



## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### Great Paxton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Mount Pleasant,  
Great Paxton,  
Cambridgeshire  
PE19 6YJ

**Diocese: Ely**

Local authority: Cambridgeshire

Dates of inspection: 25 May 2010

Date of last inspection: 19 March 2007

School's unique reference number: 110815

Headteacher: Mrs. Val Manning

Inspector's name and number: Mr Bob Miller 357

#### School context

This is a much smaller than average primary school with 117 pupils on roll, almost all of whom are exclusively White British. Most pupils live in the village. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. The school has been awarded the International School award and currently is taking part in an Inter-Faith Project in a neighbouring urban district.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Great Paxton as a Church of England school are outstanding

A strong Christian ethos is embedded in the life of this highly regarded Church of England school. Relationships within the school are exemplary and are characterised by Christian care and concern. Pupils are confident and talk in a mature way about the impact of Christian values and belief on their lives. The wealth of opportunities for reflection result in spiritually aware pupils who ask probing questions and can offer appropriate answers.

#### Established strengths

- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.
- Pupils' attitudes towards worship.
- The manner in which the headteacher and foundation governors promote a distinctive Christian vision for the school.

#### Focus for development

- To fully engage the Parochial Church Council [PCC] in taking the school forward as a church school.
- To survey stakeholders in the school as to its distinctive Christian character.

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

Great Paxton is a happy, caring and inclusive school where the staff act as outstanding role

models. The relationships with the children are based on Christian principles of mutual trust, love, honesty and understanding, which are mirrored in the school's mission statement. Pupils with learning difficulties are cared for in an excellent manner and supported, as they seek to fulfil their potential. Children say they are respected, valued and listened to by staff. Pupil behaviour and attitudes to learning are excellent. Pupils' outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development arises from the whole ethos of the school and from the commitment shown by each member of staff. Pupils develop an extremely good sense of right and wrong and are gaining a greater insight into other faiths and cultures through visits to other places of worship, such as a Mosque and by participating in an Inter-Faith Project with schools in a more urban environment. There have also been representatives from other faiths such as Hinduism coming into school. The school continues to work hard in securing the attendance of other faiths. There are now closer links with other Christian denominations such as the Roman Catholic church. These links represent good improvement since the last inspection. These features, together with an outstanding inside and outside school environment, all present opportunities to reflect on their lives and the world at large. Parents speak highly of their children's' Christian upbringing as a result of attending Great Paxton school. They too are given the opportunity of coming into school and joining in worship.

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

Acts of Collective Worship, which are an important part of school life, take place in the hall. This space is converted into a special place by virtue of a lighted candle, Bible and a cross on a table. There is also a large wooden cross on the wall behind. The table arrangement acts as a focal point for the children. Great care is taken to ensure that worship takes place in a well-organised and reverent atmosphere. Pupils say they enjoy writing and saying prayers which help them to focus on Christian values and to lead their lives accordingly. One pupil said "Writing a prayer has helped me to be kind to people everyday." These prayers have been used in worship at school and in the parish church. Reflection time is built into the worship, and live music adds to the occasion. Pupils are all familiar with the Lord's Prayer. They enjoy being able to take part in re-enactments of Gospel stories. Children are involved, by way of surveys, in evaluating worship. They also present their own acts of worship. Acts of collective worship make a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development, by encouraging them to reflect on the issues that have been discussed in religious education and other curriculum subjects. The vicar from the parish church carries out a Eucharist service once a term in school. This adds to the pupils understanding of Anglican faith and practice.

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

The high quality of the headteacher's leadership contributes to the school's continuous drive for improvement as a church school. She has a personal Christian faith that drives the school forward. She is held in very high esteem by parents and pupils alike and the school enjoys strong partnerships with parents and the local community. The headteacher together with the foundation governors promote a clear Christian vision by being good role models to the whole school community. They lead by example in a quiet, unassuming but caring manner. The headteacher has secured an excellent team spirit among the staff members. She and the governors have established clear systems that inform the school's excellent self-evaluation. The governors contribute to its success by their enthusiasm and passion to succeed as a church school. Governors enjoy excellent relationships with the children and headteacher. The foundation governors' role in the monitoring and evaluation of worship and RE is performed well in an effort to raise the good standards still further. Governors share the Christian vision for the school as do parents, pupils and staff. However, it has been identified by the school that the PCC members as well as other stakeholders now need to be involved in the school's evaluation of its distinctive Christian character. The school is aware that if they were, the church profile would be raised still further. The nearby parish church is well used for school services, to which the village community and families are invited, and as a learning resource. Parents speak highly of all that the school does to ensure their children flourish as individuals. One said "Great Paxton helps children flourish and it provides a great foundation" The capacity for the school to improve is good.

