

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

St Andrew's Church of England Voluntary Controlled First School

Trajan Walk
Heddon on the Wall,
NE15 0BJ

Diocese: Newcastle

Local Authority: Northumberland

Date of inspection: June 27 2012

Date of last inspection: July 7 2009

URN: 122275

Head teacher: Mr Andrew Wheatley

Inspector's name and number: Mrs Gillian Wild, NS 636

School context

St. Andrew's Church of England Voluntary Controlled First School is a smaller than average primary school. It is situated in an area where socio-economic conditions are above the national average. Pupils are mainly from white British families; the proportion of pupils known to be eligible for Free School Meals is well below average. The proportion of pupils supported by School Action Plus or with a Statement of Special Educational Need is low. Since the previous inspection, a new Head Teacher, Senior Leadership Team and Chair of Governing Body have been appointed. The school serves the local and surrounding area, including families based at Albemarle Barracks. Church status and an inclusive ethos, result in parents choosing to bring their children here from outside the catchment area.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St. Andrew's C.E. First School as a Church of England school are outstanding.

Much work has been done since the last inspection to augment and further enhance the strong Christian ethos, rooted in love, which permeates all aspects of school life and lies at the heart of this successful school. As a result children feel safe, valued, supported and challenged to reach their full potential. Christian values are shared by all in the community, are clearly stated in all documentation and reinforced throughout all classrooms and main areas of the school. The concept of reconciliation and forgiveness are central to the culture of praise and reward. The school, in its inclusive and distinctive Christian ethos, provides many opportunities for children to develop spiritually.

Established strengths

- A deeply caring, loving environment, underpinned by Christian values, resulting in happy children who enjoy learning and belonging to the school.
- The Christian ethos of the school, reflected in the relationship between staff and learners.
- The importance given to RE and Collective Worship in the life of the school and its contribution to SMSC and the distinctiveness of the school as a church school.
- A well led Church school with a clear and explicit Christian ethos based on expectation, mutual support and outstanding pastoral care.

Focus for development

- To establish strategies for leading, monitoring and evaluating Collective Worship to include all stakeholders.
- To embed strategies for monitoring and evaluating the school's progress as a Church of England School.
- To improve Anglican practice through celebration of the Eucharist
- To explore and develop links to worldwide Church and Anglican communion.

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

The Christian character at St. Andrew's Church of England Voluntary Controlled First School is evident in the quality of relationships that exist between all members of the school community. There is a warm, friendly and welcoming atmosphere where, as one governor commented, 'The school delights in 'heaven in the ordinary', mirroring the way Jesus lived, and this being the warp and weft of our daily lives.'. Christian values underpin the

school's ethos and children speak confidently and enthusiastically of 'coming together as a family' to celebrate worship and learning experiences. Children feel listened to and supported with their class work. Each child is special and attitudes to learning are very good because children know that their work is valued and adults treat them fairly. This is as a result of the school's commitment to meeting the needs of all learners and developing the whole child, both academically and spiritually. Children feel safe and report that there is little, if any bullying as 'the buddies and staff look after you'; they know who to turn to if they are worried or concerned. The school uses its Christian character to nurture both the academic and spiritual development of the children and there is strong evidence of this throughout the school. High quality displays with quotes from scripture are used to promote the school's distinctive Christian ethos as well as supporting the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Areas for reflection are present in every classroom and these are used effectively by the pupils. Christian values impact upon pupils' personal development as the school actively promotes regular fundraising activities and sponsors a child from overseas contributing towards Christian stewardship and global community cohesion.

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

The area for development highlighted in the last inspection has been completed. Worship is a key element in the Christian witness of the school, contributing to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the whole community. There is a clear policy for Collective Worship, which has recently been reviewed. Acts of worship are planned around a cycle of themes, promoting Christian values and providing opportunities for spiritual development and to learn about the Anglican year, biblical texts and SEAL themes and issues. Pupils realise the importance worship plays in the life of the school; they behave well and worship takes place in an atmosphere of calm and respect with staff taking an active part as worshippers alongside the children. A variety of people participate in leading worship including staff, local clergy and the children themselves thus providing diversity and richness in the worshipping experiences within the school. Worship is monitored and evaluated by the children, evidenced in written responses in portfolios. Pupils' understanding of the Anglican faith and practice is good. In discussion, pupils were able to articulate their perceptions of worship and how it may be used to affect the school community; they see worship as 'a special time where God is watching' and 'a time to think about God and Jesus'. Reflection provides opportunities for all pupils, including those of other faiths, to 'think about what's been happening.'. Prayers are used during worship and pupils regularly read their own prayers; a prayer tree is displayed centrally. Parents support invitations to attend services and, to celebrate Mother's Day the church was filled to capacity.

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

The Head Teacher, supported by a very effective Senior Leadership team and wider staff team, has the ability to inspire and is committed to promoting a distinctively Christian vision for the school based upon Christian values. His leadership, together with the support of governors is based firmly upon Christian values that are clearly articulated. All documentation clearly states the Christian vision. Within the school community there is no doubt that this is a Church school as the ethos of trust, support and corporate ownership is understood and valued by all those connected with the school and also in the wider community. The Head Teacher is visionary in his leadership and his commitment pervades the whole school through an on going dialogue to evaluate the distinctiveness and effectiveness of the school as a Church school. Governors speak of the warmth of the Head Teacher, who is a positive role model in displaying gifts of the spirit and openly living his faith. Rigorous self-evaluation, which is shared with the governors, ensures that they know the school well and have a good understanding of the school's priorities. The School Improvement Plan evaluates progress and identifies developments in RE, Collective Worship and Church school ethos all leading to continued improvement in the enhancement of a church school education for the pupils. Local clergy make a positive contribution to the distinctiveness of the school as a church school and support the school with worship and pastoral care. There are good links with the church which is used regularly. Pupils contribute effectively to the life of the school through the School Council.