

People Directorate

Note of school visit

School name	Bitterne CE Primary School	Purpose of visit	SACRE Monitoring visit
DfE Number	852		
Date of visit	9/3/2016	LA officer	Alison Philpott with SACRE member: Jackie Meering
Visit charged to	Education SACRE	Time on site	3.5 hours
Headteacher	Andy Peterson	Preparation/reporting time	3 hours
Chair of Governing Body	Cheryl Hubbard	LA category (date)	2 October 2015

Communication/activity since last visit		
Website and reading provided by the school to prepare for visit		
If a review, specify type (tick box)	Pre-Ofsted "health check"	
	Post Ofsted: progress on tackling key actions	
	Thematic	SACRE monitoring
	Effective governance	

Context of monitoring visits in Southampton

The SACRE has begun a cycle of monitoring visits to establish and increase their knowledge and understanding of Southampton schools focussing on Collective Worship and Religious Education. This has been developed with Head teachers and will include all schools over a five year cycle. The purpose of monitoring is for the SACRE to meet their statutory duty to report to the LA schools which cause concern for example, with regard to not fulfilling the requirement for collective worship of wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character; not following Locally Agreed Syllabus delivery if appropriate to school.

The SACRE has included all LA maintained schools as well as Academy/Faith/Free schools within its cycle so as to establish as broad a base upon which they will be able to make any recommendations to the LA with regard to Collective Worship and Religious Education and to enable full support and capturing of good practice across Southampton.

At Bitterne CE Primary the visit is as a result of a Head teacher request, as per the protocol Head teachers are allowed to make a request for a monitoring visit in any year.

Main Findings of the monitoring visit to Bitterne CE Primary

The visit was well organised by the school including time with the Head teacher and Deputy Head (RE lead) and the lead for Collective Worship. It also allowed time with pupils and samples of work from all Year groups. The SACRE member undertook a brief tour of the school with the Head teacher. An observation of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 Collective Worship also took place.

The school provided copies of the RE policy, the Collective Worship Policy together with additional documentation including both the strategic and action plans for RE, and for Collective Worship.

- Christian values are strongly evident across the school, in the environment, in the children's work as well as through the way visitors are greeted and the relationships evident between children and adults.
- Both elements of the visit are based upon strong planning – strategically and operationally to support staff. There is a wealth of artefacts available for teachers and these were visible in classroom reflection spaces. These were Christian and Jewish artefacts on display reflecting the current learning.
- There are only 2 children currently for whom their parents have exercised their right to withdraw for different reasons which parent/carers have shared with the school, 1 from Collective Worship and 1 from one element of RE. The Head teacher has discussed with parents the content and processes used and the school has provided an adult with other RE learning in agreement with the parents. This has ensured that staff have an increased awareness of the children and the reasons for withdrawal.
- The school has a “Church and School Partnership” which is a strategic group monitoring with respect to the requirements of the school. It was less clear from the visit how the Foundation Governors monitor RE and Collective Worship through observations and how effectively they provide support and challenge. The leaders are clearly experienced and effective in their roles so the evidence of impact of Governor monitoring may be challenging as the leaders are so proactive at constantly improving their areas and evidencing their impact.
- The Collective Worship leader is currently undertaking a Farmington Fellowship and this has enabled her to build upon the strong Collective Worship practice in place within the school to develop child led Class Collective Worship. This has evolved over the past year and is being used at Bitterne and in two other schools through her project so far. The planning in place, together with the children responses when asked about their experiences is evidence of the outstanding, innovative, evolving practice in this area. The LA officer would welcome an opportunity to return and see the delivery of a child led class based Collective Worship using this process and to share this with other schools needing development in this area.
- A wide range of adults and members of the local community lead or contribute to Collective Worship and pupils input through, for example leading prayers, leading class based worship, engaging and responding through the rich provision in this area.
- The Collective Worship lead has observed 20 Collective Worships in the previous six months and her observations have informed coaching conversations with teachers that has enabled a more reflective approach for staff and discussion points being formalised within the planning.
- The Deputy Head has recently re-taken on the RE leader role following the departure of the previous RE lead, she was passionate about the subject and could clearly articulate and demonstrate through her action plan what she was further developing in RE, why and what the impact had been so far. She has undertaken this work through the use of the SACRE audit, training through RE networks attended and in light of her role in developing Assessment across the school. There is clear impact of this work already in the most recent RE work in books across the whole school and the pupil explanations of how they use the cycle of enquiry and the LA officer is confident the approach will impact upon increased outcomes and acceleration of progress.
- The subject leader is well placed to drive these improvements to embed and is considering how to increase the capacity for leadership of Re within the school.
- The RE leader is seeking opportunities to monitor RE teaching now that the changes she identified are in place and is planning to use this to further build capacity for leadership in other staff.

