



## Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

**Furneux Pelham Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School**  
Furneux Pelham, Buntingford SG9 0LH

**Diocese of St Albans**

**LA:** Hertfordshire  
**SIAS Inspection:** 10 July 2009  
**Previous S23 Inspection:** 17 May 2006  
**URN:** 117394  
**Headteacher:** Mrs Sue Skelton  
**SIAS Inspector Name:** Mr David Morton  
**SIAS Inspector No:** 515

### **School Context**

Furneux Pelham school is a small village primary school that draws pupils from a wide rural area. Most pupils are from a White British background and nearly all speak English as their first language. The school holds a number of awards, including Healthy Schools, Eco-school (silver), Primary Geography Mark, Sports Mark and ICT Mark.

### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Furneux Pelham Voluntary Controlled Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding.**

Valued by the local community, Furneux Pelham Church of England primary School provides an outstanding education, informed by Christian values, that has a significant impact on pupils' learning and personal development.

### **Established strengths**

- The impact of the school's Christian values on pupils' learning, attitudes and relationships
- The effective leadership of the head teacher
- The role of the parish vicar in nurturing and developing the Christian ethos of the school
- The relationship between the school, the parish and the local community

### **Focus for development**

- Develop the daily recording of Collective Worship to enable effective monitoring to take place
- Ensure staff and governors receive regular training in developing and maintaining the distinctive Christian Character of the school

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

Pupils are provided with high quality learning experiences in a calm, peaceful environment. The school's Christian character is clearly displayed in the entrance area which also includes displays of pupils' work in Religious Education. Relationships across the school are outstanding and reflect the school's shared Christian values. Pupils are able to discuss the role of the school's friendship bench and clearly link its use to the school's values of kindness and caring. Behaviour is excellent. Older pupils appreciate the supportive atmosphere and freedom they are given to resolve disputes using the skills they have learnt during Collective Worship. Parents comment positively on the close relationship between the school, the parish church and the local community. The school is viewed as a place where children demonstrably care for each other and where the sense of community enhances their learning and their personal development. This is an inclusive church school that welcomes pupils of all faiths or none. Education is provided in an increasingly distinctive Christian environment and progress since the last inspection has been good. The impact of changes to the distinctive Christian character of the school can be seen in the development of the prayer life of the school. Pupils across the school have worked with clergy to write a school prayer, a prayer for lunchtime and an end of day prayer which is displayed in each classroom. These actions have significantly improved the way the Christian ethos of the school is communicated and experienced by pupils. The school is outward looking and takes seriously its responsibility to ensure that pupils are aware of the wider world and the major world religions. As a result pupils show great compassion to those in need, including those in the local area. The decision to raise money for a local school destroyed by fire provides evidence of this.

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

Worship occupies an important place in the life of the school and is increasingly rooted in the worshipping life of the parish. Children regularly visit the parish church to celebrate a wide range of Christian festivals and have recently introduced a remembrance service following a history project on World War One. This is good practice and indicates that the planning of special acts of worship is both thoughtful and reflective. The role of the vicar in promoting the worship life of the school is excellent. Working in partnership with the head teacher she has enhanced provision by clearly linking the school's values programme to Christian values and stories from the Old and New Testament. Pupils are currently being introduced to a range of simple liturgical responses during church services and these are introducing them to worship in the Anglican tradition. Pupil participation in Collective Worship is good. They overwhelmingly report that they enjoy worship and sing with enthusiasm. Pupils' responses to worship are thoughtful. In the observed act of worship they used role play to link the story of Nelson Mandela to the Christian value of equality and the biblical principle of '*... love your neighbour as yourself*'. Planning and delivery of Collective Worship is shared by the head teacher, vicar and senior staff. Whilst worship is planned and evaluated satisfactorily, record keeping is not yet in place. The school should seek to implement a simple pupil focussed record keeping system to enable better monitoring of Collective Worship to take place.

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

Furneux Pelham Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School holds a central place in the life of its local community. It firmly believes in partnership and inclusion. Its caring and responsive approach to change is outstanding and it consults parents and pupils widely. Links with the local parish are outstanding. Pupils and parents worship at the local church and the vicar is a regular visitor to school. She has developed strong relationships with staff and pupils that nurture the school's Christian Character. This is an improving school, committed to being distinctively Christian, which has a strong vision for its future development as a church school. At the heart of its improvement is the outstanding partnership between the school, its governors and the local vicar. Together they are steadily improving and developing the school's Christian character. The leadership of the head teacher is outstanding. She has led the development of the school's Christian ethos, has a clear vision for the school's ongoing development as a church school and is working effectively with the school's foundation governors to achieve this. This is reflected in the modification of the school's values programme and in recently revised documentation sent to new parents. Both now contain strong references to the school's distinctive Christian character and the Christian ethos it promotes. Governance is effective in supporting the development of the school and its Christian character. Governors regularly visit school to monitor RE, Collective Worship and other key subjects and have supported the development of the school as a church school. To maintain the school's effectiveness and distinctiveness as a church school, staff, governors should have regular access to training on maintaining and developing the distinctive Christian character of the school. This will support the succession planning process by ensuring all participants understand and value the unique contribution a vibrant Christian ethos can make to school life.