

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Corbridge CE First School
St Helen's Lane
Corbridge
Northumberland

Diocese: Newcastle

Local authority: Northumberland

Dates of inspection: 14th July 2009

Date of last inspection: 2/3rd May 2006

School's unique reference number: 327687

Headteacher: Mrs Ali Barden

Inspector's name and number: Mrs Jane Ackroyd 221

School context

Corbridge has 172 pupils aged from 3 to 9 from the local village but also drawing from the surrounding area. The children are mainly of white British origin, numbers of children entitled to free school meals and those with learning difficulties are well below the national average. There are close links with the local community including the Church. Out of Hours opportunities thrive both before and after school. The school has a range of awards including Gold Arts Mark, Healthy Schools, IIP and Activemark 2008.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Corbridge CE First School CE as a Church of England school is outstanding.

All stakeholders are proud of the Anglican ethos of this school and strive to make the school a success. Children are well known and valued as individuals. It is a lively and happy learning community where children make excellent progress in their spiritual, moral and social development alongside their academic work. Learners speak enthusiastically about their school. Expectations are high for all children. Relationships at all levels are good. The Christian ethos, underpins all that it does.

Established strengths

- An environment where the strengths of each individual are nurtured and valued.
- High quality teaching and learning.
- Governors and staff are strongly supportive of the Christian ethos.
- The relationship with the local village community.

Focus for development

- To continue to build the range of approaches used in collective worship.
- To further develop the involvement of children in the planning and delivery of worship.
- To formalise the evaluation of collective worship.
- To continue to develop assessment systems in RE.

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

The school's Christian character is reflected in the very good relationships which exist throughout the school community. Children, parents and staff are confident that they are listened to. The pupils are happy, polite and self assured, they enjoy coming to school and are excited by learning. Parents, through formal and informal means, reflect interest, involvement, a high level of satisfaction and support for the school. The in-depth knowledge of the pupils and pastoral care shown by teaching and support staff highlights that policy is effective and values are intrinsic. High quality, well designed displays enhance opportunities for spiritual development. Informal prayer areas in classrooms are a good example of how the Christian

character permeates throughout the school. There is great commitment from all stakeholders to develop the whole child in the light of Christian values. Staff and Governors work hard in order to enable children to reach their potential. "We all have talents" said one child very confidently. PSHE is seen as an important aspect of school life. Pupils are very aware of the environment, a thriving allotment involves children and parents. The links with other countries, particularly Kenya, help to develop the children's awareness of global issues. This is clearly a school in which implicit Christian values such as stewardship, forgiveness, trust and valuing others are recognised and lived out. The high level of charity fund raising reflects the care for others engendered by the school. Despite being a white, rural community, opportunities are sought for the development of awareness of other faiths. Able children are challenged while children with special needs or who are vulnerable are treated inclusively. Through nurturing, skilful and wide ranging support the children are developing well as individuals. The close links with the local Church is one way in which spiritual development is enhanced. Staff work exceptionally well as a team.

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

There is a plan for the worship year which includes major Christian festivals and those of other religions studied in school. The themes are planned collaboratively. Governors understand their responsibilities and support the worship life of the school. The local vicar other ministers and visitors regularly lead collective worship. Teachers take their responsibilities for leading/organising worship seriously. Rituals for worship are established. Children enjoy class worship, writing prayers and singing. Entry to worship is dignified and well ordered. The children generally participate well, singing enthusiastically and responding appropriately. While many children enjoy worship and learn from it, a significant number felt that there was "too much talking" and that there was "the same story lots." Evaluation of the effectiveness of worship is carried out in a range of ways and does have impact on future planning but this needs to be more regular and formal. The local church is used for some worship and plans are underway for increased use. One parent said "I am not a church goer but I go because of school, I love hearing children sing." Parents are supportive and enjoy attending class worship and the festival times.

The effectiveness of the Religious Education is outstanding

Religious Education is extremely well taught, giving children an understanding of Christianity and some other world religions. The Diocesan syllabus is taught with learners receiving a broad and balanced curriculum. The RE coordinator plans thoroughly, with links made to Worship, Philosophy for Children and PHSE. Learning about and learning from religion is equally well planned for. Religious Education is a regular point for discussion at staff meetings and there is access to appropriate staff training. High quality displays illustrating Christianity and other faiths are evident around the school, with books and artefacts to support learning. The link with Philosophy for Children enhances the quality of questioning and listening skills. Children were able to make the link between the Good Samaritan story from Worship to a P4C story studied. The listening and questioning skills developed through philosophy enhance the quality of RE. Children really enjoy the subject and talked enthusiastically about when they combine art and RE as a way of learning. Assessment is informal but thorough with support and teaching staff clear on where children are and how they can be further challenged. Plans are in place to move to assessment using the Creativity Wheel from September.

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

The Headteacher, staff and governors have an excellent understanding of the community and share a vision for the school based on Christian values. A strong Christian ethos is promoted consistently. This is a happy school where children are valued and respected and the message that we are all God's children is embraced. Both adults and children speak enthusiastically about the school's Christian character. The Christian ethos is implicit in documentation such as policies. Behaviour is excellent and self esteem is high. All staff have high expectations and work as role models. Pupils are proud to be members of the school and feel that their opinions are listened to. The School Council are proud to represent their classmates and are confident that they can effect change. Annual surveys of parents reflect confidence in the school and a very high level of satisfaction in the Christian education their children receive. The leadership of the school has a strong belief that the life of the school family can be lived in the light of the Christian Gospel. Through an efficient system of planning, monitoring and evaluation, their beliefs are lived out. The close link with the village community is a great strength and links are deepening with the local church.

SIAS report July 2009 Corbridge CE First School, St Helen's Lane, Corbridge, Northumberland NE45 5JQ