



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

### **Blackboys Church of England Primary School**

Blackboys  
Uckfield  
East Sussex  
TN22 5LL

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Diocese: Chichester

Local authority: East Sussex

Dates of inspection: 10 November 2014

Date of last inspection: April 2009

School's unique reference number: 114547

Headteacher: Jonquil King

Inspector's name and number: Rosemary Appleby 749

#### **School context**

Blackboys is a smaller than average voluntary aided primary school for pupils. There are 112 pupils on roll and the school is oversubscribed. Levels of deprivation are low and there is little ethnic diversity. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals are below the national average as are the number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Pupils travel by coach to the village of Framfield to attend church services as there is no church in Blackboys. Since the last inspection the headteacher has become executive headteacher of both Blackboys and Framfield Church of England Primary Schools.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Blackboys as a Church of England school are good**

- The school works very closely with the parish church in Framfield so that pupils value those links and feel involved in their local community.
- Leadership by all stakeholders confidently and explicitly promotes the school's Christian values of Respect, Fellowship, Courage, Thankfulness, Understanding and Perseverance.
- Christian values have a positive impact on pupils' good behaviour and attitudes to learning.

#### **Areas to improve**

- For all stakeholders to increase their strategic involvement in monitoring and evaluating the Christian distinctiveness of the school so that they can effectively contribute to the continual improvement of Blackboys.
- Ensure that the assessment of religious education (RE) more closely reflects its content so that more accurate evidence can be used to inform pupil progress.
- Improve differentiation in RE so that all learners receive appropriate reinforcement and challenge.

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

Christian values have a prominent profile in this school. They are shared and celebrated daily in acts of collective worship and are expressed through inclusive and positive caring relationships, resulting in excellently behaved and motivated pupils. Parents were involved in selecting the Christian values and believe these values provide guidelines and structure for excellent behaviour and respect for others. Parents praise the school for its exceptional inclusivity and nurturing Christian ethos and they value the charity work that the school undertakes. There are mutually supportive links with the local church community of St Thomas à Becket Church. These, together with displays throughout the school, such as 'Christians who inspire us', portray an explicit Christian ethos which has a significant impact on the spiritual, moral social and cultural development of all learners. Pupils experience a calm, happy and purposeful learning environment where they are motivated to learn. This contributes significantly to pupils achievement which current data indicates is above national average. Pupils speak positively about their achievements and the many ways, such as the Cup Assembly, the school affirms them. The school motto of 'Be the best you can be' is linked to the school's Christian values throughout school daily life and pupils understand that they must have courage and perseverance to reach their school motto. The omission of the values from the school's website and self-evaluation means that the school's mission statement is not explicit in these areas. Since the last inspection the school has developed links with schools in France and Prague and this has increased pupil's understanding of global citizenship. International weeks and increased work with schools with a more diverse culture has resulted in learners having a greater respect and understanding of other faith communities.

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

There is an act of collective worship for the whole school every day. During collective worship Christian values are reinforced and pupils value this time because they can communicate with God and pray. Pupils are engaged and respectful through participation in worship such as singing, playing instruments and praying. Pupils enjoy stimulating visual images that enhance their appreciation of how the Bible can be linked to their lives and they value time for silent reflection. The clear link between Christian values and the church year enable pupils to have a good understanding of Christian traditions. The inconsistency of staff attendance at worship means that do not always hear the messages shared with pupils. The person of Jesus Christ is evident in most collective worships. Prayer has a high profile in the school and many pupils have a good understanding of its place and purpose. Since the last inspection the school has effectively developed Reflective Areas in all classes. Pupils value these areas and this is reflected in their enjoyment in writing their own prayers to add to these Reflective Areas. Through the worship programme the idea of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit is addressed but the concept of 'Trinity' is an area that the school is planning to strengthen so that pupils can recognise and talk about God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit with a growing understanding. Aspects of Anglican worship such as the use of a candle, reciting the Lord's Prayer and a blessing at the end of worship when the Vicar is present are well established. Since the last inspection the school has started to formalise the evaluation and planning of collective worship. The current planning and evaluation of worship does not involve a range of stakeholders and therefore has a limited effect on improving future programmes of worship. Pupils lead worship at the parish church for major Christian festivals such as Christmas, Easter and Harvest, which appropriately extends worship opportunities. Staff and clergy regularly lead collective worship.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is good**

Standards in RE are in line with national expectations and core subjects by the time pupils leave the school at the end of Key Stage 2. The school tracks progress. However the assessment is not always based upon evaluating the RE subject matter and often relies too heavily on assessing the literacy content. Evidence in RE books does not reflect the good teaching across the school and lacks differentiation. RE supports pupils well in their spiritual and moral development, for example through discussion that led to pupil's awareness of the need to care for our environment through learning about Creation in a YR/Y1 lesson. Lessons are engaging and give pupils opportunities for discussion and reflection. In a Y5/Y6 lesson there was time for pupils to discuss 10 commandments for 21st century pupils. Inspiring use was made of an Indiana Jones film clip to reinforce the Ark of the Covenant. This effective teaching enabled the pupils to write their own thoughtful commandments by the end of the lesson. In a Y1/Y2 class a Chapel was created where pupils then prayed in a respectful silence as part of learning about Churches. Pupils are keen to contribute in lessons and their positive attitude to learning supports the good progress that they make. Pupils talk about Bible stories they know, they talk about Christian traditions and the beliefs of others because they learn about different faiths such as Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Islam. They know it is important to understand what different people believe. They also have opportunities to use the parish church as a learning resource. RE lessons deepen their understanding of the Christian faith and reinforces Christian values. Subject leadership is good providing routine monitoring and subject guidance for teachers.

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

The headteacher and governors confidently articulate and promote a vision for the school which is firmly based on distinctively Christian values. The involvement of the whole school community in selecting a set of core values gives them a shared ownership and consistency in their understanding of them. A clear emphasis on Christian ethos as part of the interview process demonstrates the school's commitment to maintaining the high profile of the Christian distinctiveness. The vicar has governor responsibility for RE. His role in RE lesson observations and in teaching the Eucharist is embedded in the life of the school making a positive contribution to pupil's spiritual, moral social and cultural development. Governors make visits to worship and school events throughout the year enabling them to know their school well. They want the 'best for all pupils in the school'. Governors are aware of the schools' self-evaluation process but acknowledge that they have not yet used it to monitor and evaluate the Christian dimension of the school which restricts their strategic role within the school. The school development plan includes action points linked to Christian distinctiveness which are effectively implemented to bring about improvement. Partnerships with the local community, parents and the church enrich learners' experience. Links with the local church community are strong and mutually enriching, and are effective in bringing a greater understanding of Anglican life and liturgy. The local community are involved in the 'Christmas Donkey Walk' where the Nativity scenes are brought to life and deepen participants understanding of the Christian year. The head of school and executive headteacher work closely together demonstrating a commitment to prepare for future leadership across Church schools. Staff are well supported in their professional development through use of Diocesan training. The sharing of good practice between Blackboys and Framfield Schools provides effective professional development. The high standards of pastoral care and the development of a calm and focussed learning environment based on Christian values make an important contribution to pupils' progress. This helps them to achieve their best, including those with learning difficulties. Parents speak warmly of the school and the caring environment in which their children can flourish. They value the family ethos of the school where older pupils take on responsibility for the younger pupils. The arrangements for RE and collective worship meet statutory requirements.