

# National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

## Whittingham Church of England Voluntary Controlled First School

Whittingham  
Alnwick  
Northumberland  
NE66 4UP

### Diocese of Newcastle

Local authority: Northumberland  
Date of inspection: April 28<sup>th</sup> 2009  
Date of last inspection: September 26<sup>th</sup> 2006  
School's unique reference number: 122279  
Headteacher: Mrs Pauline Molloy  
Inspector's name and number: Mrs Julie Robson

### School context

Whittingham Church of England First School is a small rural school serving a wide area in addition to the village in which it is situated. Over 60% of the pupils are bussed in from outlying areas. There are 38 pupils on roll and eight in the nursery class; all are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities is below average; no pupil has a statement of special educational need and the number in receipt of free school meals is low.

### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Whittingham First School as a Church of England school is outstanding

The strong Christian ethos and welcoming atmosphere of this school underpins and pervades all that it does. This is a fully inclusive school in which all individuals are respected and valued as created beings and in which they develop respect for themselves, for others and for the environment. All are very proud of their school family and actively contribute to its success. This is a lively and happy learning community where children are given, and readily accept, responsibility; they have outstanding attitudes to learning and speak enthusiastically about all aspects of their school. Relationships at all levels are excellent.

### Established strengths

- Outstanding Christian leadership from the Headteacher and foundation governors.
- Overt Christian principles which pervade the daily routines of the school.
- High quality relationships between members of the school community.

### Focus for development

- Broaden links with the parish family to develop shared leadership of worship.
- Ensure that the profile of the Church of England foundation and Christian ethos of the school is given high priority in all documentation.

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

The school's commitment to the education of each child as an individual and the support of each member of staff comes from its clear and well thought through Christian ethos where each individual is valued. As a result, pupils are responsible, articulate, mature and considerate to others. They speak highly of their school, clearly articulating their thoughts. As one child said, "Our school is a family itself and also is part of God's family. We all have responsibilities and we all help to make our school special".

Relationships with and between all members of the school community are excellent. A governor spoke openly of the "equality of regard" underpinning relationships and of the ethos of "empathy, understanding, forgiveness and reconciliation" within which the school family

operates, thus enabling all to experiment and to learn together. One parent commented that the school has “a personalised approach; the staff know the children very well and every child is valued for who they are”. Another said, “they don’t just know the children, they know the families well too”. The school environment contributes very well to learning opportunities; displays enhance the environment and provide opportunities for further discussion, reflection and learning across the whole curriculum.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding**

Worship is central to the life of the school and takes a variety of forms. It is a joyful and spontaneous occasion with opportunities for active involvement and quiet reflection. Led by staff, clergy and children, thus ensuring a range of experiences for the children, worship is valued highly by the school and clearly enjoyed by everyone who participates. The impact of worship is often immediate; the children are encouraged to reflect on how to use their experiences in worship as they go about their daily life. The development, at the children’s request, of a ‘quiet corner’ gives valuable opportunities for personal reflection and prayer. One child said, “You can go to the quiet corner to think quietly and put a prayer on the prayer tree if you want to. That’s important”. Children can talk articulately about the importance of worship and about the Christian values the school promotes.

The school has addressed the focus for development from the last inspection i.e. to develop and implement a more useful system for evaluating Collective Worship, and has a practical and manageable system in place which has impacted positively on the quality of worship. Close links with the parish church are highly valued and children confidently and ably lead acts of worship in church on occasions such as Education Sunday, Easter and Christingle. Whittingham CE First School meets the statutory requirement to hold a daily act of collective worship.

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

The Headteacher is passionate about the school and clearly demonstrates how much she values every member of the school community. Her vision for the school is based on her personal belief which focuses on individual worth and achievement. This clear vision, which is at the heart of the school, is well supported by staff and governors. Governors are knowledgeable about the pupils in the school and the views of other stakeholders. They are actively involved in the day to day life of the school in a variety of ways, including monitoring and evaluating its success as a church school, and in challenging it to improve further. Parents and children, governors and staff speak very highly of the school and the value it places on the individual. They describe the warm family atmosphere of the school, the links with the church and the Christian ethos as both valued and valuable. One governor said, “You can see and feel the Christian ethos in action. It’s a lovely place”. They strongly support the awareness of responsibility to the community and the support for others that the school engenders in the children. There are excellent links with the Parish church and the wider community including a lunch club for senior citizens. All staff in the school are excellent role models and the team spirit and support for each other promotes a real sense of belonging.

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