

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Embleton Vincent Edwards Church of England First School
Embleton
Alnwick
Northumberland

Diocese: Newcastle

Local authority: Northumberland

Dates of inspection: 6th October 2009

Date of last inspection: 20th March 2006

School's unique reference number: 122290

Headteacher: Miss Julie Harris

Inspector's name and number: Mrs Jane Ackroyd 221

School context

Embleton Vincent Edwards Church of England First School is a very small rural school set in an area of outstanding natural beauty. There are 20 pupils aged from 4 to 9. The children are all of white British origin. Rural deprivation is a slight issue as is the squeezing out of young families with second home ownership and retirement into the area. There are close links with the local community including the Church. Out of Hours opportunities thrive. The school has a range of awards including Healthy Schools, Eco-Start and Investors in People. The Headteacher is Head of this school and Seahouses Middle.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Embleton Vincent Edwards Church of England First School is outstanding.

All stakeholders are immensely proud of the Anglican ethos of this school and strive to make it a success. The school prospectus makes it clear that being an Anglican church school is important to the life of the community. Children are well known, valued and nourished as individuals. This is a lively and happy learning community where children make excellent progress and are enriched in their spiritual, moral and social development alongside their academic work. There is an emphasis on being wise which transcends academic ability. This is carried over into the spiritual life of the school with owls used in the reflection corner for children to write their concerns on. Interactive displays and use of symbols greatly enhance the learning environment. Learners speak warmly and enthusiastically about their very special school. Expectations are high for all children. Relationships at all levels are excellent. The Christian ethos, underpins all that it does. Care, kindness and moral values are engendered in an atmosphere of fun and enthusiasm.

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 church and 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 further develop opportunities for awareness of other faiths.

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 excellent relationships which exist throughout the school community. Children, parents and staff are confident that they are

listened to. The pupils are happy, polite and confident; 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 prayer board, with its link to the church, is an excellent example of how learners are supported spiritually. There is a commitment from all stakeholders to develop the whole child, whatever their ability, in the light of Christian values. Staff and Governors work hard in order to enable children to reach their potential. RE is seen as an important aspect of school life. Pupils are very aware of stewardship and justly proud of the work they do with the National Trust and Forest Schools. The link with a Kenyan school is helping 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. Weekly lunches for the local elderly and regular family lunches are valued by all. The high level of charity fund raising reflects the care for others engendered by the school. Despite the challenges of mixed age teaching able children are successfully challenged while children with special needs are extremely well supported; every child is regularly reviewed, ensuring challenging targets are set and underachievement addressed. Through nurturing, skilful and wide ranging support the children are developing well as individuals, able to give and receive support. The close links with the local Church is one way in which spiritual development is enhanced. Staff work exceptionally well as a team. One member of staff summed up the experience with "I come to work with a smile on my face and leave still with a smile."

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

There is a plan for the worship year which includes major Christian festivals and those of other religions. The themes are planned collaboratively. Governors understand their responsibilities and support the worship life of the school. The local vicar regularly leads collective worship. Teachers take their responsibilities for leading/organising and monitoring worship seriously. Rituals for worship are well established creating a spiritual atmosphere. Entry to worship is dignified and well ordered. The pupils are very supportive of the success of others; a feeling of real joy permeates the worship. Children participate well, responding appropriately, they enjoy taking part through reading, singing and drama and feel that they learn, for example, "to forgive each other." Children are encouraged to maximise the learning gains of worship through planned opportunities in class. Worship is monitored and evaluated in a range of ways and this has an impact on future planning. The local church is used for some worship and plans are underway for increased use now the new vicar is in place. There are some high quality resources available for worship and plans are afoot for increased use of music following a school council discussion.

The effectiveness of the Religious Education is outstanding

Religious Education is extremely well taught, giving children an understanding of Christianity and some insight into Judaism and Islam. The Diocesan syllabus is taught with learners receiving a broad and balanced curriculum. The RE coordinator is an outstanding leader who plans rigorously, and makes links to Worship and philosophy. Learning objectives are shared with the children, who are very positive about being able to learn in a wide range of ways, including dance, drama and music, "It is fun" stated a Class 2 boy. Learning about and learning from religion is equally well planned for. Lessons are monitored through lesson observations and work scrutiny. Children reach at least as high a level in RE as they do in core subjects and recording of levels is treated equally rigorously. Planning and evaluating Religious Education has protected time for staff 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 effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is outstanding

The school leaders have a clear, shared vision for the school based on Christian values and an excellent understanding of the community and their place within it. The head-teacher, governors and staff work well together, being very caring of the children, each other and all adults associated with the school. They effectively model Christian values and a strong ethos is promoted consistently. This is a happy school where children are valued and respected, where the message that we are all God's children is embraced. Both adults and children speak enthusiastically about the school's Christian character. This 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, they feel supported and valued as individuals. The headteacher is extremely dedicated and is supported by an able and skilled team. All stakeholders are confident that their opinions are listened to. The whole school is on the School Council, they value their role and are confident that they can effect change. Parental surveys reflect a very high level of satisfaction with the school and 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 church and community of villages is a great strength. The Community magazine is utilised as excellent tool for communication. Rev Phillip Harratt, the new incumbent, is a strength who is keen to work alongside the school even further in developing the symbiotic relationship of church and school. The lack of access to those of other faith does present a challenge which the leadership is aware of and is planning to overcome as successfully as possible.

SIAS report October 2009 Embleton Vincent Edwards Church of England First School, Northumberland NE66 3XR