



## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### **Guilden Morden Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School**

Pound Green  
Guilden Morden  
Royston  
Hertfordshire  
SG8 0JZ

#### **Diocese: Ely**

Local authority: Cambridgeshire  
Dates of inspection: 12.01.2012  
Date of last inspection: 14.09.2009  
School's unique reference number: 110790  
Headteacher: Judy Goldsmith  
Inspector's name and number: Anna Reeder (659)

#### **School context**

Guilden Morden is a small rural primary school situated in the heart of the village with close links to the parish church. Its pupil intake comes directly from the village and the surrounding area. Most pupils are white British and there are no children with English as an additional language.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Guilden Morden as a Church of England school are good**

The school's Christian ethos underpins the life of the school and manifests itself in a community that pays great attention to every individual's needs. There is a close, familial atmosphere where relationships are nurtured and outstanding care is given to making sure the school is a place where children can find security, acceptance, reassurance and an opportunity to fulfil their potential. Pupils at the school enjoy their learning. The teaching team ensures that pupils are motivated and supported, resulting in excellent behaviour and academic progress.

#### **Established strengths**

- The well-established ethos of care, support and respect for all.
- The personal development of every child; the pupils are unique and treated as individuals
- The mutual support between the church and school

#### **Focus for development**

- Establish ways of enabling children to plan and lead collective worship and prayer in school on a regular basis
- Develop the role of foundation governors and pupils in monitoring and evaluating the impact of collective worship and ethos development.

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

The school has an intimate knowledge of its pupils. The size of the school lends itself to individualised learning and this comes into practice due to the efforts of the teaching team. Pupils appreciate this support; "We get treated differently and taught to the standard we need; a challenge but not too much of one!" The effective interaction between the parish church and the school continues to be a natural part of school life which helps to support the Anglican foundation of the school. The quality of relationships across the close knit community means that the children feel exceptionally safe and happy. The children are articulate and happy to offer their ideas and opinions and talk about their learning. The headteacher has been proactive in revitalising and sharing the school's mission statement and Christian ethos. The pupils have excellent ownership and understanding of their code of conduct which is soundly based on Christian values and they are starting to apply moral values to their decisions and actions. The school has made good progress in extending the childrens' awareness and appreciation of cultures different from their own. A school led locality global awareness project alongside special focussed curriculum weeks driven by the children's interests in finding out about the wider world and a varied programme of visitors for collective worship have made a difference.

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

Collective worship in the school is Christian and is planned carefully with clear themes for each week that reflect the Church year. Children benefit from visitors who are invited in to lead worship, including an 'Open the Book' group from the church. The school celebrates the major Christian festivals in St Mary's parish church. The observed act of collective worship was on the theme of Epiphany that had been developed during the week. The children were able to refer back to a previous days' worship and explained how the Magi's journey made a life altering difference to them. A candle was lit to mark the start of worship. The children sang enthusiastically and joyfully. Open ended questioning encouraged reflection, and the children enjoyed seeing three of their peers dressed as kings bearing gifts and guessing what was in the mystery golden present; the gift that Jesus is there for everyone. Time was made for reflection before a prayer ended the worship. The school's self-evaluation of worship is accurate. The school's leadership team as well as the local clergy and Bishop's visitor are keen to support pupils in playing a role in the process of planning and evaluating the quality of worship. Plans have been set down to develop the children as leaders of worship with Diocesan training and support. The children would also value further opportunities to write their own prayers. It is too early to evaluate impact as planned changes are at the developmental stage and have yet to be put into action.

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

The head teacher is proactive in developing and leading this small church school community. Since the last inspection the school has reviewed its mission statement and the vision of an inclusive church school has been established. Now this is established the next step is for the experienced foundation governors of the school to evaluate how this mission impacts on the whole curriculum and life in school. The headteacher and governors take a thorough and careful approach to change, which means that new ideas and ways of working are properly embedded in the life of the school and not bolted on. The school council clearly described how the pupils had played a vital role in developing and revising the current code of conduct for the school; "It tells us what each student should be like in our school." They were clear that their views were valued. The school has a clear Christian vision that has been widely disseminated amongst its staff and pupils. There is a good partnership between the school and the parish church. The church and school provide productive and supportive links for one another both practically and pastorally. Children contribute work throughout the year to displays in the church, and school church services are attended to capacity. The school is an agenda item at every parochial church council meeting and the headteacher contributes regularly to the parish newsletter. A foundation governor plays a key role in organising a range of visitors for collective worship and governors play an active role in school life offering regular support. The leadership of the school knows itself well and is able to set out clear plans for future development of the school's distinctive Christian character.