

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### **Barningham Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School**

Church Road,  
Barningham,  
Bury St. Edmunds  
Suffolk.  
IP31 1DD

**Diocese: St. Edmundsbury and Ipswich**

Local authority: Suffolk

Dates of inspection: 3<sup>rd</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> November, 2006

Date of last inspection: 19<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> March, 2001

School's unique reference number: 124689

Headteacher: Mrs. C Morgan

Inspector's name and number: Mrs. S Metcalfe, 249

#### **School context**

Barningham is a very small village primary school with 67 pupils. Besides children from the village, 16 percent of the pupils come from outside the catchment area. Nearly all the pupils are British white, and all have English as their first language. There are three classes in the school, two of which have pupils from different year groups. The 'Friends of Barningham School' work extremely hard to raise large sums of money to benefit the pupils of the school.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Barningham as a Church of England school are good**

Barningham primary school is a good Church of England Voluntary Controlled primary school, with several outstanding features. The school self evaluation procedures are of good quality

#### **Established strengths**

The leadership of the Headteacher is outstanding. She gives a clear, firm direction to the school. Relationships are very good. The school has a very good, clear Christian vision of concern and care for all. Children feel special and valued, are secure, happy and flourish whether in class or in the playground.

#### **Focus for development**

The school has identified key areas for development to move the school further forward, which the inspection confirms:

- Further development of the school council
- More consultation with the pupils regarding the need for more quiet areas within the school environment
- Consultation with pupils regarding how collective worship inspires and promotes spiritual growth

Regular involvement by the retiring vicar has been missed by the school, though the work of the curate is much appreciated by the staff and parents alike. The governors should encourage the church authorities to give this serious consideration in the appointment of the next incumbent.

#### **The school, through its distinctive Christian character, makes outstanding provision to meet the needs of all learners.**

Provision is outstanding for all pupils, especial those with a special educational need or who have experienced bullying in previous schools. As one pupil said: "At my last school I was bullied and really didn't want to go to school, since moving here I really enjoy school, there is no bullying; teachers are very very strict about this." Parents are very appreciative of all the

school has done in this area, especially for those who have problems settling into school routines. Relationships within the school community are exemplary. Pupils and their parents feel very happy to discuss their problems, especially with the Headteacher. Good systems are in place to guide pupils' progress. School rules are clearly written and well displayed in classrooms. These stress not only the rights of everyone but also the responsibility to give such rights to others. The range of extra-curricular activities gives good support to pupils' interpersonal skills, especially the opportunity to learn foreign languages such as Latin and French.

Pupils' spiritual, development is excellent, especially through the carefully planned, Christian focused acts of collective worship and assembly. Moral and social development is very strong, with pupils happy to work and play together, support those younger in the playground as a buddy and as members of the school council. Work in citizenship for instance means that pupils' opinions are sought on matters concerning aspects of school life. Cultural development is good. Unfortunately, being a rural school, it is not possible, because of expense and distance, to get to centres of different faiths, but visitors to encourage cultural development are made very welcome into the school and topics, music and stories give good support to pupils. The school takes an active part in British cultural activities in the village, including taking part in May day celebrations, regular community and religious events in the Church and sharing harvest gifts with those in the community. Letters of appreciation adorn the school hall amidst the harvest displays.

Learners feel highly valued and special. The majority of pupils do well and fulfil their potential, whatever their gifts and talents may be. Success is celebrated very effectively in the Friday Celebration assemblies to which parents and other members of the community are invited. Each pupil receives a celebration certificate and their name is displayed as encouragement to others. There is, however, to the regret of many parents and the school, a lack of regular clergy support, though the curate does take some assemblies. In spite of this the school has been able to offer pupils a very comprehensive understanding of Anglican Christian traditions, especially events from the Christian year such as Harvest, Advent, Christmas and Easter.

### **Collective worship is good and impacts positively on all the work of the school community.**

Worship is consistently and recognisably Christian, following the schools Anglican tradition. Themes for each week are drawn from the policy based on the school's aims and are a key element in its Christian witness. Symbols such as candles are used, with music especially helping establish a spiritual atmosphere and encourage pupils to focus on the theme. Each act of collective worship has a good, clear pattern and even though pupils do not always sing to live music, they know a good range of Christian based hymns and songs as well as prayers including the Lords prayer and the grace. The headteacher makes sure that all acts of worship include a clear period for reflection and prayer. Acts of worship are consistently well planned, imaginative and inspiring. An excellent, two year cycle of themes has been established since the previous inspection, with targets for thoughts and actions frequently given. There are good levels of participation by pupils in such worship, especially in Friday Celebration assemblies to which parents are invited. During the inspection 24 parents with younger siblings attended. This is a very good demonstration of the value the community puts on this aspect of school life, especially as there are only 67 pupils in the school.

However some parents at Celebration assembly expressed their regret about the lack of regular involvement of the church with the school, especially as they had chosen the school because of its strong Anglican traditions. Pupils respond to such acts of worship with good, positive responses. There is very little fidgeting, rather most sit very attentively, sing enthusiastically and listen very carefully, answering questions and giving their opinions when asked questions. Recommendations from the previous inspection – written evaluation of acts of collective worship and themes selected for all assemblies in a week - have been fully implemented. The school now is to update the worship policy, especially as it hopes to return to class assemblies.

There are some links with the local church with the school joining the local community for

special services in the year; however, the retiring vicar does not take an active part in activities. Other visitors, including charity representatives, visit the school to lead collective worship. The school also makes visits to the Cathedral and the local church as part of their religious education lessons. This good practice ensures that collective worship and the Anglican tradition are foremost in the life and work of the school.

**The leadership and management of the school as a church school is good and effective overall**

The Headteacher is an outstanding leader of the school. She has a very clear vision for its development, especially maintaining the very clear Christian ethos of support to all pupils as well as fully supporting their high academic success. Her management skills are likewise of a very high quality. As a result there is a very happy atmosphere with pupils and staff confident and challenged in their work. The staff, both teaching and support staff are a good, coherent team. The good quality, supportive but challenging, governing body led by an experienced chair, acts well as a critical friend to the school, giving the headteacher high levels of support. All work together in a close partnership to monitor, evaluate and develop the school in line with identified needs in the high quality school development plan. The school's Christian purpose is well thought out and communicated to parents in the prospectus and reinforced in all communications. At the time of the previous inspection, this area was judged to be at least satisfactory. Although there were no specific issues related to leadership and management within the previous report, all have continued to look at their working practice and have sought to develop the school further.

Pupils and their parents speak highly of the very positive relationships between all the adults and children, all have confidence that any issues will be dealt with in a positive and sympathetic manner. The Headteacher, who retires at Christmas, has a personal management style that encourages confidence in parents. She is approachable to deal with anything that affects the development of the children and their learning.

Unfortunately the retiring vicar felt unable to become fully involved with the school though the curate does run a Friday club "ACTS" and has led some acts of collective worship. This has left the school without clerical or pastoral support. In spite of this, the school is able to offer pupils a very good understanding of Anglican Christian traditions

SIAS report November 2006 Barningham Church of England School Church Road,  
Barningham, Bury St. Edmunds Suffolk