



## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### Alconbury Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

School Lane  
Alconbury  
Huntingdon  
Cambridgeshire  
PE28 4EQ

**Diocese: Ely**

Local authority: Cambridge  
Dates of inspection: 18<sup>th</sup> October 2011  
Date of last inspection: 16<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> May 2007  
School's unique reference number: 110809  
Headteacher: Linda Dove  
Inspector's name and number: Jenny Daniels 664

#### School context

Alconbury voluntary controlled primary school is an average sized school with currently 204 children on roll. Almost all pupils are of White British Heritage. The school serves a small village situated on the outskirts of Huntingdon. Currently there are 7% of children who receive Free School Meals, with the proportion of pupils with special educational needs being broadly average. The school is closely linked with Alconbury church situated within the village.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Alconbury as a Church of England school is good.**

Alconbury is a welcoming school at the heart of the village which is held in high regard by parents and the local community. The headteacher and governors articulate a clear vision for the school which is embedded in Christian values. The children exhibit good behaviour and work alongside each other in a calm and supportive way. Good relationships exist across the school between adults and there is a strong sense of belonging and commitment to the Christian nature of the school.

#### Established strengths

- The school is a very caring, supportive Christian environment in which all stakeholders feel valued and where good relationships exist across the school.
- The classroom environment and corridor displays make a significant contribution to the spiritual development of most learners.
- There is a strong mutual support between school, the local community and the church.

#### Focus for development

- To formalise the monitoring and evaluation process for collective worship in order to shape future planning and lead to improvement.
- To ensure that collective worship is overtly linked to Christian values and largely Anglican in its tradition.
- To further strengthen and embed the children's understanding of their Christian role in local, national and global communities.

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

The children work collaboratively alongside each other and undertake roles and responsibilities across the school with pride. The children are polite, courteous and expressed pride in their school. They are particularly caring towards each other. This was evident when pupils were observed during the lunch break being totally inclusive in their play and engagement with each other. The children articulate how they 'look out' for each other, especially on the playground, and how the 'Befrienders' system works. The school building is well cared for and an interpretation of the Lord's prayer, written by the children, forms a focal point of the entrance foyer. Across the curriculum, Christian values consistently encourage, nourish and challenge the social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of the pupils. The children were able to articulate with enthusiasm how their recent participation in the schools day at Ely had caused them to appreciate the wider community to which they belong. There is a visible outworking of the Christian Faith at the centre of the school's ethos and practice. Children talk enthusiastically about the weekly 'Well Done' assemblies and the celebration of their achievements. Christian signage around the school is prominent with opportunities for quiet reflection through displays. Children were able to discuss how the Prayer Chair encouraged them to reflect on the spiritual dimension and life of the school. The Christian character of the school is beginning to impact on the learners' understanding of their role in, national and global communities. The visit last month of a touring African children's choir to the village and school raised money for the Kampala Children's Centre in Uganda and has urged the children to continue to support this cause.

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

Collective worship takes place every day and meets statutory requirements and is well supported by the input provided by the non-stipendiary curate. Themes are planned for in advance with reference to the Church calendar. At the present time a different theme is chosen each week which are derived predominately from the school's purchased curriculum: 'Core Learning Skills'. The skills currently incorporated into collective worship are based around core skills for life and not primarily Christian values as borne out when the children recalled times when they looked at 'team work' and 'speaking and listening' as themes. The prayer tree in the hall is used to support the prayer life of the school and prayers are taken down and incorporated into the collective worship. The children talk with enthusiasm and positively about the times when they are asked to take part, lead prayers and act out stories in collective worship. These are the times that collective worship impacts most on the children. A range of visitors, both lay and ordained, lead collective worship from time to time. These times in particular are influential in the worship life of the school. Children are mostly respectful during collective worship and sing with enthusiasm the Lord's Prayer. A candle is occasionally lit although the children struggled to recall its significance. Occasional monitoring and evaluation of collective worship takes place by governors but this currently lacks rigor. At key times throughout the year the Church is used for services to which parents are invited.

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

The school is very much at the heart of the local community. Stakeholders speak confidently and supportively of the school's Christian values. The school benefits from a committed governing body who take their roles and responsibilities seriously. They provide a vital support to the headteacher who is an effective leader and steers the school, upholding the Christian values at every opportunity. It is clear that Christian values influence attitudes and behaviours across the school. The curate supports the well-being and welfare of the school community and provides spiritual support through her input into collective worship. Currently self-evaluation is not routinely carried out by the school's leaders and governors. This is recognised as an area for development. Governors are actively committed to introducing more rigorous monitoring procedures to increase the school's effectiveness. The school has clear recruitment and induction procedures in place which are purposeful in ensuring new appointments are sympathetic with the school's values. The school recognises the importance of reflecting its Christian status and vision in all public documentation and communications. The school makes a quarterly contribution to the Parish Magazine and works closely with the church in supporting members of the community and with the choir providing regular entertainment at venues across the parish. The Headteacher actively seeks opportunities that will promote and foster partnerships between the school and the community. This was demonstrated when the Head organised for a touring Ugandan children's choir to visit the school and later perform for the village raising money to support a children's centre in Uganda.