

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Church Schools Report

Norham St. Ceolwulf's Voluntary Controlled First School

West Street
Norham-on-Tweed
Berwick-on-Tweed
Northumberland
TD15 2JZ

Diocese of Newcastle

Northumberland LA

Date of inspection: June 18th 2007

Date of last inspection: none: VC church status May 2005

URN: 135064

Headteacher: Mrs Julie Grainger

Inspector's name: Mary Pedley

Inspector's number: 361

School context

Norham St. Ceowulf's C of E VC First School became C of E VC in May 2005. This is the school's first church inspection. It is a small village school in a remote part of the Northumberland/Scottish borders, drawing its pupils from the surrounding, very rural area. The 33 pupils, including 8 nursery children, are all white British and are taught in 3 classes. There are plans in process to reorder and update parts of the school. The school was federated with Cornhill First School in 2006 and the present head teacher appointed in September 2006 to share the role of federated head for both schools.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Norham St. Ceolwulf's First School as a Church of England are satisfactory.

Because of the school's history of change over the last two years, the progress in establishing distinctiveness and effectiveness as a faith school is evolving carefully but slowly. Christian values and attitudes are apparent in the school's daily life and are beginning to be embedded in documentation and reflected in the school environment.

Established strengths

- Good relationships between all in the school community including parents.
- The willingness and desire of leaders and managers to enhance and establish the Christian character of the school.
- Effective working links with the parish church and its 'church team'.

Focus for development

- To ensure greater focus is given to developing and establishing the faith aspects of the school and that these are appropriately time scaled in the SDP.
- To ensure that co-ordination of CW and RE become effective through systems and learning content that will strengthen children's spiritual development.
- To establish and make effective use of a focal point for CW in the hall.

The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is satisfactory in meeting the needs of all learners.

The school's distinctive Christian character is satisfactory though there are some increasingly good elements. Children are happy, safe and secure and staff care sensitively for every child. Children enjoy their learning and value the opportunities for decision making given to them through the school council. As one child said, 'It's good to make decisions, not through arguing, but by discussing and reasoning'. Children can talk about some facts of the Christian faith and are developing some spiritual awareness. The recent activities for designing and creating a church school badge and a focal cross for CW have helped children to understand some Christian aspects of the school as well as the importance of its local history. The historical good links with the parish church and its 'church team' does much to enhance the Christian character and ethos of the school. This should be established and made explicit through ensuring greater progress in reviewing clearly stated aims and documentation that will reflect the faith aspects of church status and so strengthen children's spiritual development.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is satisfactory.

Collective worship is satisfactory but there are some good elements. Children respond positively and participate well in worship time through singing, listening, role play, answering questions and praying. Worship reflects Christian values and these have an impact on children's spiritual and moral understanding. The message of the story of St. Martin sharing his cloak with a beggar had clear meaning for the children who were able to relate this to their daily lives. A worship focus in the hall is being developed, though this should be enhanced and established to assist greater spiritual development for children. All staff and clergy share the responsibility of leading worship and planning is done collaboratively. Some informal evaluation takes place, with plans for children to be included in this. More meaningful systems for recording and evaluating should be developed, with planning that is more consistent in identifying objectives for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There is a valued weekly celebration assembly where children's achievements are recognised and appreciated. The parish church is used for worship at appropriate times of the year, with parents invited to share this time. This helps children in their understanding of the Anglican tradition and of the Christian Church's calendar and they are able to talk about the key Christian festivals.

The leadership and management of the school as a church school are satisfactory.

Leadership and management of the school are satisfactory with some good elements. The school's leaders and governing body has used the Toolkit to assist their monitoring and evaluation of the school as a church school. They are increasingly aware of the need to ensure that this has greater impact on the outcomes of the school development plan and how this will enhance the provision of CW and RE for children. Parents speak highly of the school, though some are less clear about the impact of church status. Staff enjoy professional development opportunities where appropriate, but these should also include opportunities that will add to leaders' and governors' understanding in implementing church aspects. The co-ordination roles for CW and RE are being reviewed, but a clearer timescale for achievement is needed to enable effective learning for children and to increase opportunities for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There are good and effective links with the parish church and the 'church team' make a valued contribution in sharing RE teaching in both key stage classes. In reviewing and developing the RE co-ordination role, leaders should ensure that implementation of systems for planning, monitoring, evaluation and assessment includes appropriate

time and coverage of this subject.

SIAS report Norham St. Ceolwulf's VC. Northumberland. TD15 2JZ June 2007.