

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### **Christ Church CE VA Primary School**

Shieldfield Green

Newcastle upon Tyne

NE2 1XA

#### **Diocese: Newcastle**

Local authority: Newcastle upon Tyne

Dates of inspection: 20 January 2011

Date of last inspection: October 2006

School's unique reference number: 108493

Headteacher: Sandra Furno

Inspector's name and number: Mary Pedley 361

### **School context**

This small school, close to the city centre, is in an area of high economic and social deprivation with high unemployment. The local population is changing from family homes to student accommodation. There is high pupil mobility affected by refugee and asylum families. 30% of pupils have Special Educational Needs, almost 50% have English as an additional language and some have recorded needs for child protection care. Of the 88 pupils on roll, more than 40% come from outside the local ward, choosing this school because it is a Church school, from recommendations, or because of family connections.

### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Christ Church Primary as a Church of England school are good**

Since the last inspection, improvements have enhanced the distinctiveness and effectiveness of this church school. The head teacher, senior leadership team and governors work with increasing collaboration to ensure that strong Christian values are shared by all. These underpin all aspects of school life, helping every pupil to feel valued, increasing their self-confidence and bring positive attitudes to their learning.

### **Established strengths**

- A strong distinctive Christian character that impacts on all in the school and local community and is reflected in the way every child is nurtured and valued
- An enthusiastic and committed head teacher who is moving the school forward through good leadership and management.
- The strength and impact of good community cohesion that impacts on children and families

### **Focus for development**

- To ensure that the recent developments in leading and managing RE help to raise children's achievements in this subject
- To increase the effectiveness of governors as managers in their ability to contribute usefully through monitoring and evaluating the Christian aspects of this church school
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### **The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is good at meeting the needs of all learners**

The increasingly distinctive Christian character and ethos permeates all aspects of school life. This is particularly evident in the quality of care and in the way all children, whatever their faith or cultural background, are respected and valued as individuals. A governor said that *'the Every Child Matters agenda is not just a slogan in this school but is a reality and truth in practice'*. Children gain self-esteem and confidence within this Christian context, behaving and responding with natural courtesy, respect and consideration of each other and of adults. Their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural growth and understanding is gained from improving RE learning and meaningful worship experiences. Children have a clear understanding of the Christian values they practice, through supporting and giving to the

community, as well as gaining what this diverse community offers to them through curriculum enrichment. The school is a living and essential part of the local and church communities. Displays around school show good evidence of children's learning and understanding of Christianity and of other faiths, linking the school environment to RE and worship experiences. Children, parents, staff and governors value and gain from the distinctive Christian character of the school. When asked what was special about this school, a Y4 child offered, *'Everyone is special in their own unique way'*. This clearly reflects how the distinctive Christian character and values have good impact on the children.

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

Collective worship is good with outstanding elements. It is a meaningful and a very positive beginning to each day with the whole school sharing this time together. Though children come from many different faiths, nations and cultures, Christian worship is clearly valued. There is a good range of Christian worship experiences which develop children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding, especially in this particularly diverse school community. The impact has been enhanced through a greater variety of leaders, including staff, who make good use of appropriate resources to support their leading of well-planned themes. Worship is clearly Christian in style and format reflecting Anglican traditions through use of prayers and responses. The parish clergy make regular and valued contributions in leading church and school worship. Children are fully engaged and involved, behaving very well and participating enthusiastically through prayer, reflection and some very inspiring singing. They enjoy fulfilling given responsibilities and working with leaders through role play. Regularly planned classroom worship, enhanced by use of 'Prayer Boards', links well to weekly themes strengthening children's understanding and practice of Christian values. Good planning by staff and clergy ensures that worship is relevant and inclusive for each child. Planning is consistently evaluated and used to improve quality and impact. Parents enjoy attending weekly celebration assemblies and one spoke of *'really wanting to join in'* with the children. Governors are supportive through attending worship in school and church. They could make more of their management role by formerly monitoring and evaluating this important aspect of Church school life.

#### **The effectiveness of the religious education is good**

Since the last inspection in 2006, where two areas of RE were identified for development, the profile and effectiveness of RE is now good overall. Though the quality of teaching and learning is improving, children's achievement in RE is still satisfactory but is moving towards good. The recent focus given to RE has ensured that it is now equal to other curriculum areas. Changes in staffing structures have ensured that the recently appointed RE coordinator has brought skills, creative thinking and experience to her role. The RE scheme is now embedded and includes learning of other major faiths. Good systems of monitoring, assessing and recording children's progress in RE are in the early stages of being implemented. Children in all Key Stages enjoy RE, where teachers are using a variety of teaching and learning strategies and resources to help children learn from, think and talk about different faiths and cultures. This clearly effects the development of children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural growth. Good use is made of the children's own diverse ethnic and faith backgrounds, helping them to have respect and understanding of each other's beliefs. Teaching assistants make a valuable contribution to RE activities thus adding to the impact of learning. A child with Special Educational Needs was being given very helpful and appropriate one-to-one support to ensure their inclusion into RE learning. RE is now contributing more positively to the Christian character of the school and to the strong sense of community cohesion. Governors are increasingly supportive and involved but could be encouraged to use monitoring and evaluating systems to enhance their understanding of the effectiveness of classroom practice for RE teaching and learning.

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

The effectiveness of leadership and management of this church school is good and improving. The four areas for development identified in the last inspection have been addressed: there is now greater impact and effectiveness in both RE and Collective Worship. The strong Christian ethos underpins an inclusive curriculum which encourages every child,

whatever their faith, nationality or culture, to understand, share and practice Christian values. The head teacher's enthusiastic and committed leadership style encourages good teamwork from all staff and governors. All staff and governors have recently collaborated in revising the school's mission statement to reflect and practice Christian values in daily school life. *'Christianity is instinctive in our leadership and is embodied in our mission statement'*, said a governor. The leadership vision reaches out into the local community where effective partnership links with church (Circus Project) and local projects (Shieldfield Udecide), create good, meaningful community cohesion. The establishing of 'nurture groups' within school has positive impact on children's personal, social and learning development reflecting the Christian values of leaders and managers in facilitating this. Governors are increasing their involvement as managers to become more effective in challenging the direction and vision for the school. Though their support is important and valued, they could have greater impact through more systematic monitoring and evaluation of the church aspects of school life.

SIAS report January 2011, Christ Church CE Primary School, Newcastle, NE2 1XA