

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### **Brent Knoll Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School**

Brent Rd,  
Brent Knoll,  
Highbridge  
TA9 4EQ

#### **Diocese: Bath & Wells**

Local authority: Somerset County Council

Dates of inspection: 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2008

Date of last inspection: 24<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> May 2004

School's unique reference number: 123808

Headteacher: Karen Davidson

Inspector's name and number: Muriel Griffiths - 268

#### **School context**

Brent Knoll Church School has 112 pupils on roll. The school was established in 1861 and serves both the village and the wider community. A new extension was built in 2005 and the grounds of the school have been attractively developed. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is a little higher than usually found. Almost all pupils are White British.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Brent Knoll Church of England School as a church school are good.**

The school has some outstanding features. This is apparent in the spiritual and personal development of its learners. Christian values and attitudes are embedded in the relationships that exist between the whole school community. The positive way in which learners speak about these values illustrates the impact that the Christian ethos of the school has upon their lives.

#### **Established strengths**

- The quality of relationships between all members of the school community, creating a strong family feeling
- The effective Christian learning environment provided by the school, for all pupils, where each individual is valued
- The secure and accepting ethos, giving pupils confidence to express their feelings and opinions.

#### **Focus for development**

- Review the completed evaluation document for Church of England schools so that foundation governors can become involved in formally evaluating the school's performance as one with a Church of England foundation.
- Give pupils regular opportunities to evaluate collective worship so that the school can discover its impact on learners more fully.
- In future parent questionnaires the school should invite responses about the school's distinctive Christian character.

#### **The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is outstanding in the way it meets the needs of all learners**

Pupils feel safe and secure within a warm, caring Christian environment that nurtures them and provides for all their needs. The school places a high level of importance on the needs of the whole child. There are good relationships between staff and pupils that enable pupils to talk about their concerns knowing that these will be taken seriously and acted upon. A 'worry box' is available for older pupils who prefer to pass on their concerns more discreetly. Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy talking about their learning and the many interesting extra

activities that are provided for them. They are well behaved and show courtesy and consideration for one another and all adults. All children flourish as individuals, feeling valued, special and supported in their learning. Pupils are confident in sharing their views and opinions as they know that what they say will be valued. This was evident in religious education (RE) lessons observed during the inspection. For example, when older pupils were discussing Christian baptism they were confident in sharing their thoughts about what is important about the Christian faith. The school uses its Christian character to nourish and encourage the spiritual, social, moral and cultural development of learners. Children's successes are celebrated each week during collective worship, when a range of rewards are awarded. Good procedures are in place for encouraging positive behaviour that are known and understood by all members of the school community. Issues are dealt with sensitively and promptly and parents say that 'the school is good at nipping things in the bud'. Parents also feel that younger children are well cared for by older pupils. During the inspection, this was noticeable in the playground as older children helped much younger children to play skittles. Many opportunities are taken to help children to think of those less fortunate than themselves. The School Council has selected NSPCC (National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children) as a charity to support and the school also raises money for a school in Kenya. The school celebrates its Christian foundation with appropriate signs, symbols and displays showing what the children have been learning in RE.

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

Collective worship is seen as an important part of the school day. Pupils clearly enjoy the daily act of worship and say that they especially like it when they are actively involved. This was evident on the day of the inspection when children were involved in preparing the hall and others from all year groups opened 'presents' and were quick to realise that each item, such as an apple or a crayon, came from trees. The activity was a good illustration for the theme, 'Our World'. All pupils joined in the different elements of worship enthusiastically and especially enjoyed singing about 'being friends of Jesus'. The time of prayer and quiet reflection was used well by the children. Collective worship is consistently and recognisably Christian. As well as Bible stories and Christian values, themes for worship also include major events in the Christian calendar which give pupils an understanding of the importance of these festivals to Christians. All teaching staff are involved in planning and leading worship. The school has recently consulted children about the daily act of worship as part of a review on collective worship and as a result has made some changes to the groupings and timings of worship. The school is now planning more formal monitoring and evaluation on a regular basis. Prayer is an important part of life at the school and pupils have opportunities to write their own prayers on the Prayer Tree or as part of their RE lessons. Major Christian festivals, led by the Rector, are celebrated in church and parents enjoy the opportunities to join their children on these occasions. Currently children are looking forward to the annual Leavers' Service also held in St. Michael's Church.

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

The headteacher has a strong vision for the school as one with a church foundation. The headteacher, staff and governors ensure that this foundation is at the heart of the school and that this vision is also evident in practice. Parents speak highly of the caring ethos created by the staff and appreciate the fact that the school has a church foundation. Parents say that the school is like 'an extended family'. Adults working in the school are good role models and have high expectations of care, respect and behaviour. The headteacher has a clear and accurate understanding of the school's strengths and those areas that need further development. Plans for moving the school forward, as one with a church foundation are part of the school's development planning. The governing body has a positive, supportive relationship with the school. Foundation governors are now ready and willing to be more formally involved in monitoring and evaluation of the school as a church school. Parents' views on the school's performance are sought through questionnaires but currently they are not consulted about the Christian character of the school. RE is led by the headteacher who is skilled and knowledgeable and provides good support for her colleagues. The Rector is a supportive and regular visitor to the school who helps in many ways, such as playing the

piano for collective worship and leading school services held in church. His contribution to RE lessons is much appreciated. He also provides much valued pastoral support for the headteacher and other members of the school community. The links between the school and the church are mutually supportive. The Rector describes the church as 'the next classroom' because it is used so frequently for school activities. There are good opportunities for pupils to 'have a voice' through the School Council and children appreciate the improvements made to the toilets as a result. The strong commitment of the headteacher, staff and governors to the children and their families contributes to the strong family atmosphere in the school, and to its Christian distinctiveness.

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