

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Ellingham Church of England Aided First School
Ellingham
Chathill
Northumberland

Diocese: Newcastle

Local authority: Northumberland

Dates of inspection: 23rd November 2010

Date of last inspection: 19th November 2007

School's unique reference number: 122289

Headteacher: Mrs Diane Lakey

Inspector's name and number: Mrs Jane Ackroyd 221

School context

Ellingham Church of England Aided First School is a small rural school, there are 44 pupils aged from 5 to 9. The children are virtually all of white British origin. There are an above average number of children with special educational needs at the school and about half of the pupils are from out of area. Links with the local community, including the church, are close. The school has a range of awards including Healthy Schools, Eco School and Activemark.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Ellingham Church of England Aided First School is outstanding.

This "Small school with a big heart" has Christianity well embedded in all that it does. It is a God-centred school. The school brochure makes it clear that being an Anglican Church school is important to the life of the community. Children, staff and volunteers are well known and nurtured as individuals. It is a lively and happy learning community where children make excellent progress; care, kindness and moral values are engendered in an atmosphere of fun and enthusiasm. Displays and use of symbols enhance the learning environment. Learners speak enthusiastically about their school. Expectations are high for all children. Relationships at all levels are excellent. The Christian character of the school has a powerful impact on the children.

Established strengths

- All stakeholders strongly support the Christian Ethos.
- The impact of high quality teaching and learning.
- Strong leadership, highly committed to the development of this Christian school.
- The symbiotic relationship with the church and local community.

Focus for development

- Enhance assessment, tracking and target setting in RE.
- Develop opportunities for visits to different faith places of worship.

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

The school makes excellent provision for all learners. Clear links are drawn between policy and Gospel teaching. Children, parents and staff are confident that they are listened to. The pupils are happy, polite and self assured. They enjoy coming to school and are excited by learning. Parental involvement reflects a high level of support for the school. The in-depth knowledge of the pupils and pastoral care shown by all is evidence that policy is effective and that values are intrinsic. High quality, well designed interactive displays are a good example of how the Christian character permeates the school. The "Peace Table" is an illustration of how conflict resolution skills are responsibly developed in the light of gospel teaching. Parents, through formal and informal means, reflect interest and involvement, and a high level of satisfaction. There is a commitment from all stakeholders to develop the whole child, whatever their ability, in the light of Christian values. Staff and Governors work hard in order to enable

children to reach their potential. Pupils are very aware of stewardship and justly proud of the work they do with "Breathing Spaces" and Fairtrade. The links with Ugandan, Californian and Canadian schools develop the children's awareness of global issues while the link with a Leicester school assists in building awareness of life in multi-cultural Britain. This is clearly a school in which implicit Christian values such as stewardship, forgiveness, trust and love for others are recognised and lived out. The high number of children with special needs who choose the school is a reflection of the level of care and support they receive. Pupils are regularly reviewed, ensuring challenging targets are set and underachievement addressed. Through nurturing, skilful and wide ranging support all children are developing well as individuals, able to give and receive support. The close links with the local Church is one way in which spiritual development is enhanced.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding.

There is a comprehensive plan for the worship year which includes major Christian festivals and those of other religions. The themes are planned collaboratively. Governors understand their particular responsibilities in this area and fully support the worship life of the school. Opportunities are taken for a range of visitors to lead worship. The local vicar works effectively with the school and leads collective worship each week. Teachers and support staff also take their responsibilities for leading/organising and monitoring worship seriously; rituals for worship are well established creating a spiritual atmosphere. Entry to worship is dignified and well ordered, children participate well, responding appropriately, singing with enthusiasm and obvious joy. They enjoy leading and taking part and feel that they learn, for example that "Jesus is with us all the time." Children are encouraged to make prayer part of their daily life through quiet areas, interactive prayer displays and regular prayer times. Worship is monitored and evaluated in a range of useful ways and this has an impact on future planning. The local church is used for some worship and plans are underway for even closer involvement through the PCC. Good use is made of technology to assist worship.

The effectiveness of the Religious Education is good

Religious Education is very well taught, giving children an understanding of Christianity and some insight into the Hindu faith, Judaism and Islam. One lesson learned is that to a Christian "it doesn't matter what colour you are, or if you like someone you still help them." The Diocesan syllabus is taught with learners receiving a broad and balanced curriculum. The RE coordinator is developing medium-term planning with appropriate monitoring and review. Learning objectives are shared with the children, who are very positive about being able to learn in a wide range of ways, including craft and role-play. Learning about and learning from religion is equally well planned for. The RE co-ordