

Orton Church of England Aided School
Orton, Penrith, Cumbria CA10 3RG

Local authority: Cumbria
Dates of inspection: 11th October 2007
Date of last inspection: 7th May 2003
School's unique reference number: 112419

Headteacher: Mrs. R. Spence
Inspector's name and number: Mr. W.J. Holliday NS48

**Diocese of
Carlisle**
Board of Education

Every Child Matters To God

School context

Orton Church of England Primary School is a small village school south of Penrith in Cumbria. There are 61 pupils on roll taught in three mixed age classes. In addition, ten children attend part-time in the nursery, foundation stage class, each afternoon. The school serves the village of Orton and the surrounding rural area.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Orton C.E. school as a Church of England school are good. It is a very happy, caring school with a positive Christian ethos which underpins all of school life.

Established strengths

- The strong commitment of the headteacher, governors and staff to the Christian ethos of the school.
- The very caring and supportive relationships between older and younger pupils.
- The strong links with the parish church, local chapel and the local community.
- The involvement of pupils in planning and delivering collective worship.

Focus for development

- Develop a longer term plan of themes for collective worship so as to provide a good balance over time.
- Extend the use of the materials used for a structured self evaluation of the school as a church school, so as to include the governors.
- Complete the portfolio of work in RE so that it reflects the units of work studied and is matched to the National standards.
- Revise the annual questionnaire to parents so that it includes specific questions relating to the school as a church school.

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

The pupils are very happy in school and enjoy the family atmosphere which has been created based upon Christian values. Older pupils are extremely supportive of younger children and they enjoy their times of play together. Pupils are making satisfactory progress across the curriculum and good progress in RE. The curriculum in RE makes a positive contribution to the Christian life of the school. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is very good. The school provides a rich variety of experiences which widen the pupil's cultural understanding, including a range of artists and visitors. This has included African drumming and also Indian and African dance. A new link is being established through teachers who recently visited from South Africa and, through a member of staff, pupils have benefited by

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'I like a small school'

School Councillors

learning about life and culture in Kenya. The school promotes cooperative, kind and helpful behaviour and this has a positive effect upon pupils. The children have a good sense of right and wrong and moral development is also supported well through collective worship. The school provides very good opportunities for reflection, as was evident in collective worship, in RE, and in thoughtful prayers pupils have contributed to the prayer board and displays. The pupils talk appreciatively of lessons when they have time to reflect and contribute their own ideas. Pupils enjoy exploring the wonders of the natural world, as in the foundation stage recently when pupils really enjoyed looking at objects under a microscope. Social development of pupils is extremely good. Staff provide good role models and this is emulated particularly well by older pupils in the very confident way they undertake responsibilities. This is evident throughout the day when pupils identify jobs which need doing and apply themselves to the task. The children take responsibility extremely well in planning and delivering a weekly act of collective worship and also in being members of the school council. There are very good links with the parish church and also the Methodist chapel. The vicar and Methodist minister regularly lead collective worship and also visit school on other occasions, providing good pastoral support. The vicar has organised an after school craft club and assisted with aspects of the RE curriculum. The school regularly use the church for main Christian festivals but also at other times for worship and RE. Members of the church, who are also governors, regularly help in school, providing very valuable help with music and in collective worship. A pram service is held periodically with the foundation stage and this is well supported. There are very good links with the local community and the school is an important part of village life. The school has contributed to an exhibition in the market hall to promote the village, enters a variety of work in the local agricultural show and children take part in the sports there. The Christian ethos of the school is well represented throughout the school building by displays of work in RE, a 'Jesus and Me' corner in the hall and by a particularly good quiet reflection space in the new Foundation stage class room. Parents and members of the community are extremely supportive in attending fund raising events such as barbeques, treasure hunts and charity fund raising sales.

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

The pupils enjoy the times of collective worship together, and speak appreciatively about the range of people leading, including the vicar and Methodist minister. They sing enthusiastically and take part keenly in answering questions and contributing ideas. Groups of pupils enjoy taking responsibility for planning and leading one of the acts of worship each week and these are appreciated by the whole school. On other occasions pupils confidently help in setting up the hall, playing music, operating the projector and supporting the person leading. Worship is planned well and includes a range of appropriate themes, including Bible stories, links to the main Christian festivals and also to RE and other curriculum areas. There is regular worship in church for the main Christian festivals but also on some other occasions. A joint 'Pram service' with the church and foundation stage is well supported and appreciated by the community. Themes are planned for each term but there is not a longer term plan of themes to ensure a balance over time. Informal evaluations of collective worship do take place in discussions between staff, and pupils are also asked to contribute, but evaluations are not recorded so as to inform future planning. Worship makes a good contribution to moral and spiritual development as was observed in an act of worship where pupils were encouraged to think about being a good friend to others. The space for worship is well set out, including making good use of a carpet and a helpful focus table to create a good atmosphere. Good time is provided for reflection leading to prayer, including prayers written by the children or the Lord's Prayer. The children particularly enjoy contributing their own thoughtful prayers to worship, to the prayer board in the 'Jesus and Me' corner and also choosing prayers for grace or at the end of the day.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good.

RE is an important subject within the school curriculum and a good scheme of work has been developed based upon the Diocesan syllabus. It includes an appropriate balance between Christianity and the other world faiths studied. There is a clear emphasis in planning upon learning from RE as well as learning about RE. The pupils reflect upon what they have learned and relate it to their own experience. Some good reflective writing has been produced by pupils exemplified by some very thoughtful reports on units of work studied. The pupils are very positive about their work in RE, particularly when they have been given time to think and develop their own ideas. Older children particularly enjoyed sharing in a Seder meal, as part of their work in Judaism, and can describe how the different foods are linked to the story of Passover. Younger pupils enjoyed taking part in the Shabbat meal and reflecting upon what they liked. The pupils are good at raising questions for visitors or in preparation for visits, such as to the parish church. The coordinator has taken advantage of training by diocesan officers and an LA advisory teacher and this has impacted well upon work with the pupils. Assessment is developing well and samples of work are beginning to be collected in a portfolio so as to match the pupil outcomes to the national standards. The records of achievement show good progress over time and some good achievement. Lessons are planned well and include key vocabulary, key questions and reflection but on occasions there is too much material to cover in one lesson. The pupils produce good work once they are clear about their tasks. This was evident in a lesson where pupils had to consider values they needed to stand against wrong in our world and were able to draw upon their own knowledge and experience. There is a very wide age and ability range in classes and it is challenge to meet the needs of all pupils. The differentiation in tasks and support does not always provide for those less able or with particular educational needs. There are good links with other subjects in school and to collective worship.

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

A distinctive ethos has been developed based upon Christian values with a strong emphasis on cooperative, kind and helpful behaviour. The ethos is clearly described in the school prospectus and is part of the school aims. The headteacher and staff work well as a team and, together with the governors, show a strong commitment to the continuing development of the school ethos for the benefit of the pupils. The governors are very supportive of the school and have established link governors for subject areas, including RE. Valuable support is provided for the music curriculum and other activities throughout the year. The school has made some use of materials provided by the diocesan board of education for structured evaluation of the school as a church school but the governors have not yet been involved. The views of parents are regularly sought, both informally and through annual questionnaires but these do not include specific questions about the Christian ethos. The pupils show a good appreciation that the school is a Church school. They contribute well to leadership in planning and delivering acts of collective worship each week and in being members of the school council. Ideas put forward have been acted upon, such as planting trees for shade on the school field, the establishment of a 'secure place' where pupils could find someone with whom to play. The 'Friends' of the school provide very important support to the school in fund raising.

SIAS report [October 2007] Orton C.E.] [CA103RG]