

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report



Broadhembury Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Broadhembury

Honiton

Devon

EX14 3NF

Diocese: Exeter

Local authority: Devon

Dates of inspection: 25th April 2013

Date of last inspection: 15th June 2010

School's unique reference number: 113349

Executive Headteacher: Katie Gray

Inspector's name and number: Wendy Simmons 127

School context

Broadhembury school, based in a rural environment near the town of Honiton, offers the potential for outdoor learning and exploration. One of two schools in the 'Jubilee Federation', collaboration with Branscombe VC School, following a period of leadership changes. The schools moved to formal federation in September 2012 with the headteacher working a three day rolling programme of leadership in each school. The 'Jubilee Federation' governors are representative of both schools and have chosen two ex-officio governors. The 26 pupils, from mainly white British families, mostly come from the villages of Broadhembury and Dunkeswell. The number of pupils identified with disabilities or a special need is above average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Broadhembury as a Church of England school are outstanding.

Excellent progress has been made since becoming part of the 'Jubilee Federation' and this is consistent with the impact of the executive headteacher and newly appointed staff members. The Christian ethos is the fundamental focus of the school leadership. The outstanding Christian distinctiveness of Broadhembury Church of England school supports all children and contributes to the relationships between staff, governors, parents, the church and community. This has a positive impact on pupil progress and achievement. The impact of this was clearly evident during the inspection when talking with pupils.

Established strengths

- The headteacher's excellent leadership and Christian vision for this church school.
- The experience of the federation governing body, their effective monitoring and evaluation processes, particularly their use of learning walks.
- The excellent relationships and partnership between all members of the school, church and parish community.
- The way in which the school's Christian values are reflected in the outstanding behaviour and the good manners of all children.

Focus for development

- Create opportunities to enhance children's experience of leading and evaluating worship.
- Ensure the establishment of an effective ethos committee, to focus on the Christian status of the school, share experiences with the partner school and report to the federation governing body.

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

Broadhembury school has identified a mission and aims for the school. One of the aims is to 'develop their spirituality and to understand the teachings of Christianity in the context of other world faith communities'. The development of spirituality is effectively addressed through identified Christian values. The recent review of the behaviour policy was linked to the values of forgiveness, perseverance, love and friendship and reverence and respect and led to the introduction of 'Broadhembury Bridges' reward system. During a tour of the school, children identified the current value, 'Service'. Children were asked to fill in a snail spiral with their families on how they are providing a service to each other. Other values identified in the current year are Generosity, Reverence and Respect, Wisdom and Perseverance. For example children understand that they must persevere with their learning to achieve their targets and can refer to the example of George VI who conquered speech difficulties.

Children's understanding and personal application of these Christian values has created a learning environment that is reflected in school data. This shows all pupils are now making good progress and achievement is normally above average in reading, writing and mathematics although the very small cohorts of pupils make year on year comparisons difficult. The spiritual, moral, and social development of all children is outstanding and reflected in every aspect of school life and its many and varied activities. For example, in classroom quiet corners, the Christian fish symbol is used as a focus for their prayers and reflective thoughts. An art project is underway to make banners depicting each value to be hung in the foyer. During the key stage 1 project on the environment, children were taken on a walk around the village 'to use our senses to explore the world around us' and the impact of these experiences and the making of the values banners help children to understand and reflect upon the nature and meaning of God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. When asked where they could find the Holy Spirit, children said 'it is all around us'. Emphasis on Christian values through display, the curriculum, worship and daily life in school, has a considerable impact on children's spiritual awareness.

Children have good knowledge of global cultural diversity through curriculum studies and their charitable giving. Broadhembury school is a very active in fund raising for local, national and global charities including the Samaritan's Purse, Operation Christmas Child, Shoe Box appeal, Sponsored Readathon, Water Aid and Children in Need. The adjacent St Andrew's church is used weekly for collective worship, festival services and to support children's learning in Religious Education (RE). Children provide displays for the church. Religious Education (RE) makes a good contribution to Christian Distinctiveness. Children have very positive attitudes. They enjoy Bible stories, looking at Faith in Action and how it relates to their own lives.

