

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Barby Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Daventry Road
Barby
Rugby, Warwickshire
CV23 8TR

Diocese: Peterborough

Local authority: Northamptonshire
Dates of inspection: 15 July 2009
Date of last inspection: 3 July 2006
School's unique reference number: 121958
Headteacher: Angela Tilston
Inspector's name and number: John Weaver 402

School context

Barby school is situated in north west Northamptonshire, close to two other county borders. Of its 81 pupils, over one third come from the nearby towns of Daventry (in Northamptonshire) and Rugby (in Warwickshire LA). The number of pupils on the special educational needs register is above the national average. The community is almost exclusively white British, although recently families from other cultures have been admitted to the school.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Barby Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School as a Church of England school are good

The school's living out of its Christian mission statement is very good. Pupils respect one another, work together well, help and look after each other and grow into rounded people who are well prepared for the next phase of their education. The staff work together very well and have created a school of which they can be proud.

Established strengths

- Teaching and learning in religious education (RE) is good and contributes well to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development
- The caring, Christian ethos of the school is regarded by the parents as a significant factor in its success
- The strong relationship between the school and the local Anglican church is very productive for both parties

Focus for development

- Use 'Diocesan Expectations' as a means of providing a structure for the regular monitoring of the school as a church school by the governing body
- Introduce the regular monitoring and evaluation of the impact of collective worship by foundation governors and older pupils
- Reflect the Christian foundation of the school more fully in the school's public documentation

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

The school's statement of aims, written by the foundation governors, makes clear the leadership's intention of ensuring that all pupils will be encouraged to fulfil every aspect of their potential and 'to educate them in spiritual, cultural, moral and social values within a Christian environment'. On entry to the school building it is immediately apparent, through displays, Christian symbols and quotations from the previous section 48 inspection report that the school is a church school. However, this aspect of the school is a little understated in its

prospectus and documentation for prospective parents. The living out of the mission statement is readily evident in the high quality of personal relationships within the school. Because of this, the pupils know how they should treat one another, and what to do when things go wrong. Children are made to feel special as individuals, and because of this they treat each other as special. Parents are very supportive of the school's ethos and success in this respect. One parent told me 'the children *all* care about each other'. Pupils show love, respect, tolerance, inclusiveness and forgiveness in their daily lives because these are the ways in which the adults in school treat them. They have become accustomed to taking responsibility for their own actions, and the older pupils assume responsibility for the younger ones. The school's behaviour policy is based on the concept of 'heal it'. The children gain rewards for positive action, and their achievements in all areas are regularly celebrated publicly. Pupils on the special educational needs register make good progress because the school invests in individual and small-group support from an early age. Children are encouraged to develop interests and talents outside the academic through a large range of extra-curricular (currently 14) activities. An active school council ensures that pupils' voices are heard and acted upon. Recent achievements include the establishment of a trim trail in the school grounds, for which the pupils raised some of the cost, and new playground markings are about to be painted. Nevertheless, the culture of the school is such that pupils know that they can go to any member of staff with a suggestion, and that the request will be treated seriously. The school community benefits from the regular pastoral and prayerful support of the Rector, who is a regular visitor to the school. The pupils' SMSC development is good, and is well underpinned by good RE teaching throughout the school. Pupils are encouraged to think about human feelings and the effect that the way they act can have on others. A parent said that the school gives very clear teaching on right and wrong. A great deal of work has been done since the previous inspection in broadening the pupils' experience of other cultures, beliefs and practices, which was a focus for development in the previous inspection. The school has forged links with a school in Rugby that has a large Asian population. Exchange visits between the two schools have raised awareness and understanding, although transport expense is a factor that the school has to constantly consider. Additionally, the school has become twinned with a school in France, and this link is made more effective as the pupils from year 3 upwards now learn French. The older pupils have worked with children in a school in Japan, via a webcam, as part of a cluster activity. Links with schools in Kenya and Gambia enable the pupils to understand conditions in third-world countries. The school's work in this area means that pupils' cultural understanding is now good, and the recent admission of pupils from Israel, Spain, Switzerland, Thailand and Australia has made cultural awareness even more first-hand. Pupils regularly raise funds for charitable causes. They understand the concept of helping those in need as part of a Christian duty. One pupil said 'it makes us feel guilty that we have and they haven't', and another commented 'we feel closer to those we can help'. This is a result of the school's Christian teaching.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

