

Threlkeld Church of England Primary School

Blease Road
Threlkeld
Keswick
CA12 4RX

Diocese: Carlisle

Local authority: Cumbria
Dates of inspection: 8th June 2007
Date of last inspection: January 2002
School's unique reference number: 112276
Headteacher: Mrs Katharine Horder
Inspector's name and number: Mrs C Bartlett 444



**Diocese of
Carlisle**

Board of Education

"Every Child Matters To God."

School context

Threlkeld is a small rural school in a farming and tourist area on the outskirts of the Lake District. Children come from a variety of backgrounds including the nearby town of Keswick. Several families are involved in tourism, which has an effect on the otherwise very good attendance record, due to holidays being taken in term time. The Victorian building, which is very well maintained and adapted to modern use, has limitations in size and flexibility.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Threlkeld as a Church of England school are good with outstanding features

Christian values of kindness and respect drive the everyday life of the school and create a family atmosphere, which is both purposeful and comfortable. The warm welcome given to visitors by staff and children alike shows a happy, caring school, which places emphasis on building self-confidence. The school plays a central role in the life of the community and church and enjoys a very supportive involvement of parents and Friends of Threlkeld School.

Established strengths

- Excellent behaviour both in and out of school.
- Able leadership of the Head, well supported by governors and staff.
- Imaginative use of limited space of building and grounds.

Focus for development

- Increased involvement of children in Collective Worship

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

In the door at the entrance to the school is engraved a Celtic Cross, which illustrates both the Christian Foundation of the school and the cultural heritage of the village. It is an effective outward sign of the sensitivity of the school to the diversity of backgrounds of the learners and reflects the centrality of the school in the community and the church. The strong family atmosphere is based on a thorough knowledge of all the children and a refreshing emphasis on enjoyment and fun. Children like coming to school "because everyone is kind to each other and the lessons are fun". Children are confident that their needs will be met. This was seen in the care and consideration given to enabling a child with a broken leg to participate as normally as possible in all aspects of school life. At the same time children's awareness of their responsibilities as members of the school family was demonstrated by the establishment

of the Friendship Squad, through the work of the School Council. The twice yearly, high quality musical productions foster self-confidence, nurture ability and provide an opportunity for the development of individual talents. "It is wonderful to see children and staff working with such enthusiasm and fun" (Parent comment on school production). The very active involvement of parents in school life shows how welcome they are and communication is made easy by the readiness of staff to see parents and their daily presence at the school gate. The provision of extra curricular activities is outstanding especially with the participation of parents "Everyone learns together, anything from Spanish to Knitting." The programme of visits and visitors, and co-operation with other schools and organisations in the area, offers experience of the wider world and contributes to the excellent Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development. Children regularly contribute to the Parish Magazine, and, as they are consulted about improvements made to village facilities, they feel a responsibility for their environment. The vicar's regular weekly contribution to Collective Worship and involvement in many other school activities in the role of Chair of Governors makes him a familiar and welcome presence in the school.

'I chose this school because it promotes a Christian image and instils the values of compassion, care and respect, not just in Assembly, but permeating the whole school' (Parent)

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Daily collective worship strengthens the family atmosphere in the school and is enjoyed by the children who like talking about the weekly themes and have very positive views to express. Their discussion is lively and informed and they particularly enjoy it when they are more actively involved, as in the termly visits to Church. As all the staff participate in leading worship, they are able to relate the themes to life in the classroom and bring in aspects of the curriculum. A risk assessment for a child with a broken leg outlining a specific routine and position for him in the hall indicates the ethos of inclusion in collective worship. The vicar relates to the theme for the week and the children particularly enjoy his contribution. Children are self-confident and have good self-esteem fostered by the acknowledgement of birthdays, the recognition of good work and behaviour, and the regular celebration of children's achievements. Children have a good understanding of the wider church supported by visitors and the limited visits to other churches. Children share their opinions openly and show an interest in religious issues, particularly when in the smaller setting of class worship and in Circle Time. The school keeps good records of worship, including regular evaluations, which should be extended to involve the children. 'They sometimes ask what we think after Class assembly but I think they should ask us occasionally.'(Y5 pupil) Children like worshipping together but think they could be more involved. 'I would have children reading more' and 'I think we could write our own prayers and take turns in reading them.'(Y5 and Y6 pupils)

Children enjoyed visiting a Synagogue and a Hindu Temple last year and vividly remembered details. They were able to compare differences and appreciate wider aspects of worship.

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

The head and the Chair of Governors, having worked closely together for some years, have raised the profile of the school, established very good standards and created a strong ethos of team-work and commitment to the school. The imaginative additions and adaptations to the school have included the enhancement of the entrance with the Celtic Cross and their commitment to the Christian foundation is also reflected in the current development plan. Sensitive planning has ensured that governor monitoring relates to staff programmes and close co-operation is evident. Although there is currently no specific co-ordinator for RE, work is valued in display throughout the school, a system for assessment is established and it is appropriately reflected in the school's self evaluation. Parents' views are welcomed both formally in the annual survey and informally at the school gate or through parent governors. There are many examples of response to ideas suggested by parents, particularly in the after school clubs. There is a very positive attitude to professional development, which not only involves staff but also governors (who have a planned training on 'Governance of a Church School') and parents (three of whom have attended 'Helping in Schools' courses). The children have a very responsible attitude towards the school. They feel they have a voice in its governance through the school council (which is particularly effective and well run) and a good understanding of the democratic process. They are creative in their ideas for improvement and justly proud of their achievements.

'When we vote for year representatives, they go out of the room, so they don't see how many people vote for them. We don't tell them, especially if no one voted for them, it wouldn't be nice'. (School Council Member)