

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

**St. Andrew's Benn Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School,**  
Chester Street,  
Rugby,  
Warwickshire,  
CV21 3NX

**Diocese: Coventry**

LA: Warwickshire

Date of inspection: 14<sup>th</sup> December 2006.

Date of last inspection: 1-4 Oct 2001

School's Unique reference number: 130887

Name of Acting Headteacher: Mrs. Mary Hoverd

Inspector's name & National Society Number: Mrs. Joan Furlong (98)

### Context of the school

St. Andrew's Benn is a larger -than-average primary school. A significant proportion of the pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and a small minority are at an early stage of learning English. During the last six months two temporary Headteachers have been in charge of the school. A substantive Headteacher has been appointed and will join the school in April.

### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Andrew's Benn as a Church of England school are satisfactory.

There are good features. This is an inclusive Church school, serving its community in love, respect, and generosity. Children feel valued and special and are encouraged to believe in themselves and have compassion for others.

### Strengths

1. The Acting Headteacher has made a very good impact on the school, and she is to be congratulated. In a very short time she has:
  - taken interest in the staff and encouraged them to give of their best
  - accurately analysed school achievement and put in place strategies to accelerate pupil progress
  - put worship at the heart of the school's life, making an explicit focus in the hall which honours the Anglican foundation of the school
  - raised the expectations and morale of everyone in the school community
  - welcomed parents, governors, clergy and members of the community into the school and encouraged partnership at all levels
  - been a living Christian witness to faith and demonstrated how this permeates the Christian values that underpin school life.
2. The Chair of Governors has excellent vision for driving this Church community school forward in a sensitive and facilitating manner, so that all are included and take ownership of school improvement.
3. The Foundation unit is outstanding in the facilities it provides, enabling good pupil progress.
4. The staff team have worked together to continue to deliver the curriculum to learners in a difficult transitional phase of the school.
5. Both the indoor and outdoor environment are exciting, creative places to learn and play.

*The school is to be congratulated on the 2005 Silver RHS award for the design of its garden at the N.E.C. Gardeners' World Live show, admired by Prince Charles and the Duchess of Cornwall – now safely back in the school grounds!*

### **Focus for development**

- Create areas in classrooms where reflection and prayer can be developed and consolidate this through the strategy of weekly worship in the classroom.
- Following the appointment of a religious education manager, review the scheme of work in the light of the continuity and progression of teaching and learning 'about' and 'from' belief; so that pupils can maximise their progress and raise standards.
- For the Clergy team to be confident, supportive and visible in their pastoral and priestly roles in the school, thus strengthening Church/school links and enabling the vision the Church has for this school to be '*the centre of the church's mission to the community*' to be realised.
- Raise the profile of the school's Christian status in school documentation and signage, to celebrate its Anglican Foundation.

### **The impact of the distinctive Christian character of the school in meeting the needs of learners is good.**

The whole school environment encourages pupils to think, appreciate, respect and value themselves and others. Relationships are very good. Pupils feel accepted and special, so behave well and have good attitudes to learning. The peer mediation strategy has been effective in defusing quarrels on the playground. Pupils are confident to ask for help and trust their teachers and other adults, all of whom provide excellent role models. The induction process for enabling those pupils from other cultures to integrate into school life is very good. Achievements in all areas of life are celebrated. This raises pupil morale. The school is addressing the need to ensure the most able children's needs are met, as well as their need to maximise potential in science and mathematics.

The school council has a positive effect on pupils so that they own some of the changes and development in the school. They are proud they have helped 'the school look better' through raising money. In addition the school places emphasis on charities so that pupils grow in their awareness of those less fortunate than themselves. There is a generosity of spirit in the school, which is heart-warming. The year 3/4 production for Christmas, set in Victorian England, exemplified this, as does the following prayer '*Dear God, Thank you for the Christmas spirit and the nice things that happen like nice food and people being happy because they will get a nice present. I hope you will be able to give a present to poor families so that they don't miss out on the Christmas spirit. Amen.*'

Pupils value sporting and musical activities out of school hours and are particularly excited by the steel band and its impact in the community. The indoor and outdoor environments are exciting places to be. Their impact on pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Display around the school based on the theme of 'angels' for this Christmas season was outstanding, and pupils spoke coherently about their joy in creating such work.

