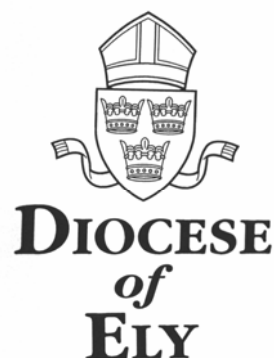


Barton Church of England Primary School

School Lane
Barton
Cambridge
CB3 7BD

Diocese: Ely

Local authority: Cambridgeshire
Dates of inspection: Tuesday 10th June 2008
Date of last inspection: March 2004
School's unique reference number: 110829
Headteacher: Miss Sue Carpenter
Inspector's name and number: Mrs Jan Munt 485



School context

Barton Church of England School currently has 100 pupils on roll. It is situated next to the parish church in a small, rural village and most pupils are from a white British background. Approximately one in five pupils has learning difficulties. The school also serves the neighbouring parish of Grantchester.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Barton Primary School as a Church of England school are good.

The ethos and values of the whole school community are based on Christian beliefs. This is manifest in caring and supportive relationships and promotes positive attitudes to teaching and learning. The school's SEF is secure.

Established strengths

- The Christian vision of the Headteacher
- The Christian ethos of the school in which all members of the school community are nurtured and valued.
- Good links with the church and community

Focus for development

- Establish a policy for the assessment of RE
- Develop the procedures for the evaluation of collective worship
- Develop the role of the Foundation Governors to encourage and support the school as a church school
- Review the policy for SMSC to identify and develop opportunities for spiritual development across the curriculum.

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

Christian values are evident in all areas of the school's life, particularly in the quality of care and concern. The size of the school and the approach of the Headteacher and staff give it a real sense of family, and learners from all groups feel valued and special. The pupils expressed their views in the School Council with a confidence born of the knowledge that they will be listened to and valued. Pupils' achievements are celebrated in weekly sharing assemblies, to which parents are invited, and in a prominent display in the entrance hall. Staff identify and respond to individual pupils' needs. There was much evidence on the day of the inspection of working in small groups and on a one-to-one basis. The staff feel valued and appreciated and relationships between all the members of the school community are excellent.

The atmosphere around school is relaxed and orderly. There were copies of the School Rules, decided by the pupils, in every classroom and in the Hall and these emphasised positive attitudes rather than negative behaviour. A sense of community and mutual support is evident among pupils. The older members of the School Council exercised a gentle control over the younger ones during our meeting, and all showed a real concern for pupils in the school who they felt were experiencing problems. They were all very aware of the special character of the school as a church school, citing tolerance for others as a particular example.

The school environment is colourful and welcoming. A great deal of thought has gone into the choice of appropriate crosses to put in the classrooms and the school has commissioned a new cross by a former pupil to be a focal point for collective worship in the hall. The School Prayer is attractively displayed in the entrance hall but there were limited opportunities for reflection offered around school. The school is aware that the policy on spiritual development is due for its regular review to further identify and develop opportunities for spiritual development in the school environment and across the curriculum.

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

Collective worship occupies an important place in the life of the school and is a key element in its Christian witness. It is well planned to include a wide range of worship styles and considerable use is made of diocesan resources. The school has worked hard to ensure that acts of worship are special and take place in a quiet and orderly atmosphere. In the act of worship observed, music was used on entry and a candle was lit and explained as a symbol for Jesus. All the pupils were quiet and attentive. The message was clear and artefacts were used to focus the pupils' attention. The pupils sang with great enthusiasm and joined in the Lord's Prayer but there were limited opportunities for pupil involvement. Members of the School Council said that they most enjoy the acts of worship which include pupil participation, like the special services organised by year groups and the visits by Gen R8 and the vicar. They also particularly appreciate the 'Sharing Assemblies' to which parents are invited. The school is aware of the need to further develop its processes of monitoring and evaluation, by staff, pupils and Governors, to inform future planning of collective worship and to ensure its consistent quality.

Worship has a strong Christian focus and major Christian festivals are celebrated both in school and in the church. A wide variety of people lead worship, including the vicar and the lay reader on a weekly basis. The school is working hard to enrich collective worship further by inviting other visitors and clergy to take part and the incumbents from neighbouring parishes have offered to lead future services. There is regular use of the Lord's Prayer and liturgical responses.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Religious education is well-planned and resourced by a committed and enthusiastic RE Co-ordinator, who regularly attends courses run by the Diocese and County. In common with the other subject co-ordinators in this school, the RE Co-ordinator teaches all four classes and this ensures continuity and progression and a high standard of subject knowledge. There is a regular use of visits to the church to support the RE curriculum.

The Key Stage One lesson observed was well-planned but offered limited opportunities for Attainment Target 2, the aspect of RE that is concerned with pupils' understanding and experience rather than with factual knowledge. Pupils responded to questions well and with understanding but were not always fully engaged or challenged, because of the limited focus on their own experience. The Reception lesson observed was good. There was a clear balance of attainment targets in the planning. Pupils were clearly enjoying themselves and they were enabled to respond to one of Jesus' stories through role-play and dressing-up. This made the story relevant and accessible for them.

Some members of the School Council said they found the lessons about other faiths more interesting than those about Christianity because they were more varied.

The school is aware that it needs to develop a process for assessment of RE that identifies both attainment targets and suggests tasks that enable children to fully demonstrate their

knowledge and particularly their understanding. The RE Co-ordinator is already making some very creative cross-curricular links with art and music to facilitate this.

On the day of the inspection, there was a very good display about Pentecost in the hall but few displays in the classrooms because class teachers do not teach RE. The RE Co-ordinator has plans for regular RE displays, however, to further raise the profile of the subject in school.

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

The Headteacher has a clear Christian vision for the school and this is fundamental to the school's philosophy and apparent in the school's ethos. The school's mission statement highlights the school's Christian character and aims and there are plans to include it on all the school's policy documents. Governors and staff are supportive of the school's Christian foundation and purpose but Governors recognise that they need to be more involved in its monitoring and evaluation in order to help the Headteacher implement her vision for the school.

There are good links with the parish church, particularly through the involvement of the vicar and Lay Reader and because the Headteacher and the Chair of Governors are practising members of the congregation. There is much evidence of strong mutual support. The pupils' artwork has been displayed in the church and several members of the congregation help in school. Information is shared in the school newsletter and the church magazine and there are many joint fundraising activities. The school is developing further links with the parish church of Grantchester and is looking forward to building a supportive relationship with a new Bishop's Visitor.

The school is very good at involving parents in their children's learning. Every term a curriculum booklet is sent to parents and parents said that they feel the school has a special quality of welcome and care. There is a strong and supportive PTA, many of whose members have other roles within school, and staff regularly support their social and fundraising events. The school is actively involved in the community through its link with the church and through involvement in a variety of village organisations.