

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### **Shap Endowed Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School**

Main Street,  
Shap,  
Penrith,  
Cumbria  
CA10 3NL

#### **Diocese of Carlisle**

Local Authority: Cumbria

URN: 112328

Inspection date: 07.11.06

Date of previous inspection: April 2002

Headteacher: Mrs Lois Whittaker

Inspector: Penny Hollander

#### **School context**

Shap CE School serves the village of Shap and the surrounding rural area with smaller settlements. All pupils live within the catchment area and are of white ethnicity. Economically, levels of employment are high but jobs are relatively low paid. This means that many families just miss the entitlement to free school meals. Adult experience of further and higher education opportunities are lower than in neighbouring wards. Mobility is low. Work on a new building to accommodate the rising number of pupils is about to begin. There have been three headteachers in the past five years which has meant that the school has been through an unsettled time but is now stabilised with the appointment of the current headteacher who has been in post since April 2005.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Shap CE Primary School as a Church of England school are good**

The school has a distinctive Christian ethos which is at the heart of school life, actively promoted by the headteacher and supported by governors and staff within school. There are strong links with the church.

#### **Established strengths**

- Collaborative leadership in promoting a Christian vision for the school
- Mutual respect between staff and pupils
- Many opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

#### **Focus for development**

- Clear assessment and differentiation procedures for RE,
- Flexible arrangements for collective worship both age appropriate and whole school times
- CPD opportunities given to all staff in developing expertise in RE and collective worship.

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

The Christian ethos in the school is strong and underpins all that happens in the school's life. It is promoted and shared by all stakeholders. Christian values are at the heart of provision, love, care and concern for others, compassion, respect and forgiveness being key features. Children share and help each other as is demonstrated in the use of the 'buddy bench' in the playground and games organised by older pupils on a daily rota in their 'pals' system. Any disputes that occur are dealt with quickly and calmly in a spirit of forgiveness and reconciliation. Pupils confirm that they feel happy and safe within the school and that they are treated equally, regardless of gender, ability or background. They speak of the mutual trust and respect that exists between them and the adults in the school and of the kindness and concern of the staff towards them. They know that they can raise issues of concern either individually or in class discussion. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all

pupils is well catered for with many opportunities given to broaden their experience and understanding of others as well as themselves. A wide range of visitors from different cultures and walks of life such as from Ghana, Uganda and India are an example of this. Residential visits to York and Manchester and day visits to a Buddhist Temple and Jewish museum also broaden children's experience. A range of after school clubs, including sport and arts and crafts, enhance the school curriculum. One pupil describes these as her favourite feature of the school. Children's positive responses to these activities are evident in the displays around the school and show their impact on the learning experience. Through their behaviour and attitudes the children show good understanding of the place of Christian values in school. Care and concern for others extends beyond the school environment to others. Fundraising activities such as "Shelter Boxes to help provide housing for three children in Rwanda is an example of this. Links between the school and church are very good. The vicar contributes weekly to collective worship. Groups of children visit the church to learn about the different aspects of the Anglican tradition both in its practices and use of symbols. The wider Anglican tradition is explained too through visitors from Africa and India. Parents appreciate the school's open door policy which enables them to feel in close partnership with the school, knowing that their views are taken seriously and questions they have are addressed. The wide variety of activities in school they support for fundraising, after school clubs and school functions, such as services in church and acts of collective worship indicate the confidence they have in the school and its leadership within a church foundation.

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

Collective worship is a special time for everyone in the school community. Members of staff are present and teachers, as well as the headteacher and vicar, regularly lead acts of worship. All feel that it has a positive impact on both pupils and themselves. What is learned in collective worship is regularly referred to in the classroom. Pupils clearly enjoy taking an active part and regard it as a significant time in the school day. The willingness to read prayers, answer questions and take part in drama, are all indicators of this. Appropriate Christian symbols are used effectively and are often chosen by the year 6 worship monitors to fit in with the theme of collective worship for the week as is the music played at the beginning and end of collective worship. Daily responses taken directly from the Anglican liturgy act as a reminder of the church foundation of the school. Plans and reflective evaluations for collective worship indicate a willingness from staff to develop this provision further. The children are responsive to the variety and styles of collective worship offered as well as the daily opportunities given to take part in saying parts of the Anglican liturgy. Parents, carers and friends are included in this aspect of school life too and parents report a need to be early in order to get a seat! This is also the case for the annual school services held in church such as at Harvest, Christmas and Easter. Parents speak very enthusiastically about these occasions and feel they highlight the school's commitment to its Christian foundation. As one parent commented *Jesus is back in school*. Collective worship also includes a weekly time of celebration of pupils' achievements and successes and children nominate other children for friendship certificates which show appreciation for the efforts and care of others, exemplifying the whole school commitment to Christian values.

### **The effectiveness of the Religious Education is good**

Teachers are enthusiastic about and committed to Religious Education in the school. Children describe their RE lessons as being, *fun, interesting and thought provoking*. The RE co-ordinator, alongside the headteacher, provides a clear lead in developing the provision within school. Classroom displays for RE are good, giving pupils opportunity to reflect on what they are learning. A wide range of approaches to learning in this subject are used and include storytelling, art, drama, studying of sacred texts, as well as different types of writing tasks. Input from the local authority's advisory teacher for RE has been instrumental in developing a new scheme of work. Trialling new RE materials from the diocese is a further example of the school's willingness to try fresh ideas. The school has identified an awareness of the steps that need to be taken next in more detailed assessment and differentiation within lessons. The school is in a good position to move forward. Medium term lesson plans clearly show activities for both AT1, learning about religion, and AT2, learning from religion. However, this is not always indicated in individual lessons plans and their inclusion there will be a prompt to pupils that they are both learning about an aspect of a religion and learning from it, relating it to their

own experience. Standards of written work produced in RE lessons are good, pupils clearly taking pride both in what they produce and how they present it. Speaking, listening and reflective activities are not so easy to assess but this should be developed by creating assessment opportunities which allow children time to reflect upon and articulate what they are learning or have learnt. The production of a book, about the different parts of the baptism service indicates this is beginning to happen as do posters produced by year 6 pupils reflecting on the different aspects of God presented in the Old Testament. Visits to different places of worship from both the Christian faith and other religions give the children insight into the beliefs and practices of others. This is complemented by the use of visitors in the classroom to talk about their own faith with the children.

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

The Christian vision for the school is clearly exemplified by the headteacher and others in the school. The governors and local church community fully support and uphold this. The collaborative and co-operative partnership which exists between the headteacher and the staff in promoting this ethos is clear. Teachers comment on how the headteacher allows them to express their views and they know that these are valued. They also are encouraged to take initiative and responsibility but are also aware that they will be given support if they need it. An inset day at the beginning of the school year is an example of the collaborative approach to the management of the school. All teachers are encouraged to contribute to the outline of the school improvement plan as well as to RE and collective worship ideas for the coming academic year. Adults working in school support the leadership by providing excellent role models for the children in promoting Christian values. Pupils enjoy the responsibilities they are given and the opportunities to put their own ideas forward. This is done not only through their teachers but also via a suggestions box and through the School Council. Members of the School Council speak of initiatives they are involved in, not only in the playground through organising games at lunchtime but in raising money for charities such as "Shelter Box". They speak proudly of the role they play in school life. Parents are fully supportive of the Christian ethos and feel it is a distinctive feature of the school, emanating from good leadership.

SIAS report November 2006, Shap Endowed CE Primary School CA10 3NL]