

# National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

## Dent Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Laning  
Dent  
Sedbergh  
Cumbria  
LA10 5QJ

### Diocese: Bradford

Local authority: Cumbria  
Dates of inspection: 23<sup>rd</sup> + 30<sup>th</sup> January 2007  
School's unique reference number: 112331  
Headteacher: Mrs Phillipa Summers  
Inspector's name and number: Mrs Fiona Beevers 351

### School context

Dent C of E Primary school is a very small rural school serving the village of Dent and surrounding hamlets and farms; 65% of the children rely on school transport, with average journey times of 20 minutes each way. There are 46 pupils on roll, organised into 3 classes in the mornings and two key stage classes in the afternoons. All children are from a white British background and speak English as their first language. The head teacher came into post in September 2006.

### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Dent C of E Primary School as a Church of England school are good with some outstanding features

Dent is a Church school at the heart of its community underpinned by its distinctive Christian ethos where every individual matters.

### Established strengths

- The care and value for each individual in the school to achieve his/her full potential
- The strong and creative leadership of the headteacher and governors
- The positive team ethos of a skilled and committed staff
- The high quality of personal spiritual, moral, social and cultural development for all pupils
- The mutual support and close links with parents, the church and wider community

### Focus for development

- Sustain, celebrate and enhance the links with the church and the inclusive and distinctive Christian foundation of the school
- Embed a wider range of assessment strategies for RE including increased opportunities for pupils' self assessment
- Fully implement findings from the Collective Worship review, including the involvement of a wider section of the school community in the long term planning for worship

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

High quality care for the individual underpinned by Christian values ensures that virtually all learners feel valued and special. Staff know their pupils very well and consequently individual needs are catered for and, in turn, pupils demonstrate an acceptance and appreciation of one other. The pupils are confident that there is no bullying in their school and that all are made to feel included whatever their needs, interests and abilities. One parent spoke about how new children are integrated 'instantly' into school. Pupil levels of self esteem, maturity and independence are high and they willingly support others both within and beyond the school community. The school uses its Christian character to nourish, encourage and challenge the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all learners.

Skilled teachers raise discussions and challenge pupils to 'think beyond' and involve them in activities which enable them to engage with the local community and the wider world. The school environment both indoors and outdoors is used to very good effect to promote spiritual reflection, prayer and worship. Evidence of a Christian character permeates the school.

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

Worship occupies a central place in the life of the school and underpins its Christian character, creating an atmosphere of spiritual depth where the presence of God is widely acknowledged and celebrated. Acts of worship are well planned and recorded. Worship is distinctly Christian and supports the school's Anglican heritage and trust deed. Recent evaluations led by the head teacher and involving governors, staff and pupils has informed the current review of collective worship and is beginning to impact on practice. Attitudes of adults and children to Collective Worship are very positive. In their responses a large majority of pupils commented on ways in which worship impacts on their daily lives. There is a 'prayer shelf' in each classroom which was suggested by pupils following work on prayer in RE; individual pupils select items from this as a focal point for classroom worship. They also add artefacts and symbols from time to time. Most staff take an active part in worship alongside the pupils and everyone in school gathers to say grace before lunch each day. There are excellent links with the local church, parish and community, and growing links with other local Christian denominations with regular visits for services and curricular activities. The recently formed school choir participates in special services and increasingly festivals such as Harvest and Christingle are celebrated during school time bringing the school, church and community together.

**The effectiveness of the religious education is good with some outstanding features**

Religious Education is led by a skilled and experienced subject leader who is enthusiastic and knowledgeable about her subject. Learners respond very positively to RE and make links to other areas of the curriculum and their lives. The school adopted the new Bradford and Ripon & Leeds Diocesan Syllabus in December 2005 and RE schemes of work are of good quality and are being further developed to take account of cross curricular links where appropriate. Virtually all learners gain considerable spiritual and moral insight from RE. Pupils and staff speak naturally and openly about their beliefs, secure in the knowledge that their views will be taken seriously by others. The vast majority of lessons provide planned opportunities for spiritual, moral cultural and social development. Very good use is made of learning outside the classroom to enhance RE. Pupils make good or better progress across the key stage. Assessment is currently based on the non -statutory 8 level scale, although the subject leader is working on plans to introduce 'I can' statements which would further involve the pupils in assessing their own progress.

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

The Head teacher and governors have a clear and shared vision for the school as a church school serving its community. Governors, including the foundation governors, are very thorough and knowledgeable in encouraging and challenging the headteacher and staff to realise this vision. Although the headteacher has only been in post since September she has developed effective strategies for school self evaluation as a church school and has a clear and strategic plan for church school improvement which is shared with, and has the support of, all sections of the school community. Parents speak enthusiastically of the school's caring, family ethos and its strong religious foundation. There are strong, productive and supportive links with the local church community. There are high levels of meaningful involvement in the school by the local and wider community which support and enrich the educational opportunities offered by the school.