teaching of Christianity which has resulted in pupils having a good knowledge of Biblical stories. However, the study of other religions has not been strong enough and is only now beginning to be taught effectively. Pupils say that they are enjoying learning about what other people believe so that they can compare this with Christian beliefs. This is resulting in pupils, especially in Key Stage 2 becoming more enthusiastic about RE lessons. All teachers regularly assess pupils' knowledge and understanding in RE and this is clearly recorded, enabling the school to monitor the progress and attainment of pupils, although the quality of teaching is not formally checked. However, assessments are not always being used well enough by teachers to plan effectively for pupils of different abilities. Consequently sometimes work is too hard for some pupils and at other times it is too easy.

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

The headteacher, together with the Interim Executive Board, has a clear vision for the development of the school's Christian character. This is endorsed by staff who all recognise the centrality of the Christian ethos in the school and its impact in giving strong support, both for themselves during a difficult period in the history of the school, and for parents and pupils. This ensures that all are cared for well and feel valued. The priest in charge and members of the Parochial Church Council continue to give good support to the school. Consequently, all staff have positive attitudes and are working well together to make further improvements. While very little had been done to address the areas for improvement highlighted in the previous church school inspection report, the headteacher has accurately identified key areas for much needed development and these are beginning to be addressed. There have been a number of changes to staff and the school has ensured that all those appointed share the vision for promoting the Christian ethos of the school. Clear and decisive leadership in introducing the agreed syllabus is ensuring that the arrangements for religious education are now providing a more broad and balanced curriculum. Leaders and managers have also needed to closely monitor and evaluate the impact of teaching and learning on the progress and attainment of pupils in English and mathematics, in order to ensure that these improve. Consequently, their formal monitoring and evaluation of teaching in RE and the impact of collective worship are still under-developed. There are positive relationships with parents and the local community who particularly appreciate the quality of care given to all pupils.

Over the last eighteen months the school's Christian ethos has both sustained and strengthened the school. There is currently a strong leadership, ably supported by the local church and clergy, who are passionate about developing this further and enabling pupils to achieve well both academically and personally. The school recognises the need to encapsulate this vision by identifying clearly focused Christian values that are shared by all members of the school community, including school managers and leaders, all staff, pupils and parents, to enable the school to continue its journey in becoming an effective church school.

SIAMS report February 2014 Bradfield CE (VA) Primary School, Bradfield RG7 6HR