



## Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report



**Northill Church of England Voluntary Aided Lower School  
Bedford Road, Northill, Biggleswade SG18 9AH**

**Diocese of St Albans**

**LA:** Central Bedfordshire  
**SIAS Inspection:** 18 March 2010  
**Previous S48 Inspection:** 19 December 2006  
**URN:** 109621  
**Headteacher:** Elizabeth Simpson  
**SIAS Inspector Name:** David Underwood  
**SIAS Inspector No:** 96

### **School Context**

Northill is a small rural school. It serves pupils from the local village and from the surrounding area and is oversubscribed. Most of the pupils are of white British heritage, although a small minority come from a range of ethnic backgrounds.

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

This is because the leadership of the Headteacher supported by parents and governors has developed a school firmly rooted in Christian values which continues to improve and has a positive impact on the learning and well being of its pupils.

### **Established strengths**

- The school's Christian values make a significant contribution to the excellent relationships and positive atmosphere for learning that exist throughout the school.
- Learners enjoy collective worship, are engaged by it and frequently make their own contributions.
- In RE pupils make outstanding progress and standards are in line with other core subjects.
- The role of the Headteacher is pivotal and well supported by the Chair of Governors.

### **Focus for development**

- Extend opportunities for pupils of all faiths or none to fully participate during times of prayer and reflection.
- Develop a strategy for the evaluation of collective worship.
- Plan for greater differentiation in Religious Education.
- Ensure that the Governing Body develops its leadership and forward planning responsibilities.

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

Everyone at the school recognises the importance of Christian values and how they impact across the curriculum and throughout school life. Relationships across the school are outstanding and contribute to the positive atmosphere for learning and support. Most stakeholders are able to say how the values of the school affect their motivation, understanding and behaviour. The spiritual, moral, cultural and social development of all learners is consistently encouraged especially through thought provoking Collective Worship and sensitive times for reflection. Regular visits from parents and members of other faiths and opportunities such as a "Faith Walk" in Bedford together with good teaching ensure that the Christian character of the school has a major impact on learners' understanding of their role in society; locally and globally.

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

Learners enjoy collective worship and are engaged by it, they frequently make a contribution and often take a lead when worship takes place in the parish church. The worshipping environment is well prepared and leads to a time of sensitive thought and reflection. Most members of the school community feel included and able to fully participate in worship, although those of other faith communities cannot participate fully in the way prayers are currently organised. The ideas and themes shared in worship are often revisited during the school day. Learners experience and have become familiar with some examples of Anglican tradition and practice. Worship is well planned and pupils share in the planning for church worship. Currently evaluation of worship is still developing.

**The effectiveness of the religious education is good.**

Since the last inspection the school has improved the assessment of pupil progress and attainment and now uses it regularly to inform teaching and learning. Pupils are making outstanding progress across each key stage, and standards are in line with those of other core subjects. A range of teaching strategies are used although differentiation is somewhat limited at present. Good INSET and resources lead to good learning taking place. Learners demonstrate enjoyment of the subject and are reflective about their own beliefs and respectful for those of others. Learners are developing a sense of moral and spiritual awareness from the experiences in Religious Education. Learners and adults value religious and cultural diversity in school, locally, nationally and to an extent globally.

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

The role of the Headteacher is pivotal and well supported by the Chair of Governors. Governors and the Headteacher have a clear view of how Christian values influence school life. Learners and adults articulate how important these underpinning values are in contributing to the attitudes and behaviour across the school. At present staff and governors have not had the opportunity to benefit from personal spiritual development. The views of most stakeholders are regularly sought and taken into account during self review and development planning. Currently the contribution from the whole Governing body emphasises its supportive and monitoring responsibilities, but as yet has not fully developed its leadership and forward planning roles. The school is developing an understanding of its future development needs as a church school, and planning possible future strategies. There is beneficial support between the school and the local parish and diocese and significant links with parents and the local community.