

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Humshaugh Church of England Aided First School

Humshaugh
Hexham
NE46 4AA

Diocese: Newcastle

Local authority: Northumberland

Dates of inspection: 9th February 2010

Date of last inspection: 1st March 2007

School's unique reference number: 122295

Headteacher: Mrs Angela Steele

Inspector's name and number: Mrs Jane Ackroyd 221

School context

Humshaugh Church of England Aided First School is a very small rural school with 33 children, serving two villages and the local area. Buildings have recently been enhanced providing an attractive learning environment in a beautiful setting. There are two classes arranged by age. There are no children entitled to free school meals. Numbers of children with special needs is average. Excellent links exist with the local churches. The school holds Activemark and Healthy School Awards.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Humshaugh Church of England First School as a Church of England school are good.

All are proud of the Anglican ethos of this school and strive to make it a success. It is a lively and happy learning community where children are nourished and make good progress in their spiritual, moral and social development alongside their academic work. Learners speak enthusiastically about their school. Expectations are high for all children. The Christian character is reflected in the very good relationships and mutual support which exist throughout the school community.

Established strengths

- The pupil's sense of collective responsibility and care for each other.
- The strong Christian family atmosphere where children are supported, valued and challenged to reach their full potential.
- The links with the village and parish communities.
- The strong and effective leadership of the Headteacher well supported by staff, governors and parents.

Focus for development

- To deepen awareness of multi cultural Britain
- To encourage greater global awareness
- To continue to develop the range of people who take worship
- To consider moving the reflection area

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

Children are seen in the image of God, their uniqueness is celebrated. Love of neighbour and love of God are actively encouraged. Children, parents and staff are confident that they are listened to. The pupils are happy, polite and self assured, enjoy coming to school and are excited by learning. Parental involvement reflects a high level of 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 interactive displays are a good example of how the Christian character permeates the school. Children were particularly responsive to an interactive "Sheep" display with Jesus their shepherd and to the recently introduced prayer tree. While the children knew of the reflection area several felt it needed to be somewhere quieter and more private. 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. PSHE is an important aspect

of school life. Children feel that "It is fun to be here." There is a high level of fund raising for national and international needs and a prayer map of the world; however there needs to be greater attention paid to widen the children's awareness of global issues and the world wide church. The environment is used both for learning and worship. This is clearly a school in which implicit Christian values such as stewardship, forgiveness, respect and valuing others are recognised and lived out. Through nurturing, skilful and wide ranging support, children are developing well as individuals. The close links with the local Church is one way in which spiritual development is enhanced.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

There is a plan for the worship year which includes major Christian festivals. The themes are planned in collaboration with the local vicar. Governors understand their responsibilities and actively support the worship life of the school. Teachers take their responsibilities for leading/organising worship seriously and are well supported by governors. Rituals for worship are well established. Children are proud of their part in activities such as singing, acting and writing/leading prayers. Entry to worship is relaxed with a sense of expectation. The children participate well, singing enthusiastically and responding appropriately. A sense of joy is evident but so too is respect. Evaluation of the effectiveness of worship is carried out in a range of ways and this has an impact on future planning. Children talk positively about their worship life. They are able to discuss major festivals and clearly gain a great deal from events such as the pilgrimage to Hexham Abbey, Ascension Day, Christingle and Communion services. Parents spoke enthusiastically about special services and Praise You celebrations; one spoke of how their four year old comes home talking about Jesus and prayer "We aren't Christians so it isn't from us." The worship life of the school enriches the local community alongside that of the school community.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Religious Education is extremely well taught, giving children an understanding of Christianity and some knowledge of Islam and Judaism. Learners achieve well and progress is in line with other core subjects The Diocesan syllabus is taught with learners receiving a broad and balanced curriculum. The highly committed and talented RE coordinator plans thoroughly, with links made to Worship and PHSE. Learning about and learning from religion is equally well planned for. The school benefits from a coordinator shared with other church schools, this enables links to be made across the Tyne Valley, for example the Tyne Valley Easter celebration and specific communal learning days. High quality displays illustrating Christianity and other faiths are evident around the school, with books and artefacts to support learning. Pupils demonstrate a very good knowledge of Christian beliefs and some knowledge of those of other faiths. The use of Thinking Skills enhances the quality of questioning and listening skills. Key Stage One children were familiar with terms such as Old and New Testaments. Children really enjoy the subject and talked enthusiastically about it. They were confident discussing prayer and what it means to them. Assessment is thorough with support and teaching staff working together on where children are, informing how they can be further challenged. Children are regularly made aware of their own progress and of what they need to do in order to reach the next level.

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 clear 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 "Each individual is special to God" 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. All staff have high expectations and work as role models. Pupils are proud to be members of the school and are confident that their opinions are listened to. 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 links with the local parishes and the village communities is a great strength. Members of the local community are welcomed into school and the services of the school are sought by the villages enhancing the life of the area. Soup day and other such events are clearly important within the school and the villages. Stakeholders feel supported by both church and school.