

Allithwaite CofE Voluntary Controlled School

Church Road, Allithwaite

Grange over Sands. LA11 7RD.



**Diocese of
Carlisle**

Board of Education

Diocese: Carlisle

Local authority: Cumbria
Date of inspection: 28th February 2008
Date of last inspection: March 2005
School's unique reference number: 112282
Headteacher: Mrs R Wall
Inspector's name and number: Margaret Lewis 538

"Every Child Matters To God."

School context

Allithwaite is a small primary school of 96 pupils aged from 4 – 11. All are of White European heritage and come from the village and surrounding rural area. The school is situated in the Lakeland Peninsular high above Morecambe Bay. Hard and grassy play areas, a quiet place for reflection, an adventure playground with a play train and playhouse and seating provide good facilities for outdoor learning and recreation. The school holds the national Activemark and the Healthy School Award and is working towards the Bronze Eco-School Award.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Allithwaite as a Church of England school are outstanding

The Christian ethos is embedded extremely well in this school. The teachings of Jesus are at the heart of the school and this is reflected in everything that the school does. Each individual receives the respect and understanding they need. The school is welcoming and valuable contributions are made by all staff, governors, clergy and the parents' association who all work closely together.

Established strengths

- Explicit Christian values are evident in all aspects of school life. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is exemplary
- Behaviour is exceptionally good. Relationships between pupils and pupils, and pupils and staff are excellent. Pupils show enthusiastic and very positive attitudes to school in their work and in helping and supporting each other. Everyone takes a pride in the school
- The outstanding provision for collective worship and the first rate links with the parish church, and the local and wider community make a significant contribution to the distinctive Christian ethos
- The leadership and commitment of the headteacher, staff, governors and clergy are very effective in ensuring that pupils thrive within a shared Christian vision, evident in all aspects of school life.

Focus for development

This outstanding church school knows itself very well and strives constantly to make it even better. As a result no focus for development is raised.

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

The distinctive Christian character of the school is recognised by staff, children, parents and governors. Pupils know that they are special and respected by all staff and appreciate the way in which this is recognised. They say “We know the teachers really well and we are not dead scared to go and talk to them.” Parents say they are delighted with what the school offers academically, socially and spiritually. Those spoken to were unanimous in saying that their children enjoy school. Pupils’ behaviour is excellent and they show great support and consideration for each other. Older ones care lovingly for younger ones and take their responsibilities, for instance as buddies, very seriously. One eleven year old buddy had gone to a birthday party for her five year friend. The distinctive Christian character is clearly defined in the values and relationships throughout the school. Pupils are taught the need for respect and compassion for others and for those of other religious beliefs. For many years the school has sponsored an Ethiopian boy so that with its financial help he can attend a Christian project ‘Compassion’ which provides his needs and education. The School Council is responsible for organising annual fundraising for his sponsorship and all the pupils know about him and how he is doing. Another example of putting prayer into action is the support the school gives, together with the church and the local Lantern Charity shop, to support a Christian Mission school in India.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision is excellent. All of the children talked to, loved coming to school and spoke highly of their teachers and with a good understanding of other faiths that they study in religious education. “We learn how to work together and share things. We do a lot of things practically. The teachers make work fun and listen to you. We talk and discuss a lot in religious education and have visited a synagogue and a Buddhist temple. ...This shows us how other people live and worship so we can understand their beliefs and compare them with our own.”

Good work and behaviour together with respect and help for others are greatly valued through praise, awards and a special celebratory act of worship each week. A prayer table, music, several crosses and creative, artistic and permanent Christian symbols on entry to the school, as well as colourful displays of children’s work especially in religious education, clearly show that this is a church school. A friendship bench in the playground and quiet places for children to reflect are well used. The local clergy and foundation governors are very involved in the work of the school. The church and school are extremely supportive of each other and staff and the clergy work together very effectively.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

All pupils are aware of the importance of worship and take part in a variety of ways such as writing and reading prayers and texts, and choosing, singing and performing music very well. They take responsibility for organising and operating technology. Pupils really enjoy their times of worship and make excellent contributions. This was evident in the excellent worship observed during the inspection. Their spiritual growth is demonstrated with the prayers that they have written and keep. From collective worship and religious education (RE) lessons pupils know about the need to look after nature and to appreciate the wonderful world in which they live; the school is working towards an Eco Award. Pupils understand and put into practice the need to be kind and make the school a welcoming place of friendship. Collective worship is a daily feature of school life and frequently held in the local church. The vicar takes a weekly service in school and relates extremely well to the children as do the volunteers in the QUEST club at lunchtimes. Parents are welcomed into class worship in school and governors attend on a frequent basis. A planned programme of themes for collective worship is in place and well recorded. This is evaluated by pupils and staff.

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

By the time they leave the school pupils mature into very confident, friendly and reflective young people due to the strong commitment of the headteacher, staff and governors who have developed a clear Christian vision based upon Christian values. The headteacher sets an excellent example to the whole school community and is the driving force behind the implementation of the school’s Mission statement. As the leader for collective worship she sets high professional standards and works very closely with the team vicar. The Christian

ethos is understood and valued by the pupils as well as those connected with the school and also in the wider school community. The headteacher is highly regarded by pupils, parents, staff and volunteers. Their views are sought and acted upon for instance in the development of playground improvements and in the establishment of a reflective garden. Foundation governors play a major part in evaluating the distinctive Christian character of the school and are currently in the process of formally evaluating collective worship to inform future planning with the use of materials provided by the National Society of Church Schools. The school is outward looking and is constantly looking for ways to further pupils' religious and cultural understanding both locally and further away. Leadership of RE is valued and supported well. Resources and staff training to support the curriculum in religious education are well in place.

SIAS report February 2008. Allithwaite C of E Primary School