

Do we need a school at Barnwell?

Yes we do!

The proposal that Barnwell School children can be accommodated at Oundle Primary School is extremely short sighted. If Barnwell School is to close and Oundle increases its catchment as suggested by the LEA, this will place an ever increasing burden on a school that is already over-subscribed. OPS has a planned maximum of 225 and already they have 237 pupils. There are 37 houses in Oundle under construction and planning permission for a further 51. Of these 88 new houses, 52 of them are for social housing and will attract young families.

All villages in this area including Barnwell, will have more social housing under the Milton Keynes expansion scheme.

Barnwell has a newly refurbished school with excellent facilities. Recent professional development ensures that we can offer good teaching. The leadership of the school is excellent and the governing body is committed to providing strong management.

Pupil numbers have declined due to poor management and the threat of closure. However there are sufficient numbers of children in our catchment area for the school to be viable. Village children alone would take our pupil numbers to over 30 and with the enquiries we have had over the last 6 weeks from people outside the village our numbers would be over 40 had they been able to see a secure future for the school.

Children growing up in a village are aware that they are part of a small community, and find their own identity in it, reinforced by attending the village school. We believe the children are happy and much more receptive to learning in a local environment where they can visit their local church and take part in activities in a familiar community. If they are sent away to a school suitable to a large urban community, they will risk losing that sense of identity. 'bus-ing children to school makes it much more difficult to take part in after-school activities.

If you are still unsure, come and visit our school. We are sure you will be impressed.

The Case for Barnwell (C of E Aided) Primary School



**Prepared by
The Governing Body
for your information**

History

Barnwell School has been in existence for more than 400 years. We believe the numbers of children at the school have declined over recent years due to poor management and lack of support from the LEA.

Following an OFSTED inspection in 1998, concerns were raised about the management of the school and the lack of staff development, and yet intervention from the LEA was not forthcoming until as late as 2002. During this period, unsurprisingly, pupil numbers declined.

Following an LEA review, the school embarked upon a pilot federation with Oundle Primary School. In September '03. With a brand new governing body, under the guidance of Oundle's head-teacher, the school began to move forward.

The head-teacher and governing body worked hard to prepare for an OFSTED inspection in January 2004, 4 months into the pilot federation. OFSTED recognised that governance and leadership had "improved considerably in recent months". Some teaching and learning were found to be unsatisfactory but it was acknowledged in their report that the acting head-teacher "has had too little time in which to bring about all the improvements required."

On the strength of this report, and without any consultation, the LEA proposed that the school should close.

The governing body continue to fight this proposal and believe that the school has a viable future.



Improvements since 2002.

- **SPRING 2003** Injection of funds from Diocese and local community provides major improvement to the fabric of the school and much needed new equipment including a new computer suite.
- **SUMMER 2003.** New governing body established. Numbers increasing from 4 to 14 active members.
- **SEPTEMBER 2003.** Pilot federation implemented. Teachers benefit from improved support and the school begins to move forward under new leadership.
- **WINTER 2003.** Governor training ongoing and link governors establishing contacts within the two schools.



Improvements since OFSTED

OFSTED raised 2 key issues.

1. Development of teaching and learning continues and recent observations by the head-teacher, LEA and H.M. Inspectors confirm necessary improvement has been made.
 2. The governing body has now met its statutory requirement to agree a policy on race equality and continues to strive to promote better pupils' understanding of cultural and ethnic diversity.
- Following the ending of the pilot federation, the school continues to make progress under the leadership provided by our new head-teacher.
 - The post-OFSTED plan has been implemented and regular monitoring ensures continued improvement.