

Gilsland Church of England Foundation School  
Gilsland, Brampton, Cumbria CA8 7AA

Local authority: Cumbria  
Dates of inspection: 18<sup>th</sup> September 2007  
Date of last inspection: 27<sup>th</sup> June 2003  
School's unique reference number: 1112418

Headteacher: Mrs. L.A. Whittle  
Inspector's name and number: Mr. W.J. Holliday NS48

**Diocese of  
Carlisle**

**Board of Education**

*Every Child Matters To God*

### School context

Gilsland C.E. school is a very small Church of England Foundation school. It is situated in the village of Gilsland in Cumbria, on the border with Northumberland, adjacent to Hadrian's Wall. There are 18 pupils on roll taught in two mixed age classes. Pupils are drawn from the village of Gilsland and from a wide rural area.

**The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Gilsland C.E. school as a Church of England school are good.** It is a very happy school with a strong family feel in which everyone is highly valued and made to feel special.

### Established strengths

- The clear Christian ethos which has been developed for the school based upon Christian values.
- The excellent relationships, evident throughout the whole school community.
- The high level of care and support provided for pupils by the very dedicated staff team.

### Focus for development

- Provide more opportunities for pupils to be involved in developing and presenting material for some collective worship.
- Create more opportunities for pupils to widen their experience of cultures other than their own including the world wide church.
- Develop the role of governors so that they are more involved in the self evaluation of the school as a church school.

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

A very happy friendly atmosphere is evident in school and all pupils are carefully nurtured and made to feel highly valued and special. Christian values permeate all of school life and are evident in the way both pupils and adults relate to one another and in the concern shown for the well being of others. The children appreciate the very high level of care and support they receive from all staff and from each other. The staff provide excellent role models and older pupils demonstrate the same friendly support for younger pupils in school. This is evident in class, at play times and in activities undertaken as a whole school. Behaviour of pupils is excellent and they are extremely positive about all aspects of school life. They work well together collaboratively and value the contributions made by others. Pupils are making satisfactory progress across the curriculum including RE. The curriculum in RE makes a positive contribution to the Christian life of the school. It is well planned and provides a good balance but there are currently no planned links between the RE and collective worship programmes. Moral and social development of pupils is extremely good and use of SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) materials enables pupils to develop their self-awareness, management of feelings, empathy and social skills. Collective worship and RE

also co 'I like the way the teachers teach. They're quite friendly, teach us in the most fun way and range  
of resp help us when we need it.' School Councillor

monitors for milk and fruit, or in choosing prayers at lunch time and for worship. Spiritual development is good across the curriculum and good use is made of the surrounding natural environment in developing in the pupils a sense of awe and wonder. Cultural development is satisfactory but pupils need more opportunities to experience cultures other than their own. This was an issue for development at the last inspection and has still not been addressed. The school has identified this area for development in the School Improvement Plan. There are good links with the parish church and pupils attend church to celebrate major festivals and as part of their work in RE. The incumbent leads worship each week and the school contributes to the parish newsletter. There is a strong commitment by school and church to develop these links and also for the school to engage further with the local community. There is clear evidence of the Church of England nature of the school in some areas of the building but not within class room areas, where there are no focus areas for worship or displays linked to RE. Parents are very supportive of the school and appreciate the very positive effect the school ethos has upon their children. A good range of enrichment activities, trips and clubs are provided which have a positive impact upon the pupil's development.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is good.**

The pupils enjoy their times of worship together and speak appreciatively of the way it is led by staff and also by the vicar, who leads worship each week. The children sing extremely well and are very enthusiastic in joining in with action songs. A good range of appropriate themes are provided and a good variety of opportunities for worship, including whole school worship, a weekly celebration of achievements and worship in church for the main Christian festivals. The children exercise good leadership in setting up the hall for worship and in thoughtfully choosing prayers and music. This was evident in a very appropriate prayer chosen for the worship observed on care of animals. The children enjoy supporting the person leading, and take part extremely well, but have few opportunities to develop or present their own materials as part of the themes chosen. Worship contributes well to the moral and spiritual development of pupils and there are good links to the SEAL programme. A helpful atmosphere is created throughout, including some time provided for reflection as part of prayer but this needs extension on occasions to enable pupils to make their own response. There is an appropriate system in place for evaluating worship, both written and informally. Worship includes some prayers from the Anglican tradition but does not draw upon materials from the world wide church.

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

A clear vision has been established for the school based upon Christian belief and values. This has recently been reviewed along with the school logo and as a result the Church of England nature of the school has been made more clear. The vision for the school is shared, affirmed and promoted by governors, headteacher and staff. The chair of governors works extremely well with the headteacher and the governors are very supportive of the school. The headteacher and staff have undertaken a very useful evaluation of the school as a church school, making use of materials provided by the diocesan board of education and advice received from the diocesan officer. The governors have not been involved in this process and their role in self evaluation requires some development. Good use has been made of questionnaires in seeking the views of parents and pupils and many ideas have been acted upon. The school council contribute helpful ideas for development, such as providing a shed for outdoor play equipment, supporting an appeal for the North Air ambulance. The pupils show a good appreciation that the school is a Church school.