- From the books shared it was evident that RE is taught regularly and the impact of the more explicit use of the cycle of enquiry with identified learning elements has strengthened pupil knowledge of their learning in RE. There is work in all books from Year R to Year 6 evidencing learning within RE, and this is captured in a range of ways which is something the pupils reflected helped them enjoy their RE lessons. Pupils were excited when they spoke about RE and it was clearly having a significant role in their SMSC development.
- Without exception, all children spoken to said that they enjoyed RE because it was “interesting...” and “had different activities and ways of doing things”, this was evident in books in the range of learning captured. The presentation of their RE work was strong and supports the work the school has had as a focus for improvement across the school.
- When asked about Collective Worship pupils reflected that they enjoy the songs, this was clearly apparent in the active manner all pupils participated in this. They also valued the invitation to pray and one pupil said “we always pray but you don’t have to you can just think about what has been said if you don’t want to pray then”. The older pupils were able to talk in particular about the role of “God” within worship with an impressive degree of understanding and younger pupils showed some understanding in their responses within the Collective Worship.
- The RE leader is using the most recent information available through training to develop Assessment in RE, in line with the Locally Agreed Syllabus and the concepts the school has selected. This is a strong element of the practice evident that Assessment is being developed as the planning evolves and pupils were able to articulate very clearly how they use the cycle and recognise when they have opportunities for assessment to demonstrate their knowledge, skills or understanding.
- There are clear points of reference for staff and pupils with regards to Christianity as well as other religions. This begins with the strategic plans for RE and for Collective Worship.
- In addition to Collective Worship points of reference for the children include displays signalling the school values “Love, Trust and Forgiveness”, reflection spaces in all classrooms where the children and staff can visit, reflect, read a bible, and take space for reflection when they want to.
- The children have the opportunity to add to the reflection areas through adding a prayer or thought using the colour coded cards provided - colours coded to the schools core values. Some of the prayers / thoughts they had written and displayed independently - were meaningful and relevant.
- Displays around the school that reflect the core values children can also add to and they all have the opportunity to write their own grace and one in each class is chosen daily to be read before lunch.
- The Collective Worships observed during the visit were linked to “Humility” and whilst there was commonality through the use of the same songs (King of Kings), bible story (The faith of the Centurion), key questions for the children the delivery was differentiated between the Key stages in a highly appropriate manner which ensured that all children, including those with SEND were able to access the provision. The children clearly enjoyed their Collective Worship and were able to give examples of how it helps them. Example, one Year 1 pupil identified that it had helped her “trust and be nice to people because I’ve learned it is important to do that” and a Year 4 pupil reflected that if he needed help that “I could pray to God for help”
- In the Key Stage 2 Worship the Vicar, leading the worship asked if anyone wished to come up and lead the prayer. Many children wished to lead this and the boy chosen, waited for the vicar to light the candle and then the boy led, what the SACRE member observing said it was a “heartfelt prayer about asking God for help and thanks for him giving it” The child made this up on the spot, speaking with confidence and sensitively, clearly indicating familiarity with the child’s experiences of Collective Worship.
- The pupils were able to draw strongly on their RE learning to explain similarities and differences between how they celebrate “special days” in comparison to people following the Jewish faith.

- There is much evidence of the schools values influencing the children in their everyday life within school and beyond it as well as supporting wider learning in school, including the promotion of British Values. The development of the Restorative Practice work is supporting the messages and learning in place through Collective Worship. Pupils were able to give examples of how they use this learning in school and beyond in particular to resolve conflict and show forgiveness.
- Despite there being two leads in place there is regular communication between the staff and support for example from the RE leader in selecting music for the Collective Worship.
- The website has clear evidence of the learning overview for parents as well as clear indication of Christian festivals celebrated and links to local Church. The values and Christian ethos clearly alive in the school are also clearly evident on the website with explanation of the schools three core values.
- An exciting project has begun very recently collaborating with the school council from another local CE school initially around school values. It will be interesting for the schools to share this work widely within school and determine the future direction for this project and actions from it possibly into a Youth SACRE approach so as to further build their pupil voice and advocates.

The school is planning to:

- **embed the development of theological thinking through the child led class based Collective Worship and look for opportunities to share this practice more widely**
- **enable the RE leader, or another identified member of staff, to formally monitor RE teaching to ensure the impact of the recent changes and to ensure consistency of High Quality teaching of RE**
- **ensure that Governor monitoring visits provide clear evidence of support and challenge and any impact as a result of this**
- **develop a wider range of opportunities to visit a range of places of worship or develop links that can be used with the school.**

The SACRE/LA will:

- **support with contacts for visitors and visits**
- **return to jointly monitor RE teaching**
- **return to observe a child led Class Collective Worship**
- **Support the promotion of the presentation on the Farmington Project in summer term**
- **Recommend to SACRE that it considers the work of the school as an example of excellent practice to be promoted on its new website and more widely throughout the SACRE networks across the country**

Summary evaluation (if appropriate)

The school is further developing both aspects of the monitoring from an already strong base. It knows what is developing in terms of developing outstanding RE and Collective Worship and why. It has two leads (one for RE and one for Collective Worship) who are experienced, passionate, knowledgeable and pro-active. The schools clearly offers stimulating and thought provoking daily Collective Worship. It also teaches RE well using the Locally Agreed Syllabus. A significant amount of evidence seen on this visit was outstanding practice and it is tantamount to the schools leadership that they are enabling strong practice to develop further due to the positive impact they are seeing it have on their pupils (and staff), pupil outcomes, within school and beyond.

Date of next visit	Focus	Pre-actions
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tba	Quality of teaching of RE and observation of Child led Class based Collective Worship	Distribute information re presentation of the Farmington project findings
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Signed : *Alison Philpott*

School Improvement Team, Professional support to SACRE

Report Tracking Process (Office Use only)		
Function	Date	Checked/completed <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Date report submitted by author		
Date report quality assured		
Date report checked my headteacher		
Date final report dispatched to school		
Date copy to chair of governors		
Data base file copy		