

**Gosforth Church of England School**

Wasdale Road,  
Gosforth,  
Seascale,  
Cumbria  
CA20 1AZ



**Diocese of  
Carlisle**

**Board of Education**

**Diocese: Carlisle**

Local authority: Cumbria  
 Dates of inspection: 26<sup>th</sup> February, 2008  
 Date of last inspection: 29<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> April, 2002  
 School's unique reference number: 112294  
 Headteacher: Mr John Corran  
 Inspector's name and number: Mrs Carol Berry: NS324

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

**School context**

Gosforth Church of England Primary School is a smaller than average school situated in a village on the western edge of the Lake district. Some pupils are from rural areas and others have families involved in local industry, including the nuclear power station at Seascale. The number of pupils with special needs (15%) is in line with the national average.

**The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Gosforth Church of England School as a Church of England school are satisfactory**

Good relationships and respect for individuals mean that this is a happy school where standards and personal development are good. Worship does not always connect effectively with pupils' own experiences.

**Established strengths**

- Children are confident, articulate and questioning as a result of following a 'Philosophy for Children' programme of study.
- RE makes a good contribution to the school's Christian distinctiveness and to cultural education.
- Commitment to the school from local churches enriches pupils' understanding of Christianity.
- There are strong links with the local community.

**Focus for development**

- To involve pupils in a review of Collective Worship in order to identify ways to make Collective Worship more exciting and relevant.
- To enable Collective Worship to play a more significant role in the life of the school by effective planning and by ensuring that all staff regularly worship with their pupils.
- To develop and share a distinctively Christian vision for the school which explicitly identifies the Christian values put into practice by the school.
- To involve all stakeholders in self-evaluation of the schools Christian distinctiveness.

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

Pupils enjoy coming to school and say that their teachers are friendly and approachable. Parents speak highly of the school and are happy that when they have concerns they are dealt with effectively. Relationships both in the classroom and in the playground are excellent. The school is a caring place to work and one newly qualified teacher spoke warmly about the support she had received this year. As a result of this happy learning environment both achievement and personal development are good. Good relationships are

founded upon Christian values which are acknowledged to be important by the school's 'Code of Conduct'. Some of these Christian values are themes considered in worship and so pupils think about them in more depth. However, although this 'Code of Conduct' is displayed around school, pupils have no knowledge of its content and it does not explicitly identify the Christian values which matter to the school. Close links with the local community enrich pupils' education and provide opportunities for them to help others. For example, they have collaborated with the National Trust to develop the school grounds and they support a variety of charities including the local Hospice. Attending events at the local 'Peace and Justice Centre' at the Methodist Church has helped pupils to understand Christian views on issues such as fair trade. Pupils explain their views clearly on moral issues and think deeply about Christianity as a result of the highly effective 'Philosophy for Children' (P4C) course. RE makes a good contribution to pupils' understanding of Christianity and sometimes questions arising from Religious Education (RE) are discussed in 'P4C'. As a result, pupils are confident in articulating their views and eagerly question issues of faith and belief. In one RE lesson pupils considered the viewpoints of different characters in the story of 'The Forgiving Father' and engaged in a thoughtful discussion about issues of love and forgiveness. The school takes seriously its responsibility to provide effective multi-cultural education and RE has made a valuable contribution to this. Activities have included celebrating Chinese New Year, trying food from China and Asia, and visitors from different cultures. There is a display about Easter in one classroom but at present little use is made of the school environment to promote spiritual education or to celebrate the schools Christian distinctiveness.

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

The best worship in this school prompts pupils to make connections between their own experiences and Christian beliefs, offering opportunities for spiritual development through reflection prompted by music or visual stimuli. Pupils in KS1 say they particularly enjoy the calm atmosphere, singing and stories in worship. In a KS1 worship, pupils thought about spring and new life through a range of activities as they prepared for Easter. Worship is enriched by contributions from local churches, for example, the rector and his wife help pupils to prepare for worship by teaching them new worship songs and the local Methodist minister engages pupils through the use of multi-media in worship. A strength of this school is the respect demonstrated for pupils' own beliefs and worship is inclusive of all pupils, whatever their beliefs. Pupils in Year 6 take responsibility for leading special services in the Church, for example, Harvest, Christmas and Easter. They put a great deal of effort into choosing the theme and organising the worship. As a result, they develop personally and gain understanding of Christian ideas. Pupils sometimes provide music for worship. However, pupils have few other opportunities to lead worship. Many pupils in KS2 demonstrate little enthusiasm for the daily worship in school and one teacher acknowledged that pupils think worship is often 'boring' and 'something they have to do'. Sometimes worship makes little impact on pupils, because it is simply delivered from the resource book without involving the pupils in a wide range of activities. Sometimes insufficient opportunity is provided to develop connections between worship and pupils' own experience. There is no current worship plan; at present teachers are using and adapting the 2006 plan. Lack of clear planning means opportunities are missed to develop links between RE and worship. Pupils demonstrate enthusiasm and enjoyment when considering issues of belief in RE, but worship does not build on this enthusiasm. For example, the pupils who had been passionately contributing to the impressive discussion about love and forgiveness in RE were unenthusiastic as they listened to a worship on the topic of love only fifteen minutes later. Teachers only worship with their pupils on one day each week. As a result, on four days each week, the leader is the only adult present in collective worship. This means that sometimes behaviour in worship is not good and pupils are sometimes not focussed.

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

Leadership founded on Christian values has resulted in this school becoming a caring community. Worship is used to develop understanding of some of the Christian values which are important to the school. However, there is no clear summary of these values in documentation provided for parents. The vision for the school, shared with new parents in

the prospectus, is implicitly Christian. However, it does not explicitly acknowledge the Christian beliefs and values on which it is based. The head verbally shares a more distinctive Christian vision with new parents, explaining the interdependence of church and school, but this is not written down to be shared with the wider school community. School policies, such as the behaviour policy, make no reference to the Christian beliefs and values which underpin them. The governors generally provide effective leadership, consulting with parents, setting up a 'governors' surgery' at parents' evenings, carrying out monitoring and evaluation of many aspects of the schools work. However, they have not been involved in challenging the school about its distinctive Christian character or about the lack of up-to-date planning for worship. Governors often attend worship but they have not been involved in self-evaluation of the school as a church school or in training for governors of Church schools. The local rector and the other foundation governors give a great deal of their time to the governing body. Both church and school recognise the importance of this partnership and both say that they would like to develop the partnership further.

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