

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Biggin Church of England Primary School

Biggin

Buxton

Derbyshire

SK17 0DQ

Diocese: Derby

Local authority: Derbyshire

Dates of inspection: 22nd May 2012

Date of last inspection: 6th June 2007

School's unique reference number: 112822

Permanent headteacher: Heather Gosney

Inspector's name and number: John Clapham

Quality assurance: Lyn Field 151

School context

Biggin Church of England Primary School is a small village school of 18 pupils situated in the Peak District National Park. Most pupils are of White British heritage, with few pupils from ethnic minority groups. The school has a higher than average proportion of children who have special educational needs. The permanent headteacher is currently absent and the school is being overseen by another local headteacher on a temporary part time basis.

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

The Christian character of the school permeates all aspects of school life and impacts positively on all within the school community. It is a school where pupils feel safe, trusting their teachers and valuing their friends. Christian values form the core of school life, where every child and every family matters.

Established strengths

- The Christian values and ethos, which underpin the whole life of the school, have a marked impact on the learners who participate fully in the life of the school.
- The exceptional way in which all stakeholders relate well to others and work cooperatively.
- The spiritual, moral and cultural development of children, particularly the depth of thinking and questioning skills acquired by the time they reach upper Key Stage Two.

Focus for development

- Develop the role of governors in monitoring and evaluating the impact of the school's ethos and distinctive Christian values within the school improvement planning cycle.
- Involve all stakeholders in the systematic monitoring and evaluation of collective worship in order to inform future planning.
- Ensure the approach to teaching, thinking and questioning skills is consistent throughout the school.

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

The polite, well behaved, articulate pupils enjoy attending school because the staff are good at meeting their needs. The children are proud of their school and its close links with the church. The Christian values of care, kindness, respect and forgiveness are core to all that the school does. As a result pupils work and play together very well both in school and on the playground, showing excellent behaviour. This leads to a relaxed, orderly atmosphere around and within the school buildings which enables staff to provide a good learning environment. The children have a strong self image and an enthusiasm for learning as a result of the excellent relationships that exist across the school. This can be seen at numerous times during the day when the older pupils care for the younger and there is a palpable sense of community. They also enjoy and respect their environment.

Christian values nurture the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of the pupils. A particular strength is the outstanding depth of spiritual understanding and the level of questioning and enquiry skills that the children acquire through philosophy, personal social and health education and religious education in key stage two. The reason that this provision is not yet outstanding is that these thinking and questioning skills are not nurtured to the same extent in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage One.

The school vision gives the children a good understanding of the contribution they make to the school, both academically, socially, emotionally and spiritually. The affirmation that the children feel was summed up by one child who commented 'I am good at being myself'. The school behaviour policy links well with SMSC and, along with the community cohesion policy, has a clear focus on Christian values. The school has made links with a school in Slovakia, which is supporting the children in developing a wider global understanding.

Parents are extremely complimentary of the work of the school and confirm that any issues that they raise are addressed effectively. One parent said 'The school staff are all very hands on and are good at communicating with us. We know our children are well cared for'. Another parent said 'This is a small tight knit community where we all work together. Our school and church are central to village life, and it wouldn't be a proper village without them'. Parents appreciate the special caring atmosphere, which enables all their children to flourish.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Children of all ages and abilities are consistently engaged and affirmed through worship. Worship has a high profile in school life, and influences the thinking and day to day actions of the whole school community. The church is currently without a vicar and a church warden from another local church leads regular school worship at the church. She is making an active contribution to the life of the school. Parents and carers from all faiths and none value the participation of their children in school collective worship, with no children withdrawn. Children participate in collective worship through drama, music, reading and writing prayers. The collective worship that was observed was planned and led by the children, who regularly work in mixed teams to plan and lead significant aspects of worship. The children and governors are not currently involved in evaluating the impact of collective worship. Through worship, the children are gaining a good knowledge of key stories and teachings of the Bible. The pupils know the Lord's Prayer and can explain its meaning in their own words. Pupils have recall of both Bible and moral messages that have been taught during worship and are able to explain their meaning. Many of them are able to relate this knowledge to their daily lives, and are developing their understanding of Christian worship and practice.

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

Parents, children governors and staff clearly articulate the school's vision, ethos and values and the impact that these have across the school. Staff agreed that 'Christian values are explicit here; they are just in our blood and integral to everything. We live and breathe them and the children do too'. Exemplary relationships throughout the school show the key role that Christian values play within the community. Everyone feels valued and all model the school ethos. This is particularly noticeable in the way that the school works with its pupils with special educational needs, involving them appropriately in the life of the school. Governors are conscientious and are hugely supportive of the school. They freely give time, encouragement and support in all aspects of school life. Governors have been involved in the monitoring of the curriculum and SMSC, yet their capacity to impact on the strategic development of the school as a church school is underdeveloped. The governors have had little involvement to date in monitoring and evaluating the impact of the school's ethos and distinctive Christian values. Staff have rallied together with the acting headteacher and have developed a collegiate style of leading the school that is maintaining and developing the Christian ethos through a time of change. A governor noted 'a real sense of closeness and commitment has been fostered through this difficult time. People talk more, share information and are open to the best ways to develop and improve'.