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***Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools
Report for Guyhirn Church of England Primary
School,
Guyhirn
Diocese of Ely***

Name and address of school:	Guyhirn Church of England, High Street, Guyhirn, Wisbech, Cambridge. PE13 4ED
Type of school:	Primary, Voluntary Controlled
Diocese:	Ely
LEA:	Cambridgeshire
Dates of inspection:	5 th December 2006
Date of last inspection:	14 th and 18 th September 1998
School's unique reference number:	110806
Name of Headteacher:	Mrs. J Sands
Inspector's name:	Mrs. S Metcalfe
Inspectors number:	249

School context

This 72 pupil school is smaller than the average, situated in the village of Guyhirn, just outside Wisbech. The actual parish Church building was closed recently because it was structurally unsound, but the local vicar, as chair of the governing body, is fully involved with the school, offering clerical and pastoral support to staff, pupils and their parents alike. The pupils come from a range of backgrounds but are nearly all British white. Many join and leave the school at other than the usual times.

Summary Judgement

Guyhirn Primary school is an outstanding Church of England VC primary school. The school self-evaluation procedures are of a very high quality.

Established strengths

The outstanding leadership of the Headteacher, along with the very high quality support from the chair of governors, the governing body and all staff, gives clear, firm direction to the school. Relationships are very good. Staff and pupils demonstrate a distinctive Christian vision of concern and care for others in all class work, in the development of pupil's personal attributes and in out of class activities.

Focus for development

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

- To develop links with other faiths, especially with faith leaders and other schools
- To develop links with the worldwide church, for instance with India
- Continue to develop links with the local community, especially providing workshops for parents
- Continuing to develop and raise the profile of the school as a Church school in the wider community

The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is outstanding and meets the needs of all learners.

Whatever their religious background, pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent. Relationships within the school community are exemplary and characterised by Christian care and concern for others.

From the entrance hall onwards there are very clear signs that the school very actively promotes its Anglican Christian ethos and purpose. Bright mottos and posters - "Apathy is not an option" and "Before you say what you think – Think!" - the school 'prayer tree'; pupils very well presented pictures and written work; the 'golden rules for living together' and carefully displayed artefacts donated when the parish church closed; all give out very positive, encouraging messages about being an active member of the schools caring and supportive community. Likewise, the outside ecology area and carefully planned playground ensure the school has a high-quality spiritual environment. Pupils respond outstandingly well to this very positive atmosphere. They work very hard to earn 'golden time' (time out from the national curriculum on a Friday), they buy healthy snacks from the playground trolley and they thoroughly enjoy the physical activities that help them focus their learning at the start of the day. They show very good respect and care for each other, their supporting adults and visitors alike. The school, through careful, clear structures, gives particular and outstanding support to those with a concern, especially those pupils who have difficulty adapting their behaviour to being a member of the school community. Pupils particularly value the knowledge that once incidents have been dealt with a fresh start is given. All pupils feel very happy to discuss problems with the staff. A teaching assistant provides counselling and her services are very much appreciated by all. Very good systems are in place within classrooms to guide pupils and help them monitor their progress. The school, using the 4 Saints of the British Isles, runs a house system, giving pupils the opportunity to compete against each other in a positive, carefully controlled way. Extra special successes, including extra-curricular activities are very well celebrated in collective worship. Pupil's voices are heard in the school council with their suggestions adopted by the schools managers into school policies. Pupils also give outstanding support to the 'Eco project' with the achievement of the award of a green flag, flown with pride, above the school. Learners thus flourish and fulfil their potential, whatever their gifts or talents.

Collective worship is outstanding and occupies a vitally important place in the life of the school, being a key element in its Christian witness.

Acts of worship are very carefully planned with the valued and especial contribution of the local vicar, who is also the chair of the Governing body. In particular worship is thoughtful, imaginative and instructive, and frequently involving high levels of participation by individuals and groups of learners. Pupils demonstrate a very positive Christian response to the acts of worship. Older students prepare the hall very well for assembly, arranging seating for staff and pupils, operating the music player and organising the interactive whiteboard and computer, ensuring a very spiritual atmosphere, ready for the act of worship.

The school is very fortunate in having a member of staff as the school pianist and this opportunity to sing to live music enhances the specialness of the occasion. Likewise, the school choir enjoys leading worship from the platform and the members sing well together, ensuring all pupils gain tremendously from making music together. Pupils of all ages sit very attentively, sing enthusiastically and listen very carefully, being more than willing to contribute their ideas and opinions after mature thought about the questions asked of them. For instance when asked to identify the different components of the Christingle Candle by the vicar leading the celebration assembly, pupils were very clear not just what decorations were used, but also what they stood

for in relation to Jesus' life.

Worship is consistently and recognisably Christian, following the schools Anglican tradition. For instance, not only do pupils learn the Lords Prayer, but also write their own prayers for use in assembly and for display on the 'prayer tree' to inspire and support each other. Likewise festivals such as Harvest, Advent, Lent, Christmas and Easter are explained and celebrated, with parents and other community members invited to join with the school at special assemblies. Excellent use is made of the local vicar especially for regular assemblies, but other denominations such as the Salvation Army and their leaders give very good support. Visitors from different charities such as Christian Aid are also invited to share their work with the pupils in the school in collective worship and assemblies. The school enjoys the opportunity to join with the Church school in a neighbouring village, coming together with them to sing on special occasions for key events in the Christian year in their village Church. The school is also highly sensitive to the beliefs and traditions of other faiths in England and takes care to ensure that all pupils are aware that not all believe the same thing. This is an area that has been identified by the school for development in the school development plan to enhance the work both in religious education and in Collective Worship in the future.

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

The Headteacher is an outstanding leader for the school. Along with the very high quality chair of governors and the challenging, supportive governing body, exceptional and very effective leadership is provided. All school staff work together in a very close partnership. The school's Christian purpose is very well thought-out and has been clearly communicated to parents in the prospectus and reinforced in newsletters and other communications. This area is ongoing in the school development plan with the role of being a church school highlighted as a key area of the headteachers ongoing professional development. Issues raised at the previous inspection, relating to community links and encouraging supportive attitudes to the school, have been thoroughly and carefully developed, especially through FROGS (Friends of Guyhirn School). Currently the community is supporting the Healthy Schools campaign, and provided money at the start of the term to buy milk and provide a small fridge for storage. The Bishops Visitor feels very comfortable and welcomed into the school, invited not just for assemblies, but also for other activities including the Christmas play, the school fête and to support pupils with their reading. All members of the school staff support the school as a Christian family and this is evident in the very positive relationships between staff and pupils and in practice in all aspects of life in the school. During the inspection the pupils were able to talk with pride of their work on the school council and in the Ecology centre, particularly the vegetables grown in time for harvest earlier in the year. They also were proud to undertake playground duty, not only the older playing with younger and selling healthy snacks from the trolley but also using 'litter pickers' to keep the grounds pristine, showing the school's Christian ethos, vision and purpose in active practice in all school activities.

Management of the school is likewise outstanding. There are careful, highly effective systems for monitoring, evaluating and developing each area of focus from the school development plan, including that of collective worship, with policies under regular review for accuracy and appropriateness. The very personal management of the Headteacher, especially her high visual profile about the school ensures that teaching and non-teaching staff feel involved and appreciated, with relationships very good between all members of the school community. Learners speak very appreciatively of the school's Christian ethos, the commitment of the staff to all individuals and the high quality of education provided.