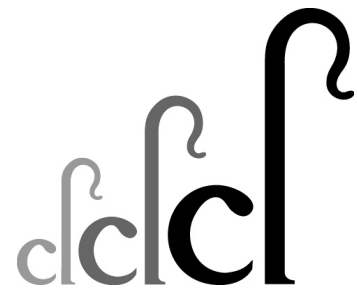


**Langdale Church of England Primary School**

Chapel Stile  
Great Langdale  
Ambleside  
Cumbria  
LA22 9JE

**Diocese: Carlisle**

Local authority: Cumbria  
Dates of inspection: 2<sup>nd</sup> December, 2008  
Date of last inspection: 8<sup>th</sup> March, 2006  
School's unique reference number: 112321  
Headteacher: Mark Squires  
Inspector's name & number: Carol Berry: NS324



**DIOCESE OF CARLISLE  
Board of Education**

*"Every Child Matters To God."*

**School context**

Langdale Church of England school is a rural school of 34 pupils situated in a remote area which is also a very popular destination for tourists. The number of pupils with special educational needs is above the national average. There are no pupils from ethnic minorities. Staffing at the school has remained stable for some years. The headteacher has a significant teaching commitment.

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

This is a happy, caring school where learning is an adventure. Innovative developments to the curriculum have a very positive impact on pupils' achievement and personal development. Collective worship is enriched by the varied curriculum. However, religious education (RE) is not incorporated into these exciting curriculum developments and the standards achieved in RE are poor. This was identified as an issue of concern at the last inspection but has not been addressed by the leadership of the school.

**Established strengths**

- Excellent relationships founded on Christian values.
- A very close partnership between the school, the local community and the church.
- Collective worship which is enriched by the pupils' exciting learning experiences.

**Focus for development**

- Ensure that planning for RE reflects the Christian character of the school and incorporates links to the excellent developments in other areas of the curriculum.
- Make use of assessment information, based on national standards for assessment in RE, to set RE targets for pupils and to ensure that the tasks set in RE provide an appropriate level of challenge.
- Leadership and management carry out self-evaluation of collective worship and RE, ensuring that this leads to thorough and effective development.

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

Pupils are overwhelmingly enthusiastic about their school and say that coming to school is "exciting" and "an adventure". Relationships in this school are excellent and reflect the outstanding moral and social education provided by the school. The school has identified golden rules which pupils apply to the choices they make about how to behave. They are able to explain why it is important to keep these rules and the probable consequences of choosing to ignore them. Personal development is excellent and achievement is good. Some

opportunities for spiritual development are lost because links are not made between RE or Christian beliefs and other elements of the curriculum. In this small school, every pupil knows that they matter and that their opinions are valued by other members of the community. Even the youngest pupils have the confidence to share their views with the whole school. Pupils' achievements are affirmed throughout the bright and welcoming environment by photographs showing exciting learning activities and pupils' achievements. Gold and red sweatshirts are awarded by pupils and staff on a weekly basis to celebrate outstanding achievement. The school regularly supports a variety of charities, for example, at Harvest, tins of food are collected for people in need and each year, the whole school sings at the Age Concern Christmas lunch in Ambleside. Pupils are able to explain reasons for supporting charities. However, they are not able to make links between their support of charities and Christian teaching, neither are they able to explain links between the golden rules and Christian beliefs. There are plans to make more use of the school environment to promote spiritual education but at present there is not a focus for spiritual development in each classroom.

The exciting curriculum gives rise to opportunities for excellent spiritual development and results in moving and memorable worship. The school recently climbed a local fell in order to watch the dawn from the summit. This was followed by breakfast in the headteacher's garden and a service led by the vicar. One pupil said, "I thought I'd seen the sun rise for the first time."

