



The Diocese of St Edmundsbury  
and Ipswich



### **St. Botolph's Church of England [Voluntary Controlled] Primary**

Back Hills,  
Botesdale,  
Diss,  
Norfolk

Diocese: St. Edmundsbury and Ipswich

Local authority: Suffolk

Dates of inspection: 12 July 2007

Date of last inspection: June 25 and 27 2002

School's unique reference number: 124758

Acting Headteacher: Mrs L Foxton

Inspector's name and number: Robert Miller 357

#### **School context**

St. Botolph's school was built in 1994 and had a further classroom added in 2004 and a spacious staff room in 2005. There are 216 pupils on roll, between the ages of 5 and 11, the vast majority of whom are white and from a British background. There is also a Nursery that caters for an additional 27 children. The school serves four villages whose populations vary widely in terms of income and housing. Pupils are taught in nine classes. The head teacher took up her post earlier in 2007 on a temporary basis. The relationship with the local churches is good.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St. Botolph's as a Church of England school are satisfactory**

St. Botolph's is a happy and friendly school where the relationships between staff and children are strong. The acting headteacher has made sound efforts to maintain the Christian ethos in the school that emphasises mutual respect for one another and the love of hymn singing. The good links between the school and the church continue to be maintained despite the absence of the Vicar due to illness, by regular visits from the foundation governors and churchwarden. The capacity for the school to carry out the necessary improvements is good.

#### **Established strengths**

- The strong relationships between staff and pupils and children with each other.
- Worship is made interesting and important by virtue of the number of outside speakers.
- The moral development of children is a strong feature in the school.

#### **Focus for development**

- Increase Christian symbolism in and around the school.
- Involve foundation governors, pupils, parents and clergy more in the planning stages of collective worship.
- Develop the monitoring role of foundation governors in collective worship.
- Create closer links with parents and the Parochial Church Council [PCC] in evaluating the Christian vision for the school.

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

St. Botolph's is a happy school to which the children enjoy coming. They are in a secure environment where they know adults in the school listen to their views. Those pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities are well supported and cared for. Parents say this support ensures that every child fulfils their potential and are able to fully participate in all areas of the curriculum. The Christian identity inside and outside the school is lacking. There is a school prayer displayed in the hall where worship takes place but very little else in the way of Christian or Church of England symbolism to show that this is a church school. The school is committed to the development of the whole child through its SEAL project. This is helping to develop the social and emotional aspects of learning. Children say that the moral guidance that they get from adults in the school is a strength. It teaches them right from wrong and to be honest. They are taught forgiveness and reconciliation and this shows itself in their behaviour most of the time. Visits to places of worship and invitations to speakers from other faiths have been identified as one aspect that would enhance the curriculum. The two Foundation governors form part of the local church community and are regular visitors to the school providing much support and promoting a distinctive Christian presence. The atmosphere around the school is orderly and most children are polite and well mannered. Pupils are able to contribute their ideas and concerns through the school council and have been able to effect change.

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

Acts of Collective Worship take place in a well-organised and peaceful environment. The hall however is devoid of any Christian symbolism that would transfer it into becoming a "special place" for a short period each day. Classical music accompanies children's entrance and exit to the hall. Pupils say that they love this time of the day because of the opportunity to listen to Bible stories, which they enjoy. Pupils are involved in the planning of assemblies e.g. the School Council and the Eco committee but there are missed opportunities involving them and others, such as foundation governors, in the planning of worship. Pupils love singing hymns and saying Grace before meals and this adds to their spiritual development. Most are learning the Lord's Prayer and some are beginning to understand it. Because of illness the Vicar has not been a visitor at the school for some time but he is well represented by the foundation governors and churchwarden who regularly take the lead in collective worship. There are also visiting Ministers from at least two other local churches representing other Christian denominations. These groups have had a good impact on high quality acts of worship. It is well planned and co-ordinated with various themes throughout the year to fit in with the Christian calendar as well as the calendars of other faiths. The recommendations made in the previous denominational inspection report have been successfully addressed.

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

The acting headteacher has the support of a willing staff and governing body, some of whom have still to learn their roles and responsibilities. The absence of the personal support of the local Rector detracts from the school being able to fully honour the Anglican tradition. However, with the appointment of a full complement of Foundation governors and the experienced churchwarden, the Christian vision for the school is ensured. The headteacher, management team and governors are establishing clear systems that inform the school's self-evaluation process. It is too early to say what impact this will have on standards and achievement. The school prospectus expresses its Christian purpose in a Mission Statement but, instead of being at the front of the booklet, this is lost within. School rules are prominently displayed around the school and they supplement the Christian aims and objectives. The school staff works closely as a team and most share a Christian vision for the school. Parents have not been surveyed for their views on a Christian vision for the school. Whilst the school does make use of the Church for events such as Christingle service and harvest festival, they are not yet utilising the expertise of the PCC enough in paving the way ahead for a church

school.

SIAS July 2007 St. Botolph's CofE [VC] Primary School, Diss, Norfolk ID22 1DW