The school's worship policy makes clear the centrality of daily worship to the school life, whilst also being sensitive to the pupils with no faith background. Worship themes are planned around the church's year, and Christian values form the core of the teaching and learning experience. Because of this, the pupils understand how Christian values should inform their lives and act accordingly. They sing a wide range of songs with enthusiasm because the songs have been chosen with care to appeal to the whole age-range. Pupils know the traditional version of the Lord's prayer (prayers are also said at lunch time and at the end of the school day) and they frequently write their own prayers for worship. On occasion the children lead the act of worship themselves. On inspection day a group of children had prepared an act of worship around the themes of exclusion/inclusion and friendship. They acted a short play, and the audience was able to draw out the moral very clearly. All the pupils were clearly engaged with what was happening at the front. A colourful cross (shortly to be replaced by one designed by one of the pupils) and a candle are the focus of worship. The children light and extinguish the candle to signify the start and end of worship. A time of reflection forms an important part of collective worship (CW), and pupils told me that they value this. They enjoy the opportunities they are given to take part in drama and the like, and would like even more of these. The school also holds acts of CW in the village church on a regular basis. Special acts of CW are used to celebrate particular events. For example, the pupils vividly recalled one that came out of a joint school, church and village

project for 'Water Aid'. The children were rightly proud of their efforts in raising sufficient money for two wells to be sunk in east Africa, and they could clearly discuss the effects that this would have on the community there. CW has played an important part in the pupils' SMSC development. Pupils told me 'it makes you think about more than just yourself' and 'it makes you reflect on your actions'. All the teaching staff are involved in leadership of CW, and the Rector is a popular and effective weekly worship leader. A member of 'Youth for Christ', who visits termly and also teaches a lesson in year 5/6, has a strong impact. Visitors from other faiths have led CW on occasion. The head teacher monitors and evaluates CW through the regular collection of written staff feedback and pupil surveys. There is scope for the foundation governors and the older pupils to become involved in monitoring and evaluating the impact of CW in the school.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is satisfactory

The head teacher's personal faith informs the way she leads the school, and during the 12 years she has been in post she has been able to create a team that fully subscribes to this vision and puts it into practice. Since the previous inspection time and effort has been put into developing the quality of RE, which was judged to be satisfactory in 2006. The impact of this work is that RE is now good overall. The standards attained by the pupils are above national expectations, and I was privileged to observe part of an outstanding lesson in which the children clearly showed the quality of the teaching that had gone before. The year 1/2 pupils' enthusiastic participation was infectious and their knowledge and understanding of Judaism was superb. Similarly, much effort has been put into the broadening of pupils' experiences and understanding of other cultures. Developments in the school grounds have enabled the pupils to observe and wonder at the beauties of God's creation. The younger children are rightly proud of 'the spinney', in which they have created habitats for insects and hedgehogs as well as wild flowers and plants to complement their more traditional plantings across the playground. The school's evaluation of itself as a church school is honest, accurate and reflective. The leadership has identified areas for future development and has the capacity to carry them out. In the previous inspection, the school was asked to apply more rigour to the monitoring and evaluation of all aspects of the school's work. This has certainly been carried out in relation to subject and curriculum monitoring, and that of standards. However, there has been a significant period since the previous inspection where one of the two foundation governors' posts was vacant, and no one could be found to fill it. This has hampered the governing body's ability to fully monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the school as a church school. Another foundation governor is now in place (June 2009) and the use of a formal structure would help her to guide the governing body in this area, as a number of the other governors are relatively new. Regular parent and pupil surveys are also used to monitor the work of the school and to drive improvements. The relationship between the school and the local Anglican church (the only church in the village) are very good. Because of this, some families who had no church background now attend the church, even though they do not live in Barby. The church encourages pupils to take part in church events outside school time, for example the inter-parish Good Friday workshop. This builds on the school's use of the church as a resource for teaching as well as worship. The distance between the school and the church is a factor that has to be considered in developing this area further.