

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### **Benedict Biscop Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School**

Marcross Drive,  
Moorside,  
Sunderland,  
SR3 2RE.

#### **Diocese: Durham**

Local authority: Sunderland City Council

Dates of inspection: 17, 18 January 2007

Date of last inspection: 13, 29 November, 2 December 2002

School's unique reference number: 108848

Headteacher: Mrs Paula Thompson

Inspector's name and number: The Revd Nicholas Chamberlain

#### **School context**

Benedict Biscop is a popular one form entry aided primary school, located in the suburbs of Sunderland. The recently renovated parts of the building are bright and smart. There is a new Nursery unit. The rest of the building is extremely well cared for but will benefit from the completion of plans for refurbishment. Until recently the school housed St. Wilfrid's ecumenical church. This has moved to larger accommodation nearby.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Benedict Biscop as a Church of England school is outstanding**

The school has a clear sense of purpose. The purpose relates to the founding principles which have been successively nurtured and renewed since its opening. Christian principles are deeply embedded, and permeate every aspect of the school. As society has changed, so Benedict Biscop school has changed in order to continue to serve the needs of the community for which it was established. The school expects high standards and achieves them.

#### **Established strengths**

- Excellent behaviour due to the high quality of relationship between children and with adults.
- The high quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education also promotes outstanding spiritual development.
- The school is skilled in analysing and reviewing its own performance so as to improve even more.

#### **Focus for development**

- Work to give the school's deeply embedded values even more expression by further building on the new creative curriculum and on the skills of the school's staff. Seek partners or new colleagues who can help in this process

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

The school's clearly articulated policies support excellent opportunities for spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. The School Council is an excellent forum for debate and growth. Children are very well cared for, and care for each other very well. There is strength in depth to the ethos of Benedict Biscop which takes time to grasp but that is deeply significant. This is a school where Christian love is lived.

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

Daily collective worship is outstanding. Worship is led by a huge range of clergy and others from the deanery and community. The atmosphere in worship is excellent. The school is courageous in seeking the children's views and in listening to them. In consequence the children view worship as 'ours', something that is often led by them, and not something which is provided 'for' them. The school is now focussing on developing the school eucharist. This is a necessary step to consolidate the children's increasing competence in articulating faith and in wanting to experience faith.

**The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding**

Tight planning and skilful delivery ensure a high standard of learning is achieved. The many interactive approaches deployed link in with other aspects of the curriculum and promote increasingly high levels of articulacy and confidence. The children support each other in their learning. The children's willingness to ask for help when necessary indicates maturity of social development. The excellent standards of attainment have been maintained as the school has moved into its new approach. The subject is very well resourced and the co-ordinator is highly motivated and dedicated. The children have excellent Biblical knowledge.

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

The head teacher, her senior colleagues and the governing body of the school are excellently organised, highly entrepreneurial and inspiring role models. They have made the school into a safe and stimulating environment for learning and for personal and spiritual growth. They are sensitive to the real needs of the children and are responding to these by the way that they are encouraging creativity. The investment in staff professional development is paying massive dividends. The whole staff now needs the further stimulus and support that might be provided by a dedicated school chaplain who is skilled in developing worship and in helping staff to handle the questions and issues that are being raised by the rapidly developing children.