



### **Bury Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School**

Owls End  
Ramsey  
Huntingdon  
PE26 2NJ

#### **Diocese: Ely**

Local authority: Cambridgeshire County Council  
Dates of inspection: March 12<sup>th</sup> 2008  
Date of last inspection: June 2004  
School's unique reference number: 110846  
Headteacher: Mr. J. Summerell  
Inspector's name and number: Mrs. Ann Williams 573

#### **School context**

The school is situated in the centre of the village of Bury, on the edge of Ramsey. There are seven classes with a total of 215 children on roll. Of these, the majority are from British white families, most of whom live in the village. The number of children entitled to free school meals is below average, as is the number of those with learning difficulties or disabilities. The number of statemented children is approaching the national average.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Bury Cof E VA Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding.**

There is a very strong Christian ethos permeating the life of the school, where adults and children are encouraged to support and care for one another, as part of the school family. Learners feel secure and happy in the gentle, nurturing atmosphere of the school, and have an obvious pride in it. They achieve well, and their accomplishments are proudly celebrated. Staff in the school feel valued and well-supported, and are excellent role models.

#### **Established strengths**

- The leadership team of the school is committed to promoting the distinctive Christian character of the school.
- The emphasis on caring for one another is demonstrated in excellent relationships between staff, between learners and adults and between learners.
- The strong emphasis on mutual respect and support ensures that learners feel secure and confident. They are articulate and their behaviour is excellent.

#### **Focus for development**

- To maintain and build on the personal links with the partner school in Nicaragua
- To develop further opportunities for parents to join in Collective Worship.
- To define clearly the distinctive role of the Foundation Governor.

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

The Christian character underpinning the life of the school is immediately obvious both visually and from the atmosphere in which the children learn and where the whole community cares for one another. Parents comment that the tranquil atmosphere and the openness of the Christian welcome convinced them at once that their child would flourish in this school. The school's aims are displayed in the corridors, and there are many examples of Christian art both by the children and by people within the local community around the school, as well

as posters with a Christian message. The visual impact is instant, but equally evident is the caring family atmosphere permeating the whole school. One member of staff said that this is a school to which everyone looks forward to coming every day.

Learners are confident and articulate, and talk enthusiastically of the kindness and gentleness of staff, their patience and their encouragement to learners to achieve well.

Extension groups for the more able are in place as well as nurture groups to enable those with difficulties. Lessons are meticulously planned, with the individual child in mind, and excellent academic results bear this out. Achievement is often exceptional, as the recent Ofsted report confirms. There are opportunities each week to celebrate successes of all kinds, including academic, sporting and musical. One learner stated with real pride that he had played his electric guitar for the school, and another that he had been applauded for his swimming certificate.

There is a wealth of extra-curricular activities both at lunchtimes and after school, and a recently introduced after school care club.

The children relish caring for one another within the school environment, and point out the friendship benches where they sit if they are lonely and someone will always come and talk to you. There is a buddy system in which year 6 pupils partner new entrants, meeting them each morning, reading with them and looking after them at playtimes. In one project, they each produced a book for their year one buddy about the story of Jonah.

In addition, they eagerly raise money for a school in Nicaragua, with which they have direct links through a local charity and the personal involvement of their Headteacher. They are excited to see children there wearing the school sweatshirts they have sent, and using the stationery and carrying the toys they have provided. They also support other local and national charities during the school year.

The School and Eco Councils encourage consideration for the environment, and give learners the opportunity to suggest ways of improving the school surroundings. A garden project is being undertaken to plant trees and to keep chickens in order to experience a little the way in which their Nicaraguan partners live.

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

The daily act of worship is intrinsic to the life of the school. It always involves the whole school community, and is led by the Headteacher or other members of staff. The local vicar occasionally comes to lead, as do other visiting groups. Members of the Governing Body attend and are responsible for the monitoring of Collective Worship. The many displays of a Christian nature on the walls turn the hall visibly into a place of worship and ensure the children enter and leave in a quiet and thoughtful way.

The pattern of worship is carefully planned and well resourced, and follows the church year, with special assemblies and productions involving large numbers of children to celebrate festivals.

Learners enter reverently and are attentive throughout. They are able to remember the Bible passage and to apply the message it delivers to their daily lives. They discuss what they have heard with each other, with their teachers and at home. They are keen to participate, and there is a real sense of worship throughout.

