

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Wallsend, St.Peter's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

North Terrace,
Wallsend,
Tyne and Wear,
NE28 6PY.

Diocese: Newcastle

Local authority: North Tyneside

Date of inspection: 21st January 2008

Date of last inspection: 1st-3rd March 2004

School's unique reference number: 108626

Headteacher: Mr Keith Reader

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

School context

This is an average size urban school. The area served by the school is socially and economically disadvantaged, with an above average proportion of pupils claiming free school meals. Most pupils are White British. There has been considerable turnover of staff in recent years. Although well-kept, it is a constant struggle to maintain the building. The school is located next to St.Peter's church but also relates to St.Luke's church in the town centre.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Wallsend Church of England Aided Primary School as a Church of England school are good

This is a seriously Christian school, in which the school's foundation is a key component in its efforts to raise standards and to serve its children properly. Love and care, offered to all, based on Christian values and worship, ensure that this is a distinctive and supportive environment in which to live and to learn.

Established strengths

- Deeply embedded Christian values create a secure context for learning and growth.
- Collective worship offers important opportunities for reflection, celebration and personal and social development.
- Well-planned Religious Education is contributing to children's spiritual development.
- Committed leadership from staff and governors is drawing on the school's Christian foundation to underpin its plans to raise standards of achievement.

Focus for development

- The school should produce a new policy for Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development.

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

'In our school it is okay to make mistakes. Nobody will laugh at us when we get things wrong' – My attention was directed to this poster in the hall on a number of occasions during the inspection, and it certainly encapsulates the way that Christian values are lived out in Wallsend. Adults work to support children, and the children are also very supportive of each other. The School Council handles a range of issues well. The children are welcoming, happy and enjoy their school. They respond positively to the moral framework that the school provides. The reflection areas in the classrooms are used, and are appropriate to the children's ages in their particular rooms. This is not a school that 'window dresses'; there is an honesty to it that is tangible. The policy for Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development is overdue for revision or renewal.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Singing was excellent during worship: a distinct improvement has occurred since the last inspection, and the choir made a very effective contribution. Attentiveness in worship was good. The sense of occasion was palpable. Children responded well to questions and to opportunities for reflection. Volunteers willingly participated in an acted demonstration of the importance of team work. Links were made in worship which contributed well to the children's personal and social development. The worship is well planned and evaluated. It is obvious that much has been done to develop the school's worship in recent years, but the school still suffers from a lack of resources in this area. The school's regular worship in the parish church introduces the children to the eucharist; an introduction that might bear positive fruit over time.

The effectiveness of the religious education is satisfactory with good features

The school has recently introduced a new scheme of work. This, with a new approach to planning for Religious Education and a new system for assessment, is now ensuring that children make good progress in this subject. The Head teacher, who is also subject co-ordinator, is building a portfolio of good practice, partly drawn from his own observation of the teaching, which also has the capacity to enhance the teachers' skills and confidence. The lessons observed ranged from satisfactory to outstanding, with most being good. There are good planned links with other subject areas. In those lessons in which pace was maintained, and in which a variety of teaching techniques were used, children responded very well indeed. I was impressed with the maturity of the questions that were asked of a visiting minister in one lesson, and with the children's responses to whole class teaching in a number of other lessons. I was also impressed with the commitment to using information technology in R.E. In lessons where pace sometimes flagged children tended to lose focus. Owing to budget constraints, the school finds it difficult to resource this subject as well as it would like to do.

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

The Head teacher is deeply and seriously committed to the school. The Chair of Governors is a valued and supportive friend. The Governing Body is promoting the Christian foundation of the school in its policies and as it recruits new staff. The recently appointed Deputy Head is bringing energy and vision to the staff team. All the teachers and other staff share in promoting the school's caring Christian ethos. The children comment very positively about their teachers and about their school as a whole, which indicates that they are proud to be part of it, even if the buildings are less than ideal and the school is facing the challenges of raising standards. This positive attitude is testimony to the staff's commitment, and indicates the children's willingness to respond to challenge and aspiration. The school values its partnership with the parish, and especially the close personal links with the rector and others. It is important to ensure that parochial links and links with the wider community are as broad as possible so that the children's horizons and experience can be continually extended.

SIAS report January 2008, Wallsend St Peter's Church of England School, NE28 6PY.