



Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Potten End Church of England Voluntary Controlled First School
Church Road, Potten End, Berkhamsted, Herts HP4 2QY

Diocese of St Albans

LA: Hertfordshire
SIAS Inspection: 09 December 2010
Previous S48 Inspection: 09 April 2008
URN: 117414
Headteacher: Mrs Jane Senior
SIAS Inspector Name: Ms Chris Westgarth
SIAS Inspector No: 44

School Context

Potten End First School is a small first school that serves the local area and takes many pupils from the towns of Berkhamsted and Hemel Hempstead. The majority of pupils are White British.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Potten End First School as a Church of England school are outstanding

Potten End school is at the heart of the community and provides an outstanding education which is informed by Christian values – this has a significant impact on pupils' learning and personal development.

Established strengths

- The outstanding personal development and pastoral care of all pupils
- The robust partnership between school, church and community
- The strong Christian ethos which underpins everything the school does

Focus for development

- Formalise the monitoring and evaluation system for Collective Worship to show a strong evidence base and reflect what happens
- Develop areas and opportunities for reflection inside and outside to further the spiritual development of pupils

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

Christian values are at the heart of this school and underpin everything it does. All pupils receive quality learning experiences in a calm and peaceful setting. Relationships across the whole school are outstanding. All pupils feel valued and included in decision making processes. All staff act as role models for pupils and give full support to the Christian ethos of the school. Pupils say they feel safe and secure and know who to go to if they have a problem. There is a strong family feel within the school and older pupils readily support younger ones. Playground behaviour is good and pupils talk readily about supporting each other – *'We have a Buddy stop, but we don't use it too much because we are all friends.'* Pupils are actively involved with a number of charitable initiatives and show a real concern for people in need. Community cohesion is strong and enhanced by the link with Masindi, Uganda, the increasing link with Kabalega school and the support give to The Bethlehem Centre in Romania. These links have been made more meaningful by strong charitable giving and the involvement of the former incumbent and staff members who have visited the Centre in Romania. Pupils speak enthusiastically about helping others in this country and overseas. The school has recently received Silver level International School status. Pupils have a sound knowledge of other faiths and particularly enjoy their International Focus weeks. Governors and church members are actively involved in *Evacuation Day*, linking history with SMSC. Pupils speak positively and excitedly about this and the numerous residential and field trips. The whole school environment is clean, tidy and well cared for, thus reinforcing the Christian ethos of care and respect for the surroundings and the world we live in. Lunchtimes are calm and orderly with a good family atmosphere. A new memorial area in the playground is being created. Pupils are encouraged to reflect at various times of the day and prayer permeates the life of the school, Governors are keen to further enhance the opportunities for reflection by the creation of special *'Pause for Reflection'* areas. Pupils eagerly write their own prayers on the prayer white board. The proposed RE and Art project linking in with the School Development Plan will further strengthen the distinctive Christian character.

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

Worship occupies an important place in the life of the school. The recently appointed incumbent is having a positive influence and the effect of her role in promoting the worship life of the school is excellent. Pupils speak enthusiastically about her involvement in the life of the school and their visits to the church for services. Pupil participation in worship is good and there is an excellent balance of song, reflection, music, creative activity and prayer. Pupils demonstrate a strong knowledge of values and stories from the Old and New Testaments. Simple liturgical responses are used. In the observed Collective Worship, there were high levels of pupil participation, the singing was enthusiastic and the prayer and reflection respectful. Afterwards they described the meaning of Jesus the light of the world as *'Jesus came to shine so there would be no dark areas.'* Worship is planned and delivered, although monitoring and evaluation tends to be informal.

Pupils describe the high profile of prayer in school as *'an opportunity to talk to Jesus, to thank Him, tell Him our worries and say sorry'*. They have a good awareness of the church calendar and festivals. There is also good involvement by clergy and youth workers. A recent survey confirms the view that pupils enjoy collective worship and it enhances their spiritual development.

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

Governors are effective in monitoring the distinctive Christian character of the school and have robust systems in place. Staff and Governors have an excellent understanding of their school and the wider community – this is demonstrated through a clear vision based on a strong set of Christian values which permeate across the whole school life. Foundation Governors take their role seriously and are involved in the monitoring of the distinctive Christian character of the school and how it informs the School development plan – a focus for development from the previous s48 report - and as a result the PCC sets a budget for church/school links. The school council and eco council are involved in decision-making and take their role seriously. As a result, pupils are able to voice their desires and concerns. The school makes regular contributions to the church magazine and is highly regarded in the community. It reaches out into the community at every opportunity and takes every opportunity to invite the community into school. Parents comment positively about the links between Church and School and the Christian ethos. Strengths of Potten End school are partnership, inclusion and the Christian ethos.