

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Greenhead Church of England First School

Greenhead
Bampton
Cumbria
CA8 7HB

Diocese: Newcastle

Local authority: Northumberland
Dates of inspection: 12th May 2009
Date of last inspection: 4th July 2006
School's unique reference number: 122284
Headteacher: Mrs Judith Dwyer
Inspector's name and number: Sheila Bamber 621

School context

Greenhead is a very small rural first school with 33 pupils on roll, serving three small villages. The school works closely with an adjacent nursery provider to provide integrated experiences for foundation stage pupils. The school is confederated to Herdley Bank First School, with which it shares a head teacher, and is a lead partner in West Tyne Church Schools.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Greenhead Church of England First School as a Church of England school are outstanding

Everyone at Greenhead School is clear that this is a distinctive and inclusive school where individuals are valued for their uniqueness, and support each other to bring out the best in all. The wide range of collaborative arrangements with both local authority and other church schools are a strength of the school, which makes a distinctive contribution to these partnerships through confidence in its identity based on explicitly Christian values.

Established strengths

- The open way in which reflection rooted in the Christian ethos is encouraged in all parts of school life
- The way in which partnerships with other schools enriches every aspect of school life
- The clear vision of the leadership for continued improvement

Focus for development

- Further develop and integrate assessment in RE across the school
- Evaluate the (specific) impact of the partnership of West Tyne Church Schools on Greenhead School

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

Pupils feel safe and valued, and talk confidently about their beliefs and the reasons for their behaviour, which are based on clear Christian values, in all lessons and in other settings. They support and help one another, and teachers challenge individuals to do their best at all times. One said 'Its special being a Church School because we look after one another.' The Christian character of the school is evident across the curriculum, and bright engaging displays throughout the school reflect this. Parents are very happy with the care their children receive and the progress they make, and speak warmly of the way in which they are welcomed into the school and invited to share any concerns they have. They feel their children are well supported by the school and their individual needs are carefully considered.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Since the previous inspection a clear focus for worship has been established in the school hall, and pupils were proud to describe the prayer doves, and to talk about how they are involved in contributing items, by, for example, bringing special things to worship and explaining their choices. Pupils were able to talk confidently about pilgrimage as a holy journey, and the collective worship was integrated into the RE lesson that followed. Collective worship is evaluated in a variety of ways, and the evaluations inform the variety of practice that is evident from the planning. Many people, including pupils, are involved in leading worship. A school Eucharist is being introduced sensitively, engaging members of the church community, parents and carers, and opportunities are taken to teach about this as well as to learn from it. The use of the sung Celtic Blessing, with an opportunity for a summing up of the theme in an instrumental interlude, was a moving and clearly familiar part of worship, and the singing, with words committed to memory, was enjoyed by all. A whiteboard has been installed for use in collective worship, but the commendable intention is not to use it as a main focus, or to provide words routinely, but to use it creatively to enhance the worship experience.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

RE is one of the areas co-ordinated through West Tyne Church Schools, and taught by an enthusiastic specialist. The teaching is outstanding, with a wide variety of challenging activities. In a lesson about St Cuthbert, building on the theme of pilgrimage, pupils showed a mature understanding of the difficulties faced by the monks, and one asked how this story related to the burial of Jesus, prompting an interesting discussion. Conversation about bereavement and loss was handled sensitively, and pupils were encouraged to reflect on their own experiences and feelings. The Diocesan Syllabus is now implemented across the school. Whilst the approach to RE is common across the schools in the partnership, the needs of each individual school are reflected in the enrichment activities offered across the curriculum (for example in Greenhead the planning of the music input around the story of Noah). *The further development of secure assessment in RE is well underway and consideration is being given as to how this can be linked into the skills based curriculum frameworks. The potential for an integrated approach to assessment in RE across West Tyne Church Schools is also being explored.*

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

The governing body are enthusiastic and knowledgeable about the school and clear about their responsibilities to uphold the foundation. They have a clear vision for the school as a church school, which is shared with parents, staff and pupils. The school self evaluation and development plans indicate clearly that this is a church school, make informed judgements and show good capacity to improve further. The school is actively engaged in the life of the wider community, and well supported by the parish. Governors are conscious of the need to safeguard the distinctiveness of the school in caring for all members of its community whilst entering fully into the strong partnership arrangements that are developing. Self evaluation is secure, and would be enhanced by more formal evaluation of the impact of the partnership between West Tyne Church Schools (and the other arrangements) on the school.

SIAS report May 2009 Greenhead Church of England First School, Greenhead, CA8 7HB