

**Dalton St Mary's Church of England School**

Coronation Drive,  
Dalton-in Furness  
LA158QR



**Diocese:** Carlisle  
**Local authority:** Cumbria  
**Dates of inspection:** 13<sup>th</sup> December 2006  
**Date of last inspection:** 15<sup>th</sup> October 2001  
**School's unique reference number:** 112412  
**Headteacher:** Mrs. S. McWilliam  
**Inspector's name and number:** Mr. W.J. Holliday NS48

**Diocese of  
Carlisle**

**Board of Education**

**"Every Child Matters To God."**

**School context**

Dalton St. Mary's is a Voluntary Aided Church of England primary school with a part time nursery class. It is situated in the centre of a large estate of privately owned and local authority housing in the south of Dalton in Furness near Barrow in Cumbria. There are 231 pupils on roll, organised into seven classes, with an additional nursery class.

**The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Dalton St. Mary's as a Church of England school are outstanding**

Dalton St. Mary's C.E. is an outstanding church school with a very caring Christian ethos. Everyone in the school community is made to feel highly valued and Christian values underpin the whole life of the school.

**Established strengths**

- The distinctive Christian vision which has been developed by the headteacher and governors, supported by the committed staff team.
- The very effective procedures which have been put in place for self evaluation of the school as a Church school.
- The strong and mutually beneficial links with the parish church.

**Focus for development**

- Complete the planned development of the R.E. curriculum so that the revision of the scheme of work is finalised and staff are secure in delivering the units of work.
- Ensure that assessment procedures for R.E. are firmly embedded and complete the development of a portfolio of pupils work linked to the national standards in R.E. and to the units of work covered.

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

The pupils and staff feel highly valued and all are made to feel special. Achievements made, both in and outside school, are recognised and celebrated. The pupils are extremely supportive of one another in class and in the playground and appreciate the very caring atmosphere of the school. The 'Buddy system' provides good opportunities for children of different ages to mix together in work and play. Christian values are evident in all relationships in school and staff provide very good role models for the children. Parents are very appreciative of the effect the school ethos has upon their children and the high priority given to ensuring the children are happy and supportive of each other. There are excellent links with the local Church and the Vicar is a regular visitor to school. The pupils enjoy his visits to lead Collective worship and also the times when he provides support for the R.E. curriculum during visits to the parish Church. The school provides excellent support for the

spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. There are good opportunities for reflection across the curriculum and particularly in R.E. and Collective Worship. This was evident in an excellent 'thinking time' in the Nursery class centred upon the Christmas story. Moral development is supported extremely well through the curriculum and Collective Worship, including developing work on a behaviour curriculum. Children are confident in taking up a range of responsibilities in school, both in class as monitors, as Buddies, as Play Leaders, or as members of the School Council. Older children are very effective in planning acts of Collective Worship. The school supports a good range of charities, both local and world wide enabling the pupils to develop a very caring attitude to others in the world. The pupils choose charities to support and they take up responsibilities extremely well in both planning and organising fund raising events. This was evident during the inspection with a coffee morning organised to raise money for a local Cancer charity. Older children visit a home for the elderly each week and this is greatly appreciated by the residents and by the pupils who are developing real concern for people within their community. Pupils achieve well in school and benefit from a broad curriculum, which includes a good range of extra-curricular activities and trips. Good links with a local Secondary school with a Creative Arts specialism provides further enrichment to the curriculum and good opportunities are provided for the children to learn about and experience other cultures through visiting artists and performers. The pupils speak very appreciatively of their teachers, the way they make lessons fun and the way they are enabled to learn, even when work appears difficult. The Christian ethos is extremely well represented throughout the whole school. There are lively displays throughout the school and excellent focus displays in the entrance hall, in classrooms and particularly in the hall. Prayer boards are in evidence in some class rooms and in the hall and children value the opportunity to contribute their prayers.

*'We seem to all stick together as a school and get on well' (School Councillor).*

### **The impact of Collective Worship on the school community is outstanding.**

Christian values are an important part of the worship programme and this has a very positive impact on the moral development of pupils. Children enjoy taking part in worship: reading prayers, reading from the Bible, acting out sketches or in contributing thoughtful ideas. Older children plan and deliver acts of Collective Worship extremely well, as was observed in an excellent act of worship on honesty in Year 6. A good focus is provided for worship, such as lighted candles, and teachers are skilful in creating special moments for prayers and reflection. Younger children were observed making thoughtful reflections about things which are special to them and were able to make links to the special birth of Jesus. Good use is made of talk partners so that all pupils can express their ideas and feelings during worship. The pupils are confident in writing and saying their own prayers, as was observed in class worship and in the thoughtful children's prayers on prayer boards. A very good range of opportunities are provided for worship, including whole school, Key Stage, Class worship and in Church for the main Christian festivals and an annual Leaver's service. There is a very good plan for worship which includes a wide range of topics, with flexibility to include any local or world wide issues which arise. Individual acts of worship are planned extremely well and short useful evaluations are recorded. Collective Worship has a very positive effect upon the pupil's spiritual development and they talk with appreciation of special worship times together.

*Pupils in Year 6 planned and led an excellent act of Worship with their class which included drama, Power Point, questions to reflect upon and prayer.*

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is good.**

Pupil's achievement in RE is good overall with some children demonstrating high levels of understanding. Pupils enjoy lessons and are able to talk with confidence about some of the work they have undertaken. There is an appropriate balance between Christianity and the other World faiths studied. The Coordinator for R.E. is very effective in her work and has developed with the staff a good scheme of work from the Cumbria agreed syllabus, which continues to be revised and amended. Staff make good use of the scheme in planning their lessons and a good range of activities are provided to meet the different learning styles of pupils. Very good use is made of interactive white boards and ICT programs to support R.E. and in younger classes very effective use is made of role play. Teachers provide good

opportunities for pupils to reflect upon their own feelings and thoughts during R.E. lessons. Plenary times are used well to aid spiritual development and to create some 'special moments' for the pupils. The Coordinator has completed a very good self evaluation of R.E. which has included monitoring of planning, discussions with members of staff and collecting samples of work. Monitoring has not included observation of teaching and this has been identified as a development need by the school, to begin next term. Assessment is being developed well but is not yet firmly embedded, so as to make it secure. There is not a portfolio of work matched to the National standards and linked to the units in the scheme of work. Staff who have moved age groups in school are not yet secure in delivering some aspects of the units to be covered and the coordinator has correctly identified the need to provide support to develop staff confidence in those areas. Good use is made of the Vicar and the Church in delivering the R.E. curriculum.

Y1 pupils made excellent use of role play and an interactive white board in exploring the events and characters in the Christmas story.

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

The headteacher and governors work extremely well together. They have created a distinctive Christian vision for the school, based upon Christian values. The vision is communicated well and is shared and affirmed by the whole school community. The staff, ably led by the headteacher, are extremely supportive of the vision and very effective in putting it into practice. There are extremely good procedures in place for self-evaluation of the school as a church school and the governors, senior management and staff have a clear and appropriate view of how the school should continue to develop. Collective Worship and R.E. are extremely well coordinated and there is a link governor in place for both areas. Pupils exercise very good leadership in planning Collective Worship. The School Council suggest initiatives and their ideas are acted upon, e.g. the development of the playground, the 'Play Leader' scheme and also changing the lunch time procedures. There are strong links with the parish Church which include working together on church community projects such as making willow sculptures. A member of the church has made a lovely wooden cross which provides an excellent focus in the school entrance hall.