

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

St John's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Fenby Avenue
Darlington
County Durham
DL1 4UB

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| Diocese: | Durham |
| Local Authority | Darlington |
| Date of Inspection | 3.4.2008 |
| Date of last Inspection | June 2004 |
| School's Unique Reference number | 114238 |
| Headteacher | Miss Christine Large |
| Inspector | Mrs Jean Mulley 358 |

School context

This average sized primary school is situated in the residential area of Lascelles Park on the outskirts of Darlington. There are 230 pupils on roll. The number of pupils on the SEN register is above average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St John's School as a Church of England school are outstanding

The outstanding Christian ethos pervades all areas of school life. The outstanding pastoral care offered to all pupils ensures that their individual needs are catered for. A friendly, happy caring yet professional atmosphere exists in this school. Parents state that this is a child centred place where staff care passionately about their children.

Established strengths

- The outstanding Christian ethos which pervades all areas of school life
- Excellent relationships between all stake holders ensure that the whole idea of the "Body of Christ" is lived out in this school
- High standards of display work which adds to the bright, lively feel of the school and also states that children's work is valued and celebrated
- Dedicated and enthusiastic teachers who work well together as a team setting a very good role model for pupils.

Focus for development

- Develop the involvement of children in the evaluation of R.E as outlined in the Action Plan
- Continue as at present so as to further enhance the distinctiveness of this church school.

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

This is a bright, lively, vibrant school where Christian values of love, respect for all, tolerance and forgiveness are embedded throughout. Children are aware of these values and are able to talk openly about them. Relationships between all stakeholders – staff, pupils, governors, parents are of a very high quality. A safe, happy, caring environment has been created in which everyone is regarded as a unique individual. Developing pupil confidence and self-esteem is seen as vitally important in enabling each child to achieve their full potential. Pupils state that they feel safe, secure and very special in this school. They are enthusiastic about all that goes on in school. Parents feel that the school is approachable and that the needs of their children are met.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Daily worship is important to the life of this school. Children have a very enthusiastic attitude to Collective Worship and are eager to participate. The family worship held on a regular basis is particularly important to the school and is well supported by parents and friends. Acts of worship are well planned and evaluated by the co-ordinator and her colleagues. Themes are linked to the Church's calendar. The parish priest is a frequent and welcome visitor to the school. He conducts school worship on a regular basis and also assists with the planning. Children are encouraged to offer their own prayers and thoughts. Children carry out written evaluations of collective worship on a regular basis and give a lot of thought to this process. Younger pupils are encouraged to give verbal evaluation and this is recorded by the class teacher. A thoughtful ambience is created for worship with the use of a candle, cross, flowers. Opportunities are given for reflection in this calm atmosphere. Opportunities for prayer are offered at other times of the day.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

The teaching of R.E has a high profile in the life of this school. The enthusiastic and committed co-ordinator states that the school aims to provide high quality experiences and provision for R.E. This is reflected in the long and medium term planning from which teachers are able to draw up their short term plans. Each class has an R.E. file which has been set up to demonstrate the breadth of work carried out in R.E. Effective monitoring and evaluation is regularly and consistently carried out – lesson observations, work scrutiny – levels of work are recorded to ensure that progress can be seen. A rigorous programme of assessment takes place. Samples of work are moderated and agreed by the whole staff. Standards of teaching and learning are of a very high standard with standards ranging from good to outstanding. R.E. is well resourced with a broad range of reference materials, teaching resources and artefacts and has a delegated part of the school budget. Children demonstrate a very good knowledge of the Bible including the stories of Jesus. They are encouraged to think about and reflect upon what they have been discussing in R.E. Evidence of other faiths is clearly seen in the excellent display work around the school. A range of visits and visitors is built in to enhance the R.E. programme.

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

The headteacher's clear Christian vision for the school is supported by staff, governors and parents. Staff work well together as a team and lead by example to encourage outstanding relationships within the school. The chair of governors is a frequent and supportive visitor to the school. All governors play a positive role in the life of the school – they know their school well. Foundation governors are aware of the specific role they have in bringing Christian aspects into governance. Parents are appreciative of all that the school has to offer. There are very strong links with the local community – the parish, the Deanery, the Diocese, cluster group of primary schools, a local residential home, charity groups.