

Newbrough Church of England Voluntary Aided First School

Fourstones,
Hexham,
Northumberland,
NE47 5AQ.

Diocese: Newcastle

Local authority: Northumberland County Council

Date of inspection: 21st May 2007

Date of last inspection: 18th, 19th, 21st February 2003

School's unique reference number: 122298

Headteacher: Mr John Moore

Inspector's name and number: The Revd Nicholas Chamberlain 508

School context

Newbrough School is a small rural school in Tynedale, part of a federation of five church schools. All pupils are from a White British background. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is below average. The rural context shapes the school. Unusually for a First School the site is divided by a busy road, leading to a long-standing aspiration to consolidate onto one site.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Newbrough C.E. Aided First School as a Church of England school are outstanding

Newbrough C.E. School offers Christian education that is key to the community's future. Parents speak extremely highly of the contribution that this church school makes both to their children and to the whole community. A generously articulated faith, lived out in school, invites positive response from people of all ages. The school is a vital part of village life, and it is its Christian foundation that makes it so distinctive.

Established strengths

- High expectations and clear Christian values lead to outstanding personal, moral, social and spiritual development.
- Engaging, enthusiastic worship focuses the day and links with the subject curriculum.
- Pioneering partnership work with other schools is extending the children's experience and learning in Religious Education.
- An excellent team of staff and governors is driving progress forward, based on the school's Christian foundation.

Focus for development

- The formal adoption of the new diocesan Religious Education syllabus, together with a new R.E. policy, is needed to ensure that the school's high standards in this area are properly embedded.

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

The range of opportunities offered to children to support their development is outstanding. Pilgrimage is a key theme, and all the children share in an exciting journey of discovery, not just of Christian faith, but about life itself. The many organised visits and experiences develop values such as respect for others, whatever their faith or none. 'I really enjoyed Hexham Abbey, it felt special' – a typical unprompted comment. The dedicated and loving staff team holds the children's respect: 'we are all given the chance to be ourselves'. There is outstanding honesty, openness and ability to speak 'from the heart', fostered by

opportunities such as belonging to the Pupil Council.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Creative, thoughtful worship is clearly enjoyed and valued by the children, as survey reports and willing participation show. Clear planning ensures that the worship links with themes being explored elsewhere in the school. The physical environment for worship is not ideal, but the best possible use is made of the hall, with wonderful display backgrounds. Children are spontaneous, confident and willing to support and encourage each other in worship. Partnership with the parish provides a helpfully different context on occasion. Involvement with other federation schools and their clergy is enriching opportunity for the children and offering a seedbed for mutual development among the clergy and their churches.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

When the school's policy documentation is updated to take the new Diocesan Syllabus fully into account I am confident that good R.E. has very good capacity to improve further. The innovative approach to teach R.E. across the Federation by one (skilful and dedicated) teacher is promoting cohesion and high attainment, and is offering opportunities that would not easily be available to single schools, such as the day experience on Judaism. It is important that clear systems are established to enable the shared teacher to communicate with school colleagues about the needs and achievements of the children, to enable evaluated progression. This is because R.E. contributes so powerfully to the school's ethos that information about the children's response in this subject is vital to the school as a whole. Attainment is extremely high.

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

A passionate and visionary Head teacher is partnered by a team of staff and governors who love this school and its contribution to the life of the village. The vision of Newbrough School is to extend educational, spiritual and personal development to the whole community. The school's Christian values, demonstrated also through exceptional pastoral care of the children, permeate the actions of the whole school. Excellently monitored educational standards, a successful Lottery bid and great local good will, together with pioneering partnerships with other local church schools, underpin this vision.

SIAS report May 2007, Newbrough C.E. Aided First School, Hexham, NE47 5AQ.