

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Henshaw Church of England Voluntary Aided First School

Henshaw
Bardon Mill
Hexham, Northumberland
NE47 7EP

Diocese: Newcastle

Local authority: Northumberland
Dates of inspection: 16th March 2009
Date of last inspection: 28th April 2006
School's unique reference number: 122276
Headteacher: Mrs D Henry
Inspector's name and number: Sheila Bamber 621

School context

Henshaw is a small rural first school (49 pupils currently) serving a wide catchment area. Pupils are taught in mixed aged classes and a variety of groupings. The early years foundation stage is delivered in partnership with a voluntary nursery provider. The school is in a soft federation with four similar CofE schools, which enables a wide range of enrichment activities. The building is used for a variety of community activities.

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

Henshaw is a school that knows itself to be a church school, and evidence of this is clearly visible in the building and in the welcome and care extended to everyone. The Head Teacher and Chair of Governors have a clear Christian vision for a school which is at the heart of the local community, and work closely with a range of partners to deliver a range of opportunities to meet identified needs.

Established strengths

- The tangible Christian ethos, which permeates every aspect of the school.
- Partnership working (eg West Tyne Church Schools, the nursery provision) which adds significant value to all aspects of school life.
- The vision of the leadership for continued improvement.

Focus for development

- Assessment in RE (in partnership with WTCS)
- Explore further the impact of the Christian ethos on the effectiveness of the school
- Develop an appropriate induction programme for foundation (and other) governors

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

Areas for development from the last Report have been met. This is a happy school, where children feel safe and confident. They are proud of their school, and talk easily about feeling special, and about the importance of friendship and looking after one another, their school and the wider environment. The values which underpin school life are clearly visible in stimulating displays in the entrance and throughout the school. Staff know the children and their families well, and work together to ensure their needs are identified and met. They take care in every aspect of school life to ensure that the children receive the widest possible range of opportunities, with an exciting programme of visits, creative days and after school activities, many of which are well supported by parents and the wider community. Sport and musical activities are particularly popular, and pupils speak with sensitivity about the needs of others across the world.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Areas for development from the last Report have been met. Collective worship is well planned and integrated with work in the classroom, for example the 'Love Life Live Lent' theme with displays in classrooms. Children enjoy worship and are engaged with the themes, showing maturity in their reflections readily identifying the values that God would like them to grow in response to a creative telling of the parable of the Sower. The careful preparation included links with Paul's teaching on the gifts of the Spirit, giving the adults present additional material upon which to reflect. Singing was outstanding, with the younger children confidently maintaining the singing of a hymn as they were the last to leave the hall. As one child said, 'We sing to God', and the development of this is well supported by a volunteer from the local church and the Vicar. Planning is thorough and well documented, and evaluation of the impact of worship is captured through displays in the hall, feedback books, prayers and other work from the children. Children enjoy attending the church for festivals, when parents and members of the church community are able to join them.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

RE is one of the areas co-ordinated through West Tyne Church Schools, and taught by a specialist. The teaching is outstanding, with a wide variety of challenging activities. Children particularly enjoy drama and the opportunities to reflect provided through the use of drama and film, Godly Play and wondering techniques. Children readily engage with bible stories, showing good factual knowledge and reflecting sensitively on what they can learn from this. One child wrote powerfully about the healing of the paralysed man (Luke 5:17ff) from the perspective of the Pharisees. There are excellent RE displays (for example the children's interpretation of the 'Many Faces of Christ' in the KS 2 classroom) and evidence of work which shows high standards and good progress, but formal assessment is not well developed, although some steps are being taken to moderate RE through the creative partnership work.

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

The head teacher has a clear vision for the school as a Church of England School, and this is well embedded in the day to day life of the school, and reflected in much of the self evaluation. The governing body has worked closely with the Diocese to develop their understanding of what it means to be a church school, and this will need careful communication to the significant number of recently appointed members. An openness to working creatively with others has led to significant improvements in outcomes for children, for instance in the early years foundation stage partnership with a local voluntary provider. The partnership of 'West Tyne Church Schools' improvement plan has a clear focus on the distinctive character of the schools involved, and the shared leadership contributes significantly to the capacity of the school to improve further. The school is well supported by the local church and community, and sees itself as being at the heart of the community.

SIAS report March 2009, Henshaw CE VA First School, Bardon Mill, NE47 7EP