

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### **Bunbury Aldersey Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School**

School Lane  
Bunbury  
Tarpurley  
CW6 9NR

#### **Diocese: Chester**

Local authority: Cheshire

Dates of inspection: 6<sup>th</sup> December 2011

Date of last inspection: 16<sup>th</sup> October 2008

School's unique reference number: 111344

Headteacher: Alyson Thacker

Inspector's name and number: Christine J Buckley NS 525

#### **School context**

Bunbury Aldersey is a slightly below average sized primary school serving the parish of Bunbury and its outlying villages. The majority of children are white British and the number of children eligible for free school meals is well below the national average as is the number of children with special educational needs or disabilities. There is a higher proportion of girls to boys in school. The children come from mainly, although not wholly, professional families.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Bunbury Aldersey Church of England Primary School as a Church of England school are outstanding**

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Bunbury Aldersey Church of England School are outstanding. The school has a Christian foundation with a commitment to the personal, pastoral and academic needs of all children. There is a strong sense of family where there are good links with the church and local community.

#### **Established strengths**

- Teaching and Learning in Religious Education.
- A strong Christian ethos that impacts upon all life in the school.
- Strong links between the church and the school.

#### **Focus for development**

- To further develop a rigorous system of self evaluation as a church school that involves all stakeholders.
- To include a Christ centred statement in the Core Professional Purpose or an alternative 'stand alone' statement that reflects the Christian nature of the school.
- Children to be more involved in the planning and leading of worship.

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

Children at Bunbury Aldersey school clearly enjoy being at school and like the family atmosphere and Christian ethos. They are secure in the knowledge that Christian values underlie the life of the school and say that their school is special because it is a church school. All children are made to feel welcome in the school and a parent made the comment that when her child moved into the school she and her child were fully supported in the transition. Children demonstrate their care and kindness to others as they look after each other and older children are buddies for the youngest children in school. Parents commented on the way in which staff relate well to one another and model Christian relationships for the children. The care and compassion of staff and children extends to helping others in the local area and beyond. At harvest time the children gave gifts to a local charity 'Save the Children' and more recently they made Christmas boxes to give to children overseas. Parents and children spoke about how the ethos and curriculum encourage spiritual and moral

development. This was clearly observed in the religious education lessons. In one lesson children discussed the concept of forgiveness and they showed a depth of understanding about the need to forgive and to be forgiven. Children have the opportunity to pray several times a day and many children talked about praying at home and one small boy spoke of how he prayed to ask God for help, while he was on holiday. These examples indicate an understanding and experience of their relationship with God. The school environment visually proclaims itself as a Christian community especially in the main hall used for worship and in the corridors.

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

A clear policy for collective worship and guidelines that refer to the pattern and manner of collective worship provide a sure foundation for worship in the school. Collective worship takes place everyday and staff and children participate fully, demonstrating the importance of worship in the school. They sing enthusiastically and join with prayers indicating spiritual awareness and development. There are strong links with the church and the vicar spoke of 'the church in school and the school in church' as he spoke of their partnership. Some children in school have requested baptism reflecting their understanding of what it means to belong to God's family and their spiritual development. Some of these services have been held in school where the school family have been the main body of the 'congregation'. This demonstrates that whole school worship affirms the school family and embraces members of the community. Services at Easter have been held in school where families of the school children and members of the community have come together to celebrate Holy Communion. Children from the school go to church for all the major Christian festivals and many attend for other services and community events as well. Through this they gain an understanding of Anglican tradition. The positive impact of collective worship is shown in the children's desire to attend church and holiday clubs run by the church. Staff and governors also show a commitment to collective worship and spoke about the inspiration that they derive from the different kinds of worship. Staff and children take part in Education Sunday each year where members of the staff are interviewed by the vicar. There is a variety in the style of worship, with visitors leading worship using different styles. This enables the children to experience a breadth of practice and supports spiritual development. There is an overview of planning and some recording of collective worship though the recording does not accurately reflect the Christian content. Evaluation is in the very early stages of development.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding**

Religious Education at Bunbury Aldersey has clear aims and a detailed policy that undergird outstanding teaching and learning. The scheme of work follows Diocesan guidelines. The expectations for teaching and learning are at least as high as high as other subjects. A variety of approaches and 'mind friendly', learning are used to accommodate individual needs. High level questioning seen in both key stages encourages and challenges the children to think about their own beliefs and responses. This aids spiritual and moral development so that children are given the opportunity to think about the big questions of life. Children in key stage two showed a good knowledge and understanding of Christianity and as they studied the work of Christian artists they were able to make a considered personal response. The lessons observed were well planned and covered the encounter and response aspects of religious education. Appropriate resources supported the teaching and learning and the children could choose how they wanted to respond. In key stage one this varied from role play, making food with play dough, to making a card to give to someone. Assessment for learning takes place during the lessons and all staff have received training on assessment since the last inspection. There is an effective subject leader for religious education who regularly attends professional development courses. To ensure continuity and progression, through the school, the subject leader monitors religious education planning, undertakes work scrutiny and observes lessons. Religious education has a high profile in the school demonstrated by the amount of time given for this subject. As religious education is taught within the context of a Christian ethos it supports the distinctive character of the school and at the same time the content of Religious education supports an understanding and respect for people of other faiths.

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

Since the last inspection reference to the school's Christian foundation has been made in more of the school's documentation. However, there is no explicit reference to the Christian nature of the school in the 'core purpose'. This is an area for development. One of the priorities this year has been to appoint a new deputy –headteacher and the recruitment process ensured that the church status of the school had a high profile, showing strong leadership from the governors and staff. The successful outcome of this process has strengthened the Christian leadership in the school and helped to ensure the future leadership in church schools. The self evaluation undertaken by the staff and governors has not focused on the church school status and the future development needs to include this as a priority. The results from this would then feed into the School Development Plan. The governors carry out their duties within a Christian context and meetings are opened and closed in prayer. There has been forward planning for the new year, when the vicar retires, by engaging a local Methodist minister to lead worship in school on a regular basis. In addition the new youth worker at the Anglican church is a regular visitor to school and she provides an informal drop in session for year six children. The leadership in school ensures that the staff have adequate training and professional development relating to the church school status. For example, the Headteacher and RE subject leader attend Diocesan courses and the new teacher has attended a course on what it means to work in a church school.