

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Barnard Castle Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Green Lane
Barnard Castle
County Durham
DL12 8LG

Diocese: Durham

LA: County Durham

Dates of inspection: 19th May 2006

Date of last inspection: 27-29th March 2000

School's Unique reference number: 114219

Headteacher: : Dr Michael Grainger

Inspector's name and number: Mrs Jane Ackroyd

School context

Barnard Castle Church of England School is a larger than average Primary School. Due to demographics numbers are falling. The building, in pleasant grounds, was previously a secondary school. There is a shared campus with a secondary school, a nursery school and a childcare centre. There are 1 in 10 children on free school meals. The school has very few children of different ethnic origins. The school enjoys a very close relationship with the local community. The children consistently perform extremely well in national assessments. Parents value the staff's knowledge of and care for their children. The school offers a very wide-range of Out of Hours activities including Breakfast Club.

Summary Judgement

This is a very good school with outstanding opportunities for personal, social and cultural development. The children's spiritual development is supported by the school's close links with the local parish church and the Christian Youth Worker as well as by the school's own ethos. There is a clear Christian ethos underpinning the life of the school.

Established strengths

- Barnard Castle Church of England School is a very caring school. Everybody is valued: children, staff, parents and friends of the school alike.
- There is in depth knowledge of children, enhanced through the strong relationships and mutual respect.
- Staff members are very welcoming, open to conversation and open to new ideas. Preparation and planning time for teachers and extended school for children have been implemented very successfully. This has resulted in very motivated and positive children and staff despite the challenge of falling roles.
- Hard work and commitment is demonstrated by everyone who is associated with the school
- The school benefits from excellent relationships with the local church.
- A strong Christian ethos
- The value given to RE

Focus for development

- To move from Assembly to Worship, developing the spiritual dimension.
- The school should ensure that the culture of self-evaluation and review permeates all aspects of its life, especially its reflection upon the delivery of collective worship.
- Build on current good work in developing multi cultural/multi faith awareness to further extend experiences.

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

Grade - Good. The school is outstanding in how, through its distinctive Christian character, it meets the needs of all learners. The school meets the needs of the whole child. As already noted, the children are happy, and this is very important. They are polite, well-behaved and appropriately welcoming to visitors. The children are very supportive of each other. This is clearly a school in which implicit Christian values such as courtesy and forgiveness are recognised and lived out. The school actively supports charities and makes a positive contribution to society, locally and internationally. Within the constraints of its geographical setting the school works hard to give children as wide an experience of the different faiths and cultures that

make up our world as possible, both through its Religious Education provision, and through worship and its provision for Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural development.

What is the impact of collective worship on the school community?

Grade – Good. Collective Worship offers an important point during the day to stop and to reflect, and also to celebrate together. All staff are present for whole-school worship. The children enjoy worship; they were able to talk enthusiastically about previous worships, one stated “They are good fun” when talking about the regular clergy worships. Children also talked about how they make you think “about things like forgiveness”. Children participate well and clearly value the positive way that they are invited to contribute and take part. A high number of Parents/carers attend the class worships. Some spoke about finding it moving. Children speak positively of worship in each of its contexts: whole school, class, and in the church. Prayer is integrated into daily life e.g. before lunch. Worship is planned and evaluated; however its impact could be strengthened by having a more coherent system for doing this.

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

Grade - Good. The quality of leadership contributes significantly to the success of the school as a church school. There is a clearly held vision of this school as a Christian school. The head-teacher, Leadership team, governors and staff work well together and are very caring of the children, each other, and adults associated with the school. They effectively model Christian values. It is a pleasure to see them at work. The Governing Body is active and interested in the life of the school. The School Council is effective and stakeholders have a strong sense of belonging.

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