

High Beech Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Mott Street
High Beech
Loughton
Essex
IG10 4AP

Diocese: Chelmsford

LEA: Essex
Date of inspection: 1st October 2010
Date of last inspection: 20th February 2007
School's Unique reference number: 115096

Name of Headteacher: (Interim) Christine Barry

Inspector's name with National Society Inspector's number: Mrs Rosemary Morgan (64)

School Context

High Beech Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School is a smaller than average primary school situated on the outskirts of Epping Forest. The majority of pupils are from white British families with a very few pupils from other ethnic groups. The proportion of children with special educational needs is below average and the proportion of pupils with statements is double the national average. The school is linked with The Church of the Holy Innocents (High Beech), where after a lengthy interregnum a new incumbent is now in place. A new headteacher will be taking up her post in January.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of High Beech Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School as a Church of England School are good.

High Beech Church of England Primary School conveys a strong sense of family community. Its distinctiveness and effectiveness are characterised by a welcoming, caring Christian ethos where pupils enjoy learning and feel valued and secure.

Established Strengths

- The respect which learners show for one another and their shared concern for those in need, these values being worked out daily in school life.
- The very caring Christian ethos of the school, where staff work as a team to support pupils and to challenge them to reach their full potential.
- The partnership with the new incumbent which has created opportunities for the school to work in even closer co-operation with the Church.
- The role of parents who readily embrace responsibility, welcome newcomers and are highly supportive of the school family.

Focus for Development

- To involve staff, governors, parents and pupils in revisiting the vision and values of the school to ensure ownership and further development of the school's distinctiveness.
- To make collective worship central to the school community by working with the new incumbent to create a plan of worship themes, incorporate more prayers and responses from the Anglican tradition and to explore further opportunities for worship in church.
- To develop opportunities for increasing pupil involvement in planning, leading and evaluating the daily acts of worship.
- To maximise the wealth of opportunities in the school grounds where pupils can reflect, wonder and contemplate.

The School through its distinctive Christian character is good at meeting the needs of all learners.

High Beech is a welcoming, friendly and inclusive school. The caring, family environment is valued for its inclusivity and its dedication to the child as an individual. Parents and pupils recognise the family ethos, one pupil commenting “*everyone knows me*” and a parent saying that newcomers are welcomed and included. Pupils feel valued. They particularly appreciated the “Leaf” presentations for putting values into action and “settling in” awards for new pupils. Parents describe staff as approachable, appreciating that “*problems can be worked through and resolved*”. Pupils feel similarly secure. The school’s ethos based on Christian values impacts on the quality of relationships, with older pupils thoughtful in their support of younger children. The recommendation to revisit the values in the context of their Christian significance will provide opportunity for the new head and incumbent to work in close co-operation, involving all stakeholders. The School Council is proud of its role in identifying the need for new play equipment, and of the new all weather pitch. Pupils enjoy responsibilities as play leaders and librarians. They are appreciative of the woodland environment and would welcome the development of areas within it for peace and reflection. Pupils showed understanding and respect for other faiths, recognising and celebrating the diversity of culture even within a small school.

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The impact of collective worship on the school community is satisfactory.

Collective worship has a place in the life of the school and pupils have some opportunity to learn about Christian festivals, as well as to engage in themes connected with gospel values and with Bible stories. A display in the entrance area with a centrepiece of a cross encourages children to consider worship themes. Pupils spoke of the new incumbent mentioning both her photograph in the school entrance and her recent leadership of weekly worship. Pupils’ general attitudes towards worship vary, but they do recognise the significance of the focal point of the lit candle and appreciate the window backdrop with the cross formed by children’s illustrations. There are now more opportunities for pupils to contribute their thoughts during worship (this was a previous inspection recommendation.) This was evident in the observed act of worship where pupils commented on the story of the Lost Sheep saying , “*It means don’t give up*” and “*Have faith in yourself*”. Pupils engage in prayer at the end of worship and would be receptive to opportunities to consider further the relevance of themes to their every day lives.

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The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a Church School is good.

The spirit of teamwork and co-operation which underpins working relationships between the governing body, staff and parents has helped to maintain a level of stability during the changes in leadership. This has been further enhanced by the contribution of the new incumbent. The strong and growing links with the Church are valued by pupils and parents alike, who describe class visits to church to re-enact both the Easter story and a wedding ceremony as opportunities to learn more about the Anglican faith. The school’s Easter and Christmas services are also held in the Church. There is some ownership of the school values as shown by relationships, attitudes and aspects of teaching, but this could be further enhanced by revisiting these, providing an opportunity for all stakeholders to participate in the discussion. Parental partnership is strong with a readiness to share responsibilities such as supervising pupils from the school bus into the school and clearing snow from the driveway! Governors are purposeful in their commitment to an ethos of continuous improvement and to nurturing the school’s uniqueness as a church school. They are prepared to devote time In helping at school, studying school policies and contributing to school events.

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