

Arkengarthdale Church of England VC Primary School

Arkengarthdale,
Richmond,
North Yorkshire
DL11 6EN

Diocese of Bradford and Ripon and Leeds

LEA: North Yorkshire

SIAS inspection: March 2006

Previous S23 inspection: April 2000

URN: 121476

Headteacher: Mrs Mary Hutchinson

SIAS Inspector NS342: Mrs Victoria Farby

Context

The school is a very small, rural Church of England School in the most northerly part of the Yorkshire Dales. It is the only school in Arkengarthdale. It has 31 children on roll, 12 out of catchment. This is the highest number on roll for many years. The school has one KS2 class of 21 pupils and one mixed FS/KS1 class of 10 children. All children come from a white ethnic background and none is from a home where English is not the first language spoken. There are no children claiming free school meals at present, one entitlement but no claim, and 10% of children are on the Special Needs Register. There is a parish church and Methodist Chapel in the village, within walking distance of the school.

Summary Judgement

The school is an outstanding church school and Christian values underpin its life and work in every sense. There is a strong commitment to the development of the whole child within the context and environment of a supportive school community. The school is fully inclusive and has a caring family and Christian ethos.

Established Strengths

- An effective, caring Christian learning environment for all pupils where children feel valued and special and are happy and secure in school.
- The leadership of the head and support of staff and governors which ensure all learners are part of the school family.
- Learners know and appreciate what it means to be part of a church school.
- The school has a very effective partnership with the church and local community
- The school encourages links with a variety of visiting speakers who enhance the experience of Collective Worship offered throughout the year and further help to establish the Christian ethos of the school.
- The strong impact of music within the school which aids the spiritual development of learners.
- An awareness of, and concern for, the wider community through the children's support of many charities, both local and worldwide.
- A good awareness of environmental and health issues.

Focus for development

- Continue to sustain and develop the outstanding work already in progress.
- Develop a policy for spiritual, moral and cultural development, which reflects the good practice that is to be found in the school.
- Involve staff, governors and learners in formalising the evaluation of Collective Worship.
- Encourage children to plan and present their own times of Collective Worship.

How well does the school, through its distinctive Christian character, meet the needs of all learners?

The school is outstanding in the way that, through its distinctive Christian character, it meets the needs of all learners. The school makes an outstanding effort to meet the needs of all its learners, placing a high level of importance on the needs of the whole child. The Christian ethos in Arkengarthdale C of E School is exceptionally strong and creates an outstanding environment for learning. There is a weekly 'celebration assembly' that demonstrates the value of the commitment to pupil achievement in all aspects of school life which is valued and enjoyed by the learners. There is good use of prayer, with prayers during Collective Worship, before lunch and at the end of the day. All children can recite the school prayer from memory and can explain its importance.

A range of fundraising activities takes place on a regular basis providing support for the people in the local and wider community. Learners speak about this with compassion. The Christian ethos effectively supports the spiritual, moral, cultural development of all learners within the school, accurately identifying and addressing the need for more emphasis on the latter to ensure children are prepared for life in a multi-cultural society. Links with local churches in the area add to the distinctive Christian character of the school. Relationships are strong between all within the school. There is a very caring and supportive atmosphere which enables children to achieve well, to be happy and to feel safe and secure.

What is the impact of Collective Worship on the school community?

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

There is a daily act of worship for all children which aims to reflect the Anglican foundation of the school and the cycle of the Anglican year whilst making Collective Worship a very worthwhile and enjoyable experience. The 'assemblies' follow themes which are planned in the context of the calendar month with a focus for a week. The School Committee (Council) responded very positively to questions about Collective Worship and demonstrated an excellent understanding of its significance and importance to them personally and to the life of the school.

The children spoke enthusiastically about their favourite hymns, about the different approaches used and how they enjoyed this important aspect of school life. The policy for Collective Worship is very clear and effective although the monitoring and evaluation is currently informal. Worship forms an integral and vital part of school life. During Collective Worship the children responded well, listened carefully and participated through singing, prayer and reflection. Staff are involved in, and lead, acts of worship. The Parish Church is currently without a vicar, however, the school has worked with local clergy who have supported the school in making an effective contribution to Collective Worship

How effective is the Religious Education in the school?

N/A

How effective are the leadership and management of the school as a church school?

The leadership and management of the school as a church school is good with some outstanding features. Effective leadership and management promote the Christian ethos of the school, understanding the need to provide for pupils and parents seeking an education underpinned by the values and teaching of the Church of England, whilst giving equal esteem to those seeking a school which serves the inclusive needs of the whole community. The staff feel valued and supported and are very positive about the leadership. There is an excellent collaborative team spirit at the school. The adults are good role models and provide direction for the high expectations of behaviour, care and respect for the individual that characterise the school. Foundation Governors effectively contribute to the life of the school but need to further develop strategies to extend their particular roles in monitoring and evaluating the distinctiveness of the school as a church school.

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