

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### **Barnabas Oley Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School,**

Great Gransden.

Sandy

Bedfordshire

SG19 3AE

**Diocese: Ely**

Local authority: Cambridgeshire

Dates of inspection: October 21<sup>st</sup> 2008

Date of last inspection: December 2005

School's unique reference number: 110814

Headteacher: Mrs. Kate Caldwell

Inspector's name and number: Ann Williams 573

#### **School Context**

Barnabas Oley Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School is situated in the centre of the Cambridgeshire village of Great Gransden. There are 156 learners drawn mostly from Great Gransden and three neighbouring villages, although a few come from further afield. All, except Year Six pupils, are taught in classes spanning two school years. Almost all pupils are from white British families; the number eligible for free school meals or with special educational needs is below average.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Barnabas Oley Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, Great Gransden as a Church of England school are good.**

Barnabas Oley Primary School is building on to its firm Christian foundation under the new headteacher who has been in post for two and half terms. She is seen by all members of the school community to be its spiritual leader and, as such, is nurturing a dedicated team with a clear Christian vision for the future. There is mutual respect and support of everyone involved in the life of the school. Learners are happy and confident in a caring environment, where Christian principles are the basis for daily living.

#### **Established Strengths**

- Strong Christian leadership of a dedicated team, committed to working together for the benefit of the school and the community.
- The nurturing of learners as individuals, ensuring they have the opportunity to achieve their full potential and the celebration of success in all spheres of their lives.
- The importance placed on a close relationship between the school and the local church and their willing support of one another.

#### **Focus for Development**

- To clearly define the role of the foundation governor and encourage their active involvement in the planning, monitoring and evaluation of collective worship.
- To introduce time dedicated to reflection and thoughtful discussion of spiritual issues raised in collective worship.
- To ensure a greater visual impact of the school's Church of England foundation.

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

The Christian character of the school is evident in the positive and caring approach of staff towards pupils and one another and the respect shown by learners to adults and peers alike. The importance of good behaviour has been emphasised, to good effect, by the introduction of 'Golden Rules', based on firm Christian principles, which apply to all members of the

school community. That 'every child matters' is evident throughout and the school is working towards becoming a 'Healthy School'.

Pupils are aware of their school's special significance and one stated simply 'we are taught to follow Jesus' example.' They are encouraged to try to resolve differences themselves, and they appreciate the friendship bench in the playground and the willow arbour where they can find personal space. There is little visual impact of the school's Christian foundation and heritage and this is noted as a focus for development.

Learners are confident and articulate and rise to the challenge of ex tempore prayer at lunchtime and at the end of the school day. They raise money eagerly for a variety of charitable concerns. Older pupils welcome their responsibility for younger ones as trained play leaders and as reading buddies, and also appreciate the times when there are activities across year groups on special days and during the weekly 'Golden Time'. Elected representatives on the School Council take their responsibility seriously. They meet regularly and know that their views are considered and acted upon.

Parents speak of their children's eagerness to come to school and of the positive, welcoming atmosphere they all experience. The children care for one another and the staff know each of them as individuals. Parents feel that all members of staff are approachable and take the time to listen to concerns. Staff have trained in bereavement counselling in order to support anyone affected by the loss of a loved one.

Pupils make good progress and there is a wealth of extra-curricular activities both at lunchtimes and after school which encourage and cater for all abilities.

Successes are celebrated each week and the honours board shows those pupils who have excelled, for example, through effort, achievement, thoughtfulness or kindness.

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

The headteacher takes responsibility for the planning of collective worship and investment has been made in new resources. The policy is in the process of being updated and the role of foundation governors in this and in their continuing monitoring and evaluation of collective worship is a focus for development.

Pupils enter in silence to reflective music, and their singing is full of enthusiasm and joy. The children are attentive and eager to participate both in school-based worship and as representatives of the school at local church services to which they are specially invited. They remember themes and content and are able to adapt the message to be pertinent to their daily lives. Parents speak of their children relating a spiritual message at home, but time is not given for reflection and discussion within the school day and this is noted as a focus for development.

Prayers are said at lunchtime and at the end of the school day. Learners are aware of the reasons for regular prayer and worship, and value the opportunities for parents and members of the local community to join them for special services. They know why there is an annual celebration of Founder's Day, and benefit from a close link with Clare College, Cambridge, through their founder, Barnabas Oley. The college maintains this link by presenting Bibles to leavers each year. Worship is further enhanced by visits to the Cathedral, by services in the local church to celebrate Christian festivals, and by regular visits to lead school-based worship by the local incumbent and by the Scripture Union based 'Gener8' team.

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

The headteacher is seen as the school's spiritual leader by staff, governors and parents and all are appreciative of the way in which she has nurtured the school since her arrival. She has worked tirelessly to bring all members of the school community together with a common Christian vision for the school's future that builds on its firm church foundation.

Staff feel valued as part of the team and they have a good and open relationship with one another, with governors and with parents. They welcome the support they receive and see themselves as Christian role models for the pupils with whom they strive to build positive and trusting relationships. That a member of staff organises the local Sunday school is seen as a means of outreach to the community. One parent spoke of considering the school community to be 'like a second family' and how the approachability of all staff and governors is appreciated. The Bishop's visitor is often to be seen in school. Her support and that of the diocesan team is welcomed by the whole community.

Governors give of their time unstintingly, but the clarification of the definitive role of the foundation governor is a focus for development. Governors are regular and frequent visitors to the school to offer support to both staff and pupils. The opinions of parents are sought formally through regular questionnaires and informally in discussion groups with governors and via a suggestion box. The headteacher's regular newsletter gives information about school, church and community activities and is displayed on village noticeboards as well as at school.

The PTA is hardworking and well-supported by parents, staff and members of the local community. Through their efforts, money is raised for the school and for good causes. In addition to charity giving being linked to the local church's mission partners, the school community fills shoeboxes for the Operation Shoebox appeal and makes up hampers for the needy. Parents and friends join the school for special acts of worship and support the children in many extra-curricular activities.

The school is considered to be at the heart of the local church and secular communities and the children enthusiastically represent their school in church at Sunday services and in village events such as the annual agricultural show.

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October 2008