



## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

### **Brailes Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School**

Main Street  
Lower Brailes  
Banbury  
OX15 5AP

**Diocese: Coventry**

Local authority: Warwickshire

Date of inspection: 4 December 2013

Date of last inspection: 5 July 2010

School's unique reference number: 125656

Headteacher: Mrs Sarah Plaskitt

Inspector's name and number: Mr David Stanier 700

#### **School context**

Brailes Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School is a much smaller than average primary school. All of its 72 pupils are of White British or Irish backgrounds and come from Upper and Lower Brailes, and the villages of Winderton, Sutton under Brailes, Stourton, Cherington and Whichford, many travelling by bus with an escort. Currently the school has a below average percentage of pupils with special educational needs. The headteacher has been in post for 10 years, and the school has very good links with St George's Church, which is about ten minutes walking distance away.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Brailes Primary School as a Church of England school are good**

- Clearly communicated Christian values which shine out in the daily life of the school, and are reflected in high quality relationships and good learning and achievement.
- The enabling Christian vision and leadership of the headteacher, supported by the highly dedicated staff, working together with governors, parents and clergy
- The high quality inclusion strategies and pastoral care for all, which ensure every child is known as an individual, and is valued and special.

#### **Areas to improve**

- Enhance the school environment to create opportunities for personal reflection to support pupils' spiritual development.
- Extend the role of pupils in planning, delivering and evaluating worship that impacts on their daily lives.
- Embed the role of the recently reshaped governing body in monitoring and evaluating the school's distinctive character.

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

There is a strong family atmosphere in the school, with clearly stated Christian values actively promoted in all aspects of school life by all the adults in the school, and put into action by all the pupils. The school, through its Christian character, has raised aspirations for all learners and is now good at meeting the needs of all learners. School leaders carefully track attainment and progress of all pupils, and the outcomes at KS2 in core subjects have shown an upward trend over the last three years, with all pupils making at least two levels of progress through the key stage. Through rigorous self evaluation the school has identified where additional support should be targeted to ensure that every individual realises their potential. Pupils say, 'We can go to anyone for help, and teachers always make time for us'. The school's Christian character informs its approach to behaviour, and forgiveness underpins its behaviour policy. Attendance is extremely good, and there have been no exclusions. The quality of relationships throughout the school is good, providing and supporting a stimulating environment where pupils are enthusiastic about their learning, relating their behaviour to Christian values, such as forgiveness and justice, which have a distinct impact on their lives and relationships with one another. The school behaviour policy is grounded in forgiveness. Parents are very positive about the Christian values which are woven through the daily life of the school, saying, 'I love this school for its Christian values'. Parents also say, 'my children are valued and respected by staff and one another'. Parents really value the work of the school, and speak of the impact of the school at home. The active and articulate school council feel that they are valued and listened to, and that they make real decisions, for instance about fundraising, and were able to relate personally with the focus on supporting 'Shipston Home Nursing'. The school website clearly articulates the Christian nature of the school, and the school prayer and the link to the church website are examples of the positive influence of St George's church. The school banner near the entrance, the Advent focus board, and the Pilgrimages display all contribute to the spiritual development of pupils. Religious education (RE) makes a clear and valued contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development. Religious festivals from other faiths such as Divali, are recognised, acknowledged and respected. The school has already identified the need to enhance spaces for reflection. Here every child matters every day, and knows that they are valued.

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

Collective worship is seen by pupils and staff as an important part of the daily life of the school. Worship is distinctively Christian in character, and planned around 'Values for life', with all staff involved in leading worship. Pupils say that they enjoy collective worship, and that they value this opportunity for prayer and the time for reflection. Pupils say, 'We get time to reflect in assembly' and 'It's a time when we can pray to Jesus – we think about Him, and how He's made this world as it is now. It's that quiet time when we really get to think about Jesus.' All the children know and join in with 'The School Prayer', and the physical actions for this daily prayer enable participation by the youngest learners. Pupils spoke of the impact of other action prayers, shared by the vicar, such as 'The Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ' as being very helpful. and know the Lord's prayer. Pupils value prayer, saying, 'we thank God every day for what we have' and 'we thank God for our food at lunchtime'. Pupils enjoy being involved fully involved in worship, and are making a contribution to it by participating in drama, and by playing music before and after worship. They say that they would like to play a more active role, over time, so that collective worship is more active, linked to the active and participative learning that they experience each day in their classrooms. Pupils say, 'In the future we would like to choose hymns, and bits of the Bible to read, and share prayers of our own' and 'We would enjoy helping with more drama, linked to the theme we're focussing on in collective worship'. These comments by pupils already indicate their growing confidence in evaluation. Pupils speak positively about the worship led each week by the vicar, where they are becoming familiar with some aspects of Anglican tradition, and are familiar with prayer responses. Christian concepts such as The Trinity and sacraments such as Holy Communion have not yet been explored in

any great depth. The shape of the church year is demonstrated by, and explored through the changing colours of the cloths used to cover the worship table, prepared with a candle and a cross. School leaders have identified further involvement in collective worship by pupils as a priority, and are considering how areas for reflection, in classrooms, in the hall, and in the outside environment can be enabled, to allow all learners to continue to reflect on the values being shared in worship.

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

Governors and school leaders have a good understanding of the school's overall performance, and are closely involved in monitoring pupils' progress throughout the school. They have worked effectively together to bring about significant developments since the last inspection. There is now a clearer understanding of the school's Christian values and distinctiveness. Highly valued input from the reshaped governing body, led by the very supportive chair of governors, and supported by the active foundation governors, hold the headteacher to account and act as 'critical friends'. The headteacher's commitment to the Church School Leadership course, supported by the governing body, is having a very positive impact on moving the school forward as a Christian based centre of learning. She sees her role as a church school leader is to enable, to encourage and to develop, leading the team by example. Her drive and Christian commitment, and her enabling and shared vision for the school is moving the school forward as a church school. She sees the process as a rigorous journey, and not a destination, and is clear that vision without action is merely vision. The headteacher is enabling the team to put this vision into practice; everyone is valued – as the whole team value the children in their care. All of the staff, both teaching and non-teaching, are committed to the school's aims and purpose, and to living it out every day. There is effective leadership of the teaching of RE, which has a high profile in the school. Parents are very positive about the impact of the school at home, saying, 'I love the school for its Christian values, and its home from home teaching' and 'I greatly appreciate the Christian family atmosphere in the school, it really pulls together'. The school has developing links with the diocesan family of schools and greatly appreciates the support of the local community and the Friends of Brailes School (F.O.B.S.) who work to enhance opportunities for all pupils in this inclusive school. The governing body has rightly identified the need to embed the monitoring and evaluation of the school as a church school into its annual programme.

SIAMS report December 2013 Brailes Church of England Primary School OX15 5AP