

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### **Kirkbampton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School**

Kirkbampton

Carlisle

CA5 6HX

**Diocese: Carlisle**

LA: Cumbria

Dates of inspection: 10<sup>th</sup> July 2007

Date of last inspection: January 2003

School's unique reference number: 112252

Headteacher: Miss Joan Routledge

Inspector's name and number: Mrs. C.M. Bartlett 444

#### **School context**

Kirkbampton School serves the villages of Kirkbampton and Thurstonfield west of Carlisle. The wide rural catchment area includes a high proportion of expensive housing prohibitive to young families. A significant percentage of pupils come from outside the catchment area nearer the city, producing a wide social mix in the school not reflected in contextual data. The practicalities of being in a rural location, particularly in relation to extended schools provision, have led the school to develop community services on the site.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Kirkbampton as a Church of England school are outstanding.**

The welcome and hospitality given to visitors and the friendly open attitude of the children and staff reflect the leadership of the head in establishing the school as an effective Christian family. The excellent and long-term relationship with the church is of significant mutual benefit and support emphasising their partnership in the eyes of the community. Worship is at the centre of the life of the school whose Christian foundation is also evident visually throughout the building.

#### **Established strengths**

- Individual knowledge and care for children and adults in the school
- Vision and commitment of the head and dedication of the staff
- Regular and effective commitment of the clergy

#### **Focus for development**

- To involve children in planning and delivery of worship
- To include evaluation in the records of worship, also involving children
- To develop structures for regular consultation with the children

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

Children enjoy coming to school, their attendance and behaviour is excellent showing how happy they are in school and proud of their achievements. They are confident in expressing their ideas and show initiative in putting them into practice. Discussion in Circle Time has helped to create a climate of tolerance and understanding of individual differences. 'Some people behave badly because they have difficulties but we try to help them' (Y4 pupil). Parents speak highly of the school and a recent survey indicated that they value the opportunities given to their children. Their support of the school is appreciated by staff. 'There is always a parent there ready and willing to help out with anything we need.' The very strong links with the Church are valued 'as it adds a wider dimension to the work of the school'. The rector currently serves as a governor and is assisted by the curate who leads worship weekly and makes an effective contribution to several aspects of the curriculum. Together they unite the life of the church and the school in the eyes of the community. Pupils are well aware of the needs of others and initiate support for charities and in raising money for needs within school such as improvements to the playground. As a small school, opportunities for staff promotion are limited, but professional development is a priority in the School Improvement Plan. This has led to participation in initiatives out of school such as the use of Interactive Plasma Boards which is helpful across the curriculum and in Collective Worship. With small numbers formal test results are unreliable as a means of assessing achievement, however all pupils are enabled to develop and achieve to their ability through the careful monitoring of their progress and the individual intervention possible because of the small teaching groups. The wide curriculum and out of school activities support the very good development of the children spiritually, morally, socially and culturally. This expertise is used well in the school and the interaction with other schools is of mutual benefit. The whole

school environment illustrates an emphasis on care of resources, respect for the individual – their needs and their talents – and celebration of achievement, all within the context of the Christian family.

Evidence of the Christian foundation of the school abounds in display throughout the school, not least in the imaginative work produced around Easter time in conjunction with the Church. A permanent feature for the new art room is a colourful cross with embroidered Celtic designs produced by Y6.

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

The school starts every day with an act of collective worship, demonstrating the distinctive nature of the Christian family meeting together to share a special moment. The children enjoy the opportunity to ‘hear stories, to sing and to be quiet.’ (Y2 pupil) They respond very well and are engaged, but are not as yet fully involved in leading parts of worship themselves. They write and use their own prayers and enjoy participating in the telling of stories. Some older children assist in the recording of worship but they are not included in any evaluation process. Evaluation is informal and needs to be recorded to be more effective in improving future practice. Respect for the individual is a core value in school that implies automatic inclusion and this is evident in worship by engaging interest across the age range. The use of liturgical prayers and responses illustrate the excellent links with the Church, as do the visits twice a term. ‘We do the same when we go to Church.’ Parents and governors join the school in Church and attend special assemblies in school. Attendance of school families at Sunday Church services and events has increased as a result of joint school and church activities. The involvement of the staff in leading worship ensures a variety of approaches and, as children are encouraged once a week to share their work and achievement, worship is closely linked to the curriculum and every day life and contributes very well to their spiritual development. Illustrating the centrality of worship to the life of the school, a special service was held to open a new art room. Children wrote their own prayers and song, the Bishop dedicated the room and clergy, governors and parents attended.

It was good to see children enthralled by the journeys of Paul, through the exciting use of the white board and the enthusiasm of the curate. Particularly relevant to the children moving on to Secondary School, it gave them assurance and encouragement in their journey to the unknown.

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

The vision of the Head, supported by Governors and staff, leads the school forward in every aspect. Always seeking improvement and dedicated to the development of the whole child, they have improved the facilities within the building, extended the use of the building to Nursery and Breakfast and After School Club, and worked hard to raise and maintain high standards of attainment in the school. ‘The dedication of the whole school team – teachers, non-teaching staff, governors and all the others who help us in so many ways – is reflected in the caring atmosphere in the school.’ (Chair of Governors) Responsibility is shared, in that all teaching staff are given time to lead and manage development within at least one curriculum area including RE and Worship. The curate supports work in RE when needed and his imaginative work relating to Easter is particularly remembered by the children. The defining of committee structures and responsibilities has clarified the role of the governors. The governors seek parental views through a questionnaire and respond to concerns raised by parents. The establishment of the Breakfast and After School Club was in response to a concern raised by parents as was the offering of more organised activities in the playground. Children too have an effective voice in school development; participating in the review of the Home/School Agreement, contributing ideas for the new art room and extending activities in the playground. A playground committee, created in response to children’s ideas, supported by the Foundation Governor, involves money raising, canvassing the views of the pupils and drawing plans. The school needs to channel this enthusiasm into a more structured means of consulting the children on a regular basis.

‘We are hoping to improve our play area to make it more enjoyable. The committee made a questionnaire to see what all the other children would like. Some of the committee made a graph of the questionnaire results. It was their idea to do sponsored Sports Skills. We raised £850.75’ (Committee Member)