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

Pupils expect collective worship to be relevant to their lives and enjoy offering their opinions, concerns and prayers on a regular basis. The small and cosy 'hall' provides a comfortable environment for worship which helps pupils feel confident about making their own contributions. The cross on the wall, music and a painting provide a focus for pupils' thoughts. Both teachers regularly lead worship, and there are weekly contributions from the vicar and another member of the congregation. Pupils sing with enthusiasm. They contribute to the services held in the church for special festivals three times each year. Their experiences of worship encompass a wide range of activities, including thoughtful prayer for the concerns of each other, more traditional Anglican worship in the local church and the exuberant 'Breakfast with Squires' which takes its name from the headteacher and is held approximately once each term. Pupils are able to explain the message of the most recent 'Breakfast with Squires' when the headteacher played tricks involving cat food and shaving foam in order to prompt thoughts about treating other people appropriately. Links are sometimes made between worship and other areas of the curriculum, for example, the Christmas theme of good news was continued during an RE lesson. Pupils often write their own prayers which they read in worship or before lunch. The leavers in Year 6 take full responsibility for putting together their Leavers' Service which is held in church. However, there are few other opportunities for pupils to take a lead in worship. Planning for worship ensures that pupils encounter an appropriate range of Christian themes. However, the planning lacks depth and depends too heavily on informal communication between those involved in leading worship. Planning and evaluation of collective worship was a focus for development from the last inspection but has not been addressed by the school.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is inadequate**

Pupils enjoy RE and engage enthusiastically in discussion. The school has developed a highly creative curriculum for other subject areas and this has prompted discussion of some of the big questions about life. There is some good RE teaching which builds on the excellent relationships between staff and pupils to create an environment in which pupils are able to express and develop their opinions. However, RE has been omitted from the school's innovative curriculum plans with the result that opportunities to deliver exciting RE have been missed. For example, although pupils have discussed many issues as a result of the work on war, links have not been made between this and learning in RE. The standards of written work achieved by pupils in RE are significantly below the standards achieved in other subject areas. Pupils rarely undertake written work in RE. The written tasks set for KS2 pupils are often inappropriate because they do not challenge them to think deeply. Written tasks in RE often require pupils to copy something out and are rarely marked. Pupils are never given targets to help them to improve in RE. Planning for RE is very limited and comprises simply the themes to be followed each half term. There is no planning either to support teachers in

selecting appropriate content for lessons or to help teachers identify stimulating resources. As a result, the way in which some RE units of work are taught does not adequately reflect the Christian character of the school. No attempt is made to assess the progress made by pupils in RE. Consequently, no assessment information is available to ensure that lessons meet the varying needs of pupils who demonstrate different abilities in this subject. The focus for development from the last inspection included planning for RE and differentiation for the most able pupils. However, the school has not made any progress in these areas since that inspection.

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

The headteacher is a caring and innovative leader, who has demonstrated his ability to lead significant curriculum change. The way in which he models Christian values has helped to create a happy working community in which staff feel able to experiment with new ideas and take risks. Both pupils and staff know that they are valued and the headteacher has supported some members of staff in making significant professional progress. The school has a creative approach to learning which has resulted in outstanding curriculum developments, in areas other than RE, as well as providing pupils with unusual and moving experiences of collective worship. These innovations have had a very significant impact on the learning and personal development of pupils. There is a close partnership with the church and the local community. This partnership enriches collective worship and contributes to the rich learning experience of pupils. The 'Langdale School Express' is edited to a high standard by pupils and is used to share school, church and community news. Informal self-evaluation is a regular feature of life at the school and staff are ruthlessly honest in evaluating their work. Pupils regularly contribute to this self-evaluation through informal discussions. However, there has been no formal evaluation of collective worship or RE and neither governors nor parents have been involved in evaluation of these areas. Evaluation of collective worship and RE was identified as a focus for development by the last inspection report, but little has been done in this area. No steps have been taken to improve standards in RE, despite the recommendations of the last inspection report. The headteacher is aware that RE has been omitted from developments in other areas of the curriculum and had identified some, but not all, of the weaknesses in RE prior to the inspection. The school development plan includes a range of strategies to move the school forward as a Christian school, including plans to improve RE. However, these plans have not resulted in effective action. There have recently been significant changes of personnel on the governing body and during the last year a new incumbent has been appointed. The new foundation governors are learning about their role in a church school and have not yet received any diocesan training. The governing body has not performed its role as a critical friend, for example, by challenging the school about the extent to which they have acted on the previous inspection report.

SIAS report December 2008: Langdale Church of England School, Cumbria. LA22 9JE