

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Belchamp St. Paul Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Vicarage Road
Belchamp St. Paul,
Sudbury,
Suffolk.
CO10 7BP

Diocese of Chelmsford

Essex Local Authority

Date of inspection : 27th September 2012

Date of last inspection: 25th March 2008

School's unique reference number 115134

Headteacher: Linda Buchanan

Inspector's name and number: Iain Gunn 727

School context

This village school is much smaller than the average primary school. Nearly all of the children come from White British backgrounds. The proportion of children known to be eligible for free school meals is low. The proportion of disabled children and those with special educational needs who are supported at school action plus is higher than average. Their needs vary from speech, language and communication problems to specific learning difficulties. There are no children with a statement of special educational needs.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Belchamp St Paul Church School as a Church of England school is good

Belchamp is an effective church school. It is a place where explicit Christian values are implicit in the actions of the adults and children. It is a place where the children are extremely well cared for and where they feel safe and listened too. The strong links with the local church enhances the distinctiveness of the school as a place of spiritual development.

Established strengths

- The core Christian values that permeate through all areas of the school.
- The depth and quality of the collective worship.
- The extremely strong links with the local church.
- The children's enjoyment of religious education [RE]teaching.

Focus for development

- The leadership of the school to develop an accurate system to report on the standards across the school in RE so there is a clear overview.

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

Core Christian values underpin every aspect of the school. They are evident in displays, behaviour, collective worship but most importantly in how people treat each other at the school. The children are able to articulate them and say why they are important. One child said, 'They make the school a better place and make us think about how we treat each other'. The parents back this view up saying that the children live their values outside of school- they are a very positive influence. Pupils are polite and relate their behaviour to the core values saying, 'We want to live the values so we can be proud of ourselves.' The pupils and parents agree that issues are dealt with quickly and fairly, resulting in a very happy school. The children are proud of the charities that they collect money for and understand why they are important saying, 'We can make a difference if we help people, we learn this in assembly.' Children also spoke with great passion about their involvement in the local community: singing for the Evergreens, delivering Harvest produce in the village and visiting the Christmas Child Depot to help sort toys. The parents value the school's position within the community and spoke with great pride about the ethos of the school that they feel nurtures their children. The children recognise the symbols around the school that make them a distinctive church school and could explain the significance of each item in great detail. They are proud of their religious displays in each of the classrooms and the values of the school that are on display in entrance to the school. Also in the hall there is an altar that is used as a focal point for worship. The children spoke positively about the prayer box in school saying that they used it to say thank you as well as to ask for help.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Very well planned and resourced acts of worship have a place of major importance, and appropriately reflect the Christian foundation of the school. The children, staff and parents all recognise the importance of worship at the heart of their school and the impact it has. The worship is Anglican in nature which results in children of all ages having a good understanding of the symbols and traditions. The worship inspires the thinking and actions of the school with direct links made to Christian values. Children of all ages are fully involved coming to the front to display and explain drawings that link to the theme. There is an excellent balance of practical, talking, adult and child led elements in worship. This means the children are fully engaged throughout and speak positively about it. A child said, 'In assembly we talk to God, it feels like He is here and makes us feel we are not alone' There is quality reflection time built into the worship. This is linked to the lighting of a candle and adds a spiritual dimension. A number of key services are held at the local church as well as some services being held in school that are open to the community. The parents feel that these services strengthen the links between the church and the community and spoke very positively about the Ashing Service. There is very thorough monitoring of collective worship by the Governors and leaders in the school. Pupil's views are gathered from across the school by the School Council. The pupils feel that they have a say in the worship of the school and one child spoke about how this makes them feel more part of it.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

The standards in RE are at least in line with other core subjects in the school. The quality of teaching in RE is good with some aspects being outstanding. In the outstanding teaching a range of learning styles are catered for, ICT enhances the learning; the work is very well paced and meets the needs of the learners. The children were engaged and spoke with real enthusiasm about their RE lessons, They explained that RE is often linked to other subjects and this makes it fun and relevant. They are very proud of a photo story that they have recorded on the Easter Story, acting sections out around the village, linking drama and ICT with RE. The curriculum is relevant and effective with a good balance between Christianity and other faiths. The parents spoke positively about the fact their children had a good knowledge of other faiths. A child said, 'It is important that we understand difference so we can all get along'. Since the last inspection the school has introduced a whole school assessment schedule which provides teachers with information about pupil progress. This means that staff are more aware of the children's levels so the work is planned and pitched appropriately. The children enjoy Bible stories and spoke about their favourite stories and how they related to their values and as a result impacted on their lives.

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

School leaders and Governors have a very clear vision of how distinctive Christian values are central to every aspect of school life. These are the principle on which the school operates at all levels of the leadership of the school and decisions made are based around these values. The values are evident in policies, with the behaviour policy in the school stemming from the core values. The current head teacher has introduced new systems so that progress and attainment can be assessed in RE; this now needs to be collated and reported on to the Governors so that they have a whole school picture from which they can challenge. The issues from the last inspection have all either been addressed or partially addressed with a clear time frame for implementation of the final stages with the current leadership driving them forward with vigour, which has meant there is a more focused approach to developing the distinctive character resulting in more accurate assessments and a deeper use of core values. Children, parents and governors speak very highly of the leadership in the school. There is a development plan in place; however more precise use of data will further enhance this. The Governors are well briefed on collective worship with a clear monitoring schedule in place, receiving written and verbal reports. This has resulted in daily meaningful worship that is at the centre of the schools distinctive character driving forward the core Christian values of the school. The Governors have a clear yet open view about succession planning, which results in very good staff appointments. The school uses external support well to enhance the development of learning in the school. There is a strong relationship with the parents and community as well as extremely close relationship with the local church. One parent commented that the local vicar knows all our children by name.