

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Bowes Hutchinson's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Bowes
Barnard Castle
Co Durham
DL12 9LG

Diocese of Bradford and Ripon and Leeds

LEA Durham

Dates of inspection 11th July 2006

Date of last inspection 12/14 October 1999

School's Unique reference number 114237

Name of Headteacher Mrs Sue Griffiths

Inspector's name with National Society inspector's number Meg Cooper

School Context

Bowes is a smaller than average Church Aided School. It serves the village of Bowes and draws from neighbouring villages and farms. Very few pupils are eligible for free school meals or are from minority ethnic groups but the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is above average.

Bowes Church of England Primary School is an outstanding school that reflect its Christian Foundation well.

Its values and aims are clearly stated and the concepts of forgiveness and reconciliation are central to the culture of praise and reward. Its effectiveness is enhanced by the strong commitment of the Headteacher, staff and governors and the provision of the 'Secret Garden' as a spiritual learning environment.

Established strengths

- The Christian ethos of the school is reflected in the relationships between staff and children and also between governors and the school.
- The links with the community and church are excellent.
- The behaviour is exemplary and attitudes to learning are excellent.
- The impact of the teaching of Religious Education on the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding.

Focus for development

- Extend the systems for monitoring and evaluating Collective Worship and Religious Education led by Foundation Governors in consultation with the Leadership Team.
- The Leadership Team to continue to develop strategies to further extend wider whole community participation in Collective Worship to support the impact it has.

The school, through its distinctive Christian character, meets the needs of all learners, including those with special educational needs, in an outstanding way.

Pupils from all groups feel valued and special, including those who have special educational needs and those who are experiencing difficulties. Relationships within the school community are inclusive and are characterised by Christian care and respect for others. Any conflicts are resolved within a framework of truth, forgiveness and reconciliation. Standards of behaviour are exemplary. Pupils flourish and fulfil their potential whatever their talents. Parents comment on the confidence and self esteem their children develop in school and welcome the Open Door policy facilitated by the Headteacher. Parents say that the pupils love coming to school and enjoy the wide range of activities and after-school care. The Pre-school, operating from the same site, works in partnership with the school and the move into school is a seamless transition. The Headteacher and vicar provide outstanding role models and pupils say they can share their concerns through the 'Worry Box' and 'Think Books' and they will be treated with respect. The school supports a wide range of charities and has achieved a number of curricular awards. The school takes part in a wide range of community activities within the village and the church.

The impact of Collective Worship on the school community is good with some outstanding features.

Acts of Worship are exceptionally well planned with the Headteacher sharing the planning with the vicar and other visiting clergy from Barnard Castle and HMYOI Deerbolt. Worship involves high levels of participation by individuals and groups of pupils. The pupils are very responsive and there is opportunity for reflection. Worship is consistently and recognisably Christian and honours the Anglican traditions. Teachers ensure that acts of worship are fully inclusive and invite pupils to participate at their own level. There is a monthly family service in St Giles' Church with special services for Christingle, Harvest and Leavers. All children, with some community and parents, attend. Foundation Governors are aware of their roles and responsibilities and, through the church, reach out to support the distinctiveness of the school. At present, however, there is no monitoring or evaluation undertaken by Foundation Governors. Monitoring of planning and evaluation of the impact is undertaken by the Headteacher through 'Learning Conferences' where she listens to pupils' views. Friday celebration is enjoyed by the children where awards are presented by the School Council. There are symbols of Christianity and artefacts of other faiths around the school and parents comment that the school is sensitive to beliefs and traditions of other faiths and of none.

The teaching of and learning from Religious Education is outstanding.

The high expectations of teachers and the calm approach support the learning environment. Religious Education is recognised by the stakeholders as crucial in the life of the Christian school and the subject's status reflects this. The younger pupils are learning about religion and are able to explore their feelings about a visit to church. This was demonstrated by class discussion and group consensus for recording feelings. The relationship between pupils and teacher enables the children to reflect openly on their emotions. ICT is used effectively by all staff. Older children use the strategy of 'Community of Enquiry'. This shows the positive attitudes of self awareness, respect for all and open-mindedness. Their high order language skills shows a deep understanding and interaction between one another and their teacher. The teachers manage the mixed age group effectively and there is a good pace to lessons. The Headteacher monitors through observation and work scrutiny, and assessment procedures are in place. Foundation Governors, at present, are not monitoring the subject. Schemes of work comply with the syllabus reflecting the school's Christian foundation at the same time as giving due weight to other faiths. Whatever their own faith background, learners enjoy the subject.

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

The Headteacher provides an exceptionally strong lead, has the ability to inspire and is committed to promoting a distinctive Christian Vision. The governors know the school well and the large number of Foundation Governors indicates the commitment between church and school. There are well established and effective systems for monitoring by the Headteacher. Parents and learners comment that the staff shows a high commitment to the quality of education. The distinctive nature of the school as a church school is clearly communicated and understood by those with close links with the school.