

O Lord, our Governor



'O Lord, our Governor...' (Psalm 8)

We are blessed across the Benefice to have three primary schools, Ardeley St Lawrence, Benington and Walkern Primary. Each of our schools offers a well-rounded education for all children, whatever their ability or need, and is often sought out by parents, beyond the catchment area, who want their children to benefit from a smaller setting with a more 'family feel' than the larger urban schools can offer. All three schools have a close relationship with their parish church; Ardeley and Benington have a Church of England foundation.

Unlike other denominational schools, Church of England schools, which comprise a quarter of all primary schools in England, do not specifically aim to attract new adherents to the Christian faith. For those unfamiliar with the Church of England's approach to education, it is worth spelling this out more clearly. Since Victorian times, and before, the established Church of England has been concerned with playing its part in helping to educate all children, regardless of their social background or creed. Education is recognised as being fundamental in helping all children to flourish so that they can mature into being the best adults that they can be. It is this sole motivation that puts church schools at the forefront of the Church's agenda. Children of all faiths, and none, are welcome to attend a C of E school.

All schools are a partnership of stakeholders, children, parents, staff and the wider community. The local school is often a place in which village identity is affirmed and celebrated. The need for a space where people can come together and bonds of social cohesion can form is often focused on the village school. An example of this is meeting up at the school gate, an opportunity for adult interaction and for some, a lifeline. Villages where schools have closed lose not just a centre of learning, they lose much of the cross-generational heartbeat that lends itself to a vibrancy of life-giving energy. Like the pub and the church, a school must not be taken for granted. All stakeholders have a part to play.

A specific role which enables a school to rise to the challenge of helping children to thrive is that of a School Governor. School Governors are volunteers who commit themselves to ensuring that a school stays on track with quality teaching and learning, balances its budget and evolves an ethos which is both inclusive and aspirational. The role does require time and a skill set that understands the importance of best practice. Above all, it offers an opportunity to positively impact the future of children and the contribution they will make in years to come.

Feel up for the challenge? Talk to one of our headteachers. They'd love to hear from you!

God Bless.

Revd Mark Bailey