

## SCHOOLS and EDUCATION

Education in North Bedfordshire is going through a process of change with the current three tier system moving to two tier, Together with current government policy for all schools to eventually become academies in some form of multi-academy trust the challenges will continue for the next few years. Our church schools are an integral part of the church's presence in the villages and we are determined to support them – and our local community schools - as teachers, parents and children negotiate these significant changes.

**Harrold Lower School** - is currently a feeder school to **Harrold Priory Middle School** but, under Bedford Borough's plans to move to a two tier educational system, the two schools are likely to be merged in 2017 to form a Primary School that will feed the highly regarded Sharnbrook Academy. See [www.harroldlowerschool.co.uk](http://www.harroldlowerschool.co.uk) and <http://www.harroldpriory.co.uk>

**Carlton Voluntary Controlled Lower School** - is a Church of England School which also acts as a feeder to Harrold Priory Middle School. Carlton school has been rated excellent by the last two Ofsted inspections and the latest Diocesan inspection. There is also a thriving pre-school taking children from age 2½ to 5. Plans are under way to convert Carlton Lower School into a primary school (4-11 years) as part of the Borough's scheme to create a 2-tier school system. The school hall is shared with the church and village and is used for a wide variety of activities. See [www.carltonvclower.ik.org](http://www.carltonvclower.ik.org)

**Turvey Lower School** – The school enjoys a good relationship with our children, families and the wider community and we encourage the children to take a full part in our community such as our gardening projects, local competitions and celebrations at our local church. We aim for our children to develop a diverse cultural awareness and ultimately to become responsible citizens for the future. See [www.turveylower.co.uk](http://www.turveylower.co.uk)

**Podington: The Christopher Reeve Voluntary Aided School** – a lower school with a catchment area that not only includes Podington, Hinwick and Farndish, but also accepts children from neighbouring Northamptonshire parishes, including Rushden, Irchester and Wollaston. There are currently 69 children on the roll, with capacity for 75. A number of parents choose the school for its Christian ethos, and a large majority select this as route to gain access to the second and third tier of education in the North Bedfordshire area. See [www.christopher-reeves-school.co.uk](http://www.christopher-reeves-school.co.uk)

**Wymington: St.Lawrence Voluntary Aided Church School** – A recent extension has provided a new hall with storage and kitchen facilities, and the school benefits from it's own playing field and a full time Nursery Unit. The school has a good reputation and is attended by 120 children many of whom are from outside the village. See [www.st-lawrenceschool.co.uk](http://www.st-lawrenceschool.co.uk)

There are no schools in Odell or Stevington so most children of school age travel by bus to the various schools in nearby villages, the majority of which are considered outstanding by Ofsted, including the Sharnbrook Academy. Some children travel to Bedford to attend one or other of the Harpur Trust independent schools or private schools, Bedford schools having enjoyed a long-established reputation for excellence.

## EXISTING SCHOOL-CHURCH LINKS

'Open the Book' volunteers from Harrold, Carlton and Odell churches regularly take assemblies in Harrold and Carlton Lower Schools which are effective and much appreciated. The previous Harrold & Carlton LEP shared minister also took regular assemblies before she retired, and had a good relationship with each of the 3 schools. Church activities such as Holiday Club, Messy Church, Christingle etc. have been advertised through the children's book-bags.

Although the Lower School at Turvey is not a church school, as part of belonging to the wider community, the children come to church for special celebrations. The former priest-in-charge went into school and maintained good relations with the head teacher.

The Chair of Governors at the Christopher Reeve VA school in Podington is an active member of St.Mary's Church, Together with a couple from St.Lawrence's Church Wymington she has initiated and developed a joint Messy Church, now running around 5 times a year, co-inciding with Christian festivals and/or half-term and summer holidays. Other members from both churches have come on board as volunteers and caterers. Up to now, the worship-time has been led by clergy from elsewhere in the deanery who have been happy to support this venture. Messy Church usually takes place in Wymington Village Hall, but the head of the school has expressed her willingness for school premises to be used as an alternative venue.

There is a close relationship between the Lower School at Wymington and the church of St.Lawrence. Two members of the PCC serve on the Board of Governors and others lead school assembly once a month. The school holds services in the church at Easter, Harvest, Remembrance and Christmas to which parents are invited – also to the school leavers' service in the church at the end of the school year.