

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Barnham Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Mill Lane
Barnham
Thetford
Norfolk
IP24 2NG

Diocese of St Edmundsbury & Ipswich

LA: Suffolk

Date of inspection: 8 May 2008

Date of last inspection: November 2001

School's unique reference number: 124688

Name of Headteacher: Helen Wojciechowski

Name of Inspector: Simon Windmill

NS number: 182

Context

Barnham is a small school serving the village of Barnham. A high number of pupils travel to school from the town of Thetford. It has well established links with the local parish church. Almost all the pupils are from white British backgrounds, and the number of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is about average.

Summary Judgement

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Barnham as a Church of England school are outstanding

The school's Christian ethos underpins the life of the school. It is shown in the caring and supportive relationships between pupils and staff. Pupils' personal development and behaviour are outstanding, and they enjoy learning within a stimulating and safe environment.

Established strengths

- The Christian atmosphere of love, care and support, which permeates throughout the school
- The importance of prayer in the life of the school
- The staff and governors' commitment to realising their vision of the school's Christian identity

Focus for development

- Use the training opportunities provided by the diocese to develop more ways of promoting pupils' spiritual development
- Complete the development of the school's behaviour management process to ensure all staff apply it consistently
- Use the information gained from recording and monitoring collective worship to evaluate the impact of worship on pupils

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

Care and support for pupils and staff is outstanding. Pupils of all abilities are able to flourish in their learning and personal development. The school's Christian ethos is soundly based on Christian values, and has a very positive influence on the life of the school.

Relationships within the school are outstanding, and are seen in the school's warm, welcoming, inclusive and friendly atmosphere. Pupils say they like being at school because they feel safe and secure, and enjoy being with their friends and teachers. They enjoy the praise they get for their achievements, and relish celebrating this with each other.

Behaviour is outstanding. Pupils learn from the excellent role models of staff and other adults, who help them to develop self-confidence and independence. The school's House system gives pupils a say in making the rules, so they understand and respect them, and know the consequences if rules are broken. There is a very strong emphasis on helping pupils to take responsibility for their own behaviour, and they know that they can be forgiven if they acknowledge and put right any mistakes they make.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They have a clear understanding of right and wrong, and a strong awareness and concern for the needs of others. The school's policy for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very detailed and thorough, and its impact on pupils' spiritual development is monitored and evaluated by staff.

Pupils are given many opportunities for spiritual development, such as a prayer corner where pupils can say or write their prayers, or take time for quiet reflection. Opportunities for spiritual growth are planned, for example through celebrating Pentecost, and staff seize upon any other opportunities for spiritual development that arise from the wider curriculum.

The Christian identity of the school is evident in many ways, such as displays showing the school's mission statement, the school's rules, and displays of pupils' work, showing such things as 'What Christians believe', 'We can tell God anything because...' followed by the pupils' answers.

Pupils are encouraged to develop healthy lifestyles through diet and exercise, and are very aware of the need to look after the environment. They raise money for the school and for charities, for example by supporting the Barnham Fete and Christian Aid.

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

Daily collective worship is outstanding, and is central in the school's life. All pupils attend, and worship has a very positive impact on pupils, shown in the excellent relationships within the school. It is soundly based on the Christian gospel, and always includes singing, teaching, and time for prayer and reflection. Staff lead most acts of worship, along with the vicar and other visiting church leaders. All staff attend collective worship.

Plans for worship are detailed and thorough, with themes reflecting the Church year. It is marked as a special part of the school day by using a cross, candle and bible as a visual focus, with a large background display which is linked with and reflects the current worship theme. The local church is used for some of the Christian festivals such as Christmas, Easter and Harvest. The impact of worship is monitored and evaluated by staff and governors.

Pupils enjoy worship, and join in very enthusiastically. They are fully involved in worship, and enjoy saying or reading their own prayers. They value their opportunities for both quiet reflection and rousing celebration in worship, and can relate their worship experiences to their everyday life in school and at home. They can talk knowledgeably about stories from the Bible, and relate them to their own lives.

Pupils have a very good understanding of the range of purposes and styles of prayer, such as praise, giving thanks, saying sorry, and asking for help, forgiveness or healing. Pupils often say their own prayers in collective worship, and are very comfortable with praying at the prayer table, and at other times and

places during the school day. They know the Lord's Prayer, which is sometimes said during worship, and some Anglican responses are used in worship.

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

The headteacher and deputy head have forged an outstanding working relationship in the relatively short time since their appointments to the school. Under their leadership, staff and governors form an excellent and effective team, and staff feel well cared for and highly valued. The introduction of a staff well-being programme has contributed to this.

The governors give excellent support to the school, and matters relating to the school's Church school status are prominent in the school development plan. Staff and governors make good use of training opportunities provided by the Diocese; for example they plan to use the diocesan training for promoting pupils' spiritual development. The school's recruitment process refers to its Christian foundation.

Parents and governors speak very highly of the family atmosphere generated through the school's caring relationships, and are very happy with their school. They feel well informed about the school's work and activities, and support them in many ways; for example a group of parents undertook training on helping children to read. They also give excellent support to school and community events.

The school is held in very high regard by its wider community, and there are excellent links between them, for example with the local Churches, some members of which lead worship from time to time. The local community enjoys the monthly 'Coffee and Cake Church', where parishioners and parents share coffee and cake in the school before joining the pupils for collective worship.

The school has made good progress in recording and monitoring collective worship and now needs to make the evaluation of worship more rigorous in order to demonstrate and enhance the impact of worship on pupils.

Issues identified in the previous inspection have been addressed effectively, and the school's self evaluation provides a secure base for future development.