

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### **Aldbury Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School**

Stocks Road  
Aldbury  
Tring  
Hertfordshire  
HP23 5RT

#### **Diocese: St Albans**

Local authority:	Hertfordshire
Date of inspection:	23 April 2012
Date of last inspection:	4 June 2009
School's unique reference number:	117382
Headteacher:	Mrs Kathy Little M Ed
Inspector's name and number:	Mrs Lizzie McWhirter MA 244

#### **School context**

Aldbury is a small, rural school serving the village of Aldbury and nearby villages. It is situated in the heart of the village adjacent to the parish church of St John the Baptist which is used as an extension to the school. The majority of the 81 pupils are from a White British background. The headteacher has been in post since September 2011.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Aldbury as a Church of England school are good.**

This school is a welcoming community where everyone is encouraged to achieve their best. It is a place of learning where there is a real sense of belonging and where Christian values make a difference. This is a good church school with children at its heart in which the whole school community is valued and involved.

#### **Established strengths**

- The strong sense of community, based on Christian values.
- The positive attitudes of the pupils who love learning.
- The close links with the church.

#### **Focus for development**

- Involve pupils and governors in the evaluation of collective worship.
- Ensure pupils take ownership for the planning and leading of collective worship.
- Establish opportunities for clergy to dialogue with pupils on the deep questions of faith.
- Engage pupils in the development of outdoor spaces for reflection.

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

Aldbury Primary provides a very nurturing environment for learning which is much loved by its pupils and much appreciated by its parent body. Pupils speak highly of their school and have very positive attitudes to each other, life and learning. Here is a place where exemplary relationships are lived out and everyone values the care and respect which underpins all school life and practice. This is promoted through the two core Christian values of love and joy which extends to the whole school community, including the school animals. Parents are very supportive of this school and say the family atmosphere is very important to them; where 'staff are settled, much has been done educationally and pastorally for the children' and 'there is individual tailored education for each child'. Some pupils aspire to be teachers because of the good role models they have seen. The giving of harvest gifts to the village and other charitable works, such as fundraising for Water Aid, enables pupils to experience the Christian values of service and gratitude. Their sense of global awareness is enhanced through the links with Kakunyu School in Uganda. Through collective worship and religious education [RE], pupils understand they belong to a church school where they feel happy and secure and where Christian values are promoted. A good example is the 'Core Values Tree' in school and in church. Pupils are enthusiastic about RE, showing good knowledge of Christianity as well as respecting other faith traditions, such as Buddhism and Sikhism. Pupils are very open about their beliefs and have a high level of theological literacy. Some pupils recently had the opportunity to engage with other pupils from schools in the diocese in a RE day at St Alban's Abbey, developing their creative thinking skills, asking questions such as 'How big is heaven?' One pupil pictured 'Jesus sitting on Aldbury pond fishing' in response to 'Where is God?' as part of a vision for a better Aldbury. Pupils welcome opportunities for all classes in turn to engage with the vicar 'on a certain day every three weeks' and, as 'part of the circle ask questions such as what happens when you die?' Pupils enjoy the interactive prayer tables in classrooms together with the quiet garden and Wildwood Den. They are keen to be more fully involved in the planning and development of outdoor spaces for reflection. In all these ways, pupils' spiritual development is greatly enhanced.

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

Collective worship enjoys a special place in this church school where links with the parish church of St John the Baptist ensure the Anglican tradition is upheld. Worship clearly engages pupils and is making a difference in their lives. They especially enjoy being involved in drama in worship and speak of Bible stories from the Old and New Testaments and how they are able to apply the Bible teaching to their own lives. They make thoughtful comments on Jesus' death and resurrection and cite St George 'sacrificing his life and not denying his faith' and 'thinking of others before yourself no matter what the consequences'. Pupils speak positively of clergy involvement in worship when weekly worship led by the vicar is 'fun and in a teaching way as well'. Some children have been admitted to First Communion, and 'feel part of the whole family with everyone taking part', acknowledging the importance of 'belonging to God's family'. Pupils and parents value the key celebrations which take place in church throughout the year, such as Shrove Tuesday and the patronal festival. Pupils enjoy writing their own prayers. They say The Lord's Prayer regularly and recognise the importance of forgiveness. Pupils are keen to contribute their own thoughts and reflections, thus enabling worship to continually improve in style, quality and integrity. Governors recognise the need to evaluate worship, involving pupils as well as enabling pupils to take ownership of worship. Thus the profile of worship is being raised, supporting pupils' spiritual development.

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

Much has been achieved in a short space of time as the headteacher, together with staff and governors, share a developing vision and a new direction for the whole school community. Everyone models Christian values. Pupils are proud that 'we're a church school' and they are equipped with the tools for prayer and worship. Parents say that the teachers 'know and care for the children so well'. They praise the headteacher who actively seeks parental views and is dedicated in her faith and commitment to the work of the school. Foundation governors seek to make a difference through their active involvement. Areas from the previous inspection have been addressed, showing how the school has progressed. Many governors are new in post and they are open to ways in which they can take the school forward, especially in their monitoring and evaluative role. The school has identified clear areas for development, such as enhancing the school grounds for reflection as well as establishing a regular pattern for the formal evaluation of worship; and governors acknowledge there is work to be done. There is great impetus and renewed energy and vision to accomplish this, taking everyone on board. There are plans for pupils to write in the parish magazine, 'Aldbury Outlook', which always features the school; and pupils' work is displayed in church so that church/school links are seen and valued. 'Messy Church' makes an important link between the school and parish community. Links with the church and village are very strong. For example, the whole village comes together for May Day and a former parent and village resident brings her dog to school; and as part of 'Pets for Therapy' pupils read to him, building their self esteem. The school values support from the diocese so that the school's Church of England foundation can be upheld and celebrated by all.

SIAS report April 2012 Aldbury Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School,  
Stocks Road, Aldbury, Tring, Hertfordshire HP23 5RT