



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Brereton Voluntary Aided Church of England Primary School

School Lane,
Brereton Green
Sandbach
Cheshire
CW11 1RN

Diocese: Chester

Local authority: Cheshire East
Dates of inspection: 4th July 2013
Date of last inspection: 19th June 2008
School's unique reference number: 111332
Headteacher: Mrs Susan Riley
Inspector's name and number: Mrs Ruth Wall 548

School context

Brereton is a smaller than average-sized primary school. Since the last inspection the number of children on roll has increased significantly. Children come from diverse socio-economic backgrounds. The vast majority of children are of white British heritage. The proportion of children eligible for free school meals is below the national average as is the number with identified learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Since the previous inspection a new chair of governors and rector have been appointed.

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

This is a very friendly and happy school with a caring Christian ethos in which all members of the school community are highly valued and nurtured as individuals. There is strong and committed leadership by the headteacher, supported by the staff, governors and parents. The emphasis on Christian values enables all children to reach their full potential in both personal and academic development.

Established strengths

- The strong Christian ethos which underpins the work of the school and permeates all aspects of school life
- The clear vision of the headteacher and governors and their success in embedding Christian values within the daily life of the school
- The strong link with the parish church, other local churches, the community and the Kenyan Christian school

Focus for development

- To further develop teacher confidence in assessing children's RE achievements
- To extend children's experience and understanding about different cultures in the United Kingdom to further strengthen their understanding and respect for different communities.

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

The school's mission statement which includes the Bible text, 'I can do all things in Him who strengthens me' makes explicit the school's commitment to its church school distinctiveness.

Christian values are fully embedded in the school's care and concern for all members of the school community. This makes an exceptional contribution to the children's social and moral development. Children have positive attitudes to their learning and know they are valued and respected by staff. They are polite, friendly and very well behaved. The headteacher explained that children are taught how to act and respond to others through reference to the Christian values of respect, consideration, honesty and forgiveness. One parent said her child now refers to Christian values at home. Each week children are nominated by staff and each other to receive certificates for demonstrating specific Christian values. Children are encouraged to follow the example of Jesus in demonstrating concern for world issues and in helping others less fortunate than themselves. Of particular note are two year six boys who have organised a fundraising event to raise money to vaccinate children against malaria. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the ethos of the school and believe the Christian distinctiveness adds to this strength. High quality Christian displays, with Bible references, together with symbols, including a beautiful ceramic cross in the playground, reflect the fact that Christian values are important here. Tracking of children's academic progress is thorough and rigorous, and intervention programmes are quickly put in place, which successfully address issues of underachievement. The majority of children are making expected, or better than expected progress when compared to the national average. The school have identified the need to develop links with a different type of community within the UK to further strengthen children's understanding and respect for different communities. There is an active link with a Christian school in Kenya. Following a recent visit to Brereton School one Kenyan teacher wrote of his appreciation for '...your love with magnitude that no-one can measure.'

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Worship is a central feature of school life and is respected and enjoyed by the school community. All members of staff attend and take a full part in worship which gives a positive message to the children. As a result of outstanding leadership by the headteacher, worship is well-planned and imaginatively delivered. Themes are rooted in Christian beliefs with a strong emphasis on Christian values for life. Monitoring and evaluation are used effectively and inform school improvement planning. Children agreed that they enjoyed the regular role play opportunities which, as one child put it, 'are fun and help us understand the stories better.' The school has developed effective links with a range of leaders from different Christian traditions to further enrich children's experience. In the worship observed, the rector skilfully involved the children while putting across an important Christian message. The children were impeccably behaved, responded to prayers and reflection time in a respectful way and participated enthusiastically. Prayer is considered to be an integral and everyday part of school life. Teachers spoke about classroom prayer trees and prayer beads on the worship table that are used to support the children on their 'spiritual journey'. Children know the Lord's Prayer and learning to sign the school prayer helps them to understand the significance of the words. Careful thought has been given to helping the children to understand the Trinity. This was demonstrated effectively as the whole school sang a favourite action song about the Holy Spirit helping them to live out the Christian life. Elements of Anglican liturgy are incorporated into worship. This helps to develop children's understanding of Anglican practice which they experience in church services. All children are now involved regularly in planning and leading significant acts of worship. Parents agreed with one parent who said, 'These services are really joyful occasions.'

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Religious education (RE) has the status of a core subject and has been a subject of focused school improvement since the last inspection. The subject leader has worked with a clear purpose and sense of direction in driving through initiatives to address issues identified at the previous inspection and to raise standards of attainment which are now consistently good. There are examples of outstanding achievement from some children. Portfolios of children's work have been introduced to compile evidence of attainment across the age range. The subject leader has benefited from diocesan training and now provides informed and valued support to other teachers. Recently revised schemes of work are of high quality and fully comply with the diocesan syllabus, reflecting the school's Christian foundation at the same time as giving due weight to other faiths. Additional ideas have been incorporated to enhance

children's knowledge and understanding of the relevance of faith in today's world. Children spoke with particular enthusiasm about the 'Walk through the Bible' activities. A wide variety of teaching and learning strategies are used to take account of the different learning styles of the children. These include art, craft and multi-media resources, as well as visits to places where people of other faiths worship. Procedures for assessing children's work are at an early stage of development and are yet to be fully embedded. Children take pride in their new 'special' hard-backed RE books. They say they enjoy RE lessons and talked with interest about their learning and personal beliefs using religious vocabulary with confidence. In the lesson observed, the teacher made good use of open-ended questions and provided activities to stimulate creative thinking. Tasks set were carefully matched to children's abilities so they were motivated and challenged appropriately. Following the Kagan approach to learning, children respond to opportunities to work collaboratively to solve problems and use their initiative in lessons in all areas of the curriculum including RE.

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

The headteacher and governors provide outstanding management and leadership of the school as a church school. The whole school community have been involved in an evaluation of their church school distinctiveness and they are able to articulate how their values are firmly based on the teachings of Christ. The headteacher works tirelessly and is well thought of by the whole school community. The governors show high levels of commitment to the school and use their specific skills to work very hard and effectively on its behalf. They are fully involved in monitoring the performance of the school. The school's self-evaluation document is used to clarify the present position of Brereton School and to inform continuous improvement. Subject leadership for RE and collective worship are outstanding. Children feel comfortable in expressing their views through the school council and are confident that their suggestions are valued and acted on when appropriate. Members of staff have a shared commitment to improvement, which is evident in levels of support and positive relationships. Everyone's contribution is valued and appreciated. The school is committed to the professional development of teachers and staff. Training accessed from the diocese and in-service training is in-line with the school's plan for school improvement. Parents are given the opportunity to comment on church school issues and say that the school listens to their views and problems are dealt with quickly and sensitively. Relationships between school, the community and church are excellent. Staff, governors and parents all spoke of the positive impact the rector has had in providing much valued support and advice on church school issues. All agreed that he presents a positive image of the church. Brereton is a school which has a clear sense of direction for further improvement and is right to be proud of its achievements.

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