A school liturgy, based on a simplified form of Anglican service, with traditional Anglican greetings and dismissals, has been developed, and the projection of poignant imagery together with key points to be remembered ensures the children remain focussed and reflective.

The singing is exceptional, with a real sense of joy, and the accompaniment by the recorder ensemble is confident. Prayers written by the children are used at times, as is one of three sung versions of the Lord's Prayer. Learners are able to express their thoughts and feelings in prayer, and are aware that it is a conversation with God.

In order to remember that God is part of their lives at all times, grace is said at lunchtimes and school ends with prayer each day.

The local church is too small to accommodate the whole of the school community, but it is used, nevertheless, for the annual Carol Service, when there is standing room only.

The school and the local church community have recently joined together in a new initiative, First Bite, which is a more informal act of Sunday worship, held in the school hall on a monthly basis. Children, whose families are not churchgoers, have encouraged their parents and grandparents to attend, and the numbers are steadily increasing. This is seen as an important act of service to the community by the school.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding.**

Religious education has a prominent place within the school curriculum. It is not only taught as a discrete subject with at least the minimum requirement of time allocation, but it is also incorporated into much cross curricular work.

The Cambridgeshire agreed syllabus is in place, with some additions to meet the needs of a Church of England School, and careful planning of the outline is prepared by the subject co-ordinator, with individual lessons planned by the teaching staff. Teachers are creative in their delivery, using a variety of styles and a wealth of resources to ensure its effectiveness. In the lessons observed, there were links to literacy, to science and to art, with year 6 interpreting Christ's passion by studying the significance of the parts of a passion flower and the thoughtful appreciation of a painting of the shipwreck of Jonah by year 2. This year group then dramatised the story of Jonah using a variety of musical instruments for sound effects and stick puppets and fabric to represent the characters and action. Impressive especially was the preparation to ensure that every member of the class had a significant part to play. In the year 5 lesson about Baptism, learners had the confidence to ask searching questions about this sacrament, and the opportunity to watch video clips of an actual service.

Religious education is monitored by the subject co-ordinator, and a member of the governing body has specific responsibility for the subject. Assessment of the children's work is moderated by the whole staff, and their performance in RE is always at least as good as in other core subjects. In many instances, achievement, especially by the less able, is in excess of their performance in other subjects, as the range of styles used to deliver this subject enables them to succeed. Learners are eager to tell of their enjoyment of RE, with many listing it as their favourite subject. They appreciate the visits they make to local churches of all denominations and to the cathedral, which enrich their experiences.

In addition to Christianity, pupils learn about other world religions within each Key Stage, and through this, begin to tolerate the differences of others and to accept another's views.

That children of other faiths within the school family choose not to be withdrawn from RE is a tribute to the sympathetic way in which the subject is taught.

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

Judgement that the school is outstanding in this category is supported by a wealth of evidence. The leadership team is wholly committed to ensuring that the distinctive Christian nature of the school is given paramount importance. That Christian values underpin all that the school represents and achieves is clearly stated within its aims and is evident in all areas of school life.

The headteacher, as spiritual leader, is a strong and overtly Christian role model, and he is highly respected by staff, governors, pupils and parents, and by members of the local church and secular communities. He has built up the Christian life of the school and parents commented that under his guidance, the children are enabled to have a real personal relationship with God. His own involvement in the charity link with the school in Nicaragua is exceptional and he has fired the enthusiasm of not only this school community, but of the local church and other local schools also, to support that work in Central America.

Staff and learners alike feel valued. All those interviewed emphasised the family atmosphere in which everyone is cared for and nurtured and the whole community is motivated to pull together for their mutual benefit. Staff appreciate the lead from the Head and the spiritual support gained from the weekly staff prayer meeting, and all are outstanding role models for the pupils.

All governors give positive support to the school by their visits and careful management, but Foundation Governors should be aware of their distinctive role. Meetings begin and end with prayer and most governors are members of local churches. The diocese also supports the school through the Bishop's visitor, opportunities for staff training and educational visits by the children. The Head represents the school on the Diocesan Board of Education.

Parents feel that their views are considered and valued, and the Friends Group raises valuable funds for the school and for the charities it supports. They are regularly informed of school, church and community events in the school newsletter

There is an excellent relationship with the local community, and local tradespeople, including the garage and the village shop, have welcomed the pupils for educational visits.