



## Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

**Benington Voluntary Controlled Church of England Primary School**  
Walkern Road, Benington, Stevenage SG2 7LP

**Diocese of St Albans**

<b>LA:</b>	<b>Hertfordshire</b>
<b>SIAS Inspection:</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> &amp; 6<sup>th</sup> October 2008</b>
<b>Previous S23 Inspection:</b>	<b>10<sup>th</sup> &amp; 11<sup>th</sup> November 2003</b>
<b>URN:</b>	<b>117389</b>
<b>Headteacher:</b>	<b>Mrs Jenny Munns</b>
<b>SIAS Inspector Name:</b>	<b>Mrs Judith Ruff</b>
<b>SIAS Inspector No:</b>	<b>528</b>

### School Context

Benington Church of England Primary School is a small school of 90 pupils. Approximately half of the school's population comes from the village itself. A smaller percentage of pupils come from surrounding villages and a significantly greater proportion from Stevenage. Pupils on the SEN Code of Practice make up approximately thirty percent of the pupils on roll. Pupils come from predominantly 'White British' backgrounds. The school is very well regarded within the community.

### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Benington Church of England Primary as a Church of England school are outstanding**

The School's ethos is based very soundly on Christian values and principles. The newly appointed Headteacher feels privileged to be leading a church school, where she can share with others her core beliefs and have the opportunity to touch so many young lives. Very recently School Council members have translated the school's mission statement into 'child friendly' speak, giving them ownership of the school's aims and vision. There are strong, effective links with the local church and Governors, in particular the two Foundation Governors work extremely hard to strengthen and develop links between the school and church communities. Displays and use of Christian artefacts successfully promote the school's foundation.

### **Established strengths**

- The pastoral care of pupils and the strategies to promote self esteem are outstanding
- Links with the local Christian community support and strengthen the Christian ethos
- Basic Christian values are very evident in the quality of relationships and in the day to day management of pupils

### **Focus for development**

- Encourage a wider view of the Anglican Communion by increasing opportunities for pupils to be made more aware of Christianity world wide, using Diocesan resources and existing charitable links
- Review systems for evaluating collective worship by both adults and pupils

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

The Christian ethos of the school is very evident in the high quality of relationships at all levels across the school. Pupils feel valued and special. They are proud of their work which is celebrated and built upon very well by adults within the community. For example the Friday Celebration Assembly gives a good opportunity for talents and achievements to be recognised and commended by both parents and staff alike. Pupils are nurtured to discover their own strengths and the hall display of 'hexagons' is a valuable way of highlighting pupils' efforts and achievements, across a wide range of areas of development. Buildings are kept in excellent condition and displays around the school are colourful, interactive and reflect very well the school's Christian foundation.

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

The quality of collective worship is good. It is given high priority within the school and enhances pupils' spiritual development. An overall plan has been devised which identifies appropriate themes. These are broadly Christian in outline, following the church calendar. The school has been well supported by the priest in charge and a lay free church member, who also regularly lead collective worship at the school. Pupils sing very well to a piano accompaniment and the school choir performs at local community events, such as the village harvest lunch. Opportunities for reflection are offered, both within collective worship and classroom sessions. These could usefully be further developed and refined to allow more quality time for reflection. Candles are used well as a focus for worship. Pupils are given good opportunities to write and share their own prayers. The church is used well for major festivals and parents are invited to join these services. The monthly 'Family Service' at the local church is successfully growing, with pupil participation in services encouraged and developed through the 'Saturday Club' which offers a good number of children opportunities to be involved in the Sunday service. Church holiday clubs also run successfully with school promotion and support. The school has systems in place for evaluating collective worship. These have been in place for a considerable time and would benefit from a review to look at other ways in which both adults and pupils can be involved in evaluating acts of worship, comments being taken forward into a summary document which provides the basis for a collective worship action plan. Pupils would also benefit from increased opportunities to learn about the Anglican Communion worldwide and there are good initiatives in place already which can be successfully built upon.

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

The newly appointed Headteacher has already worked within the school for a period of six years and in that time she has contributed immensely to the church ethos, frequently through her commitment to the use of music in worship. An excellent partnership is in place with an experienced Chair of Governors, who is an active member of the local church. Well advanced plans are already in place to cover the impending interregnum. The church is able to continue a significant church presence within the school during this period. Parents appreciate the links with the church and are supportive of the school's links through attending festival services and contributing to charitable giving, such as the Bishop's Harvest Appeal and the World Vision charity. They speak very positively of the school, which develops pupils' 'core of self belief', enabling their children to blossom. They view the local church as friendly and welcoming. They are grateful for the church continuing to nurture and develop their children into their teenage years, providing good role models for the older pupils at the school. Pupils' understanding of the school as a church school is excellent. They understand the importance of Christian symbols around the school and knew that many of these had been gifts from the local church community. An excellent relationship has been fostered with the church and the school community, largely the work of a small number of people who have served willingly and with great dedication on the Governing Body, fostering and nurturing parents' interest and support for events which enable the children to learn more about Christianity and how these beliefs change lives.

SIAS report October 2008

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