RE is planned and delivered according to the Devon agreed syllabus ensuring that lessons have sufficient challenge. For example they are learning about the similarities and differences between Christianity and Hinduism and can discuss and share their findings. As a result children's work shows outstanding and consistent progress and attainment in line with their attainment in English.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Worship is highly valued with an outstanding impact on all children and is based upon 'Values for Life'. Planning by the headteacher uses eighteen Christian values on a three year rolling programme. Each value is supported by appropriate Bible Stories to support the theme. The vicar uses the planning to support his worship based upon the Church year. Consistency of approach ensures that worship reflects Anglican traditions and the Anglican belief in God the Father, God the son and God the Holy Spirit. Children can reflect upon and accept this belief. Children are now beginning to lead a weekly worship based on the current Christian value. For example they planned and led a worship based upon Noah's Ark in response to the value of 'wisdom'. The Remembrance Service at the village memorial, planned by the school for the community was attended by the British Legion. This has had an impact on all children and helped them to reflect on the value of 'service' both past and present and developed an understanding of their locality and their place within it. The vicar also leads festival and special services in St Andrew's church.

Children can recall the special services for Easter, Christmas, Harvest and the Remembrance Service. Worship on a Palm Sunday theme was shared with the partner school through Video link and was led by the Vicar of the partner School. Each school sang a hymn for the other school. Such shared worship helps to embed their shared Christian ethos. The outstanding celebration worship observed took place in church and was led by the vicar. It was attended by parents, a prospective foundation governor and parishioners.

The opportunity for spiritual reflection and prayer was enhanced by music accompanied by a video of our global environment before and after the worship. As it was St Mark's Day, the life of St Mark was shared with the children. The focus on St Mark as an evangelist and a servant of the Gospel, enhanced children's knowledge of discipleship and their spiritual awareness. Pupil involvement included candle lighting, a reading from St Mark's Gospel and a prayer. Prayer is of central importance in school life, children write prayers and these are used during worship. They are particularly proud of their school Blessing compiled by the children in response to the theme of Respect and Reverence. Each classroom has a prayer reflection area. Music is an important part of worship and school life and the children sing very well. A worship record is kept and the ex officio governor and headteacher evaluate worship. However, as yet children are not involved in any formal evaluation of worship.

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

The head teacher's outstanding leadership is successful in articulating the Christian vision of the school. Parents are particularly impressed with the high level of communication. For example, the headteacher's weekly newsletter reinforces the termly Christian value and all parents are informed and involved with school activities. The impact of the Christian distinctiveness and values ensures that children of all abilities make very good year on year progress and their achievements are in line with and sometimes above national expectations. This is reflected in the range of activities such as the creative learning approach. Links with the federation partnership school and the church community impact on the children's understanding and awareness of their school as a Christian school. Governors are fully involved in the self-evaluation process. They are secure in their three aims, to provide a strategic overview, act as a critical friend and ensure accountability. They have established an effective programme of 'learning walks and rigorous systems of monitoring and evaluation through visits and links with staff members. The school development plan has a key element related to its Christian character, namely to establish an ethos committee for each federation school. The areas for development at the previous inspection have been addressed. Links with the Diocese of Exeter are maintained by advisor visits and in service training. RE is taught on a weekly basis but is also linked through the curriculum in a more holistic approach. As RE subject leader, the headteacher has considered plans for the development, monitoring and assessment of RE with particular regard for mixed age teaching, but is rightly awaiting the publication of the new Devon RE syllabus. Therefore assessment is not yet fully embedded. However evidence from work scrutiny shows that progress in RE across the school is at least good. Partnerships at all levels are outstanding. Following federation, children designed a new school logo, which reflects the school's Christian status, their learning and care for the environment and local landmarks. The school enjoys good links with the local community and parish church. For example, the school supported the village by producing a logo to apply for a lottery grant for a new village hall. Children's understanding of their village environment, Christian school identity and their wider locality links with their partner school makes a significant impact upon their understanding of community, team work and respect for others. For example, children speak of singing carols in the village at Christmas and their team building day with Branscombe school at Bicton.

Parents spoken to are very happy with their children's education. They welcome the Christian foundation and all parents spoken to value the Christian ethos and care, guidance and support for all children. Parents say that the small number of families involved with the school is one of its strengths with everyone working together for the benefit of all children. The relationships between staff, governors, parents and the community are outstanding and support all children and contribute to the Christian distinctiveness of Broadhembury Church of England school.

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