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

Pupils have responded well to questionnaires about worship. Comments such as... '*Prayer has helped me have more confidence in myself*', '*It helps me talk to God*', '*It helps when you don't know what to do*', and '*It helps me pray in my own religion*' illustrate the value pupils place on this religious activity. The worship programme put in place by the Acting Headteacher has provided some continuity of teaching and learning and worship experience. There is insufficient emphasis on Anglican rituals in school worship, although the Church's year is celebrated, alongside festivals of other faiths.

St Andrew's is in the town – thus not very accessible for the school. Indeed there is a parish church nearer, which may provide a different centre for worship in the future. The clergy team are aware of such potential. Worship observed was satisfactory, but lacked a sense of wonder, appropriate for this Christmas season. Singing was good.

Pupil involvement in leading worship and the quality of reflection could be enhanced through using the strategy of classroom worship on a weekly basis. Prayer could then be seen to permeate the school day and become central to the 'heartbeat' of the school community.

### **Religious Education is satisfactory.**

The previous manager for religious education has provided a thorough scheme of work, based on the Warwickshire Agreed Syllabus, with assessment procedures to enable teachers to identify standards and progress in the subject. This groundwork enables teachers to continue with the subject in the absence of a manager and pupils achieve average standards throughout the school. In particular, pupils progress well in the Foundation unit. The strategy to 'learn from' a religion is well covered. Pupils ably and sensitively expressed their views about God, faith and a variety of religious artefacts. A year 2 pupil in a lesson on 'Giving', said

*'I would take Jesus a book of the Christmas story so he realises that we know that he is a very special person'.*

Pupils are interested in belief and accepting of fellow members of their class from the religions and cultures represented. For example; year 5 pupils were enjoying Eid food, kindly made and shared by a parent. A year 6 pupil said,

*'In this school we have confidence to believe in ourselves and in any God'.*

Teaching and learning observed was good, although not always pitched at a level for the highest attainers to achieve their potential. The oldest pupils are muddled as to the key beliefs and practices of the religions studied. For example, a year 6 pupil could not remember which religion re-incarnation was representative of. However, attitudes to the subject are excellent throughout the school and mirrored the school's inclusive approach to everyone in the learning community and the value placed on every pupil.

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

Although the Acting Headteacher has managed the school very well and in a short time put sound strategies in place to raise achievement, the effect of such leadership is yet to be fully realised. Indeed, it will be for the substantive Headteacher to continue to manage the improvement programme and build on the Christian vision of the school. The impact of raising the status of worship has been effective. The clergy team can build on this to become a consistent part of the worship experience of pupils, particularly celebrating the Anglican tradition on which the school is founded. The Chair's expertise and vision is excellent – again yet to fully impact on the life of the school. The attendance and behaviour management strategies have been successful and action-planning thoughtful and reflective. The school looks forward to students from Rugby school working with pupil groups to raise expectations and learning. Gaining stakeholders' views of the school, to contribute to the school's self-evaluation, has been started, with pupils and parents. More parental involvement in the life of the school would be welcomed, so that the 'Home/School' partnership is further strengthened, to aid pupil learning. The school council is a good strategy for enabling pupils to take responsibility for issues affecting the life of the school. Pupils are proud of their contributions.

The Diocese has supported school improvement. Foundation Governors would benefit from additional training, so that they can both support and challenge the school as a Church school. The Church has vision to enable the school to become a place of mission in the community, offering the excellent facilities to enhance people's lives, within a culture of acceptance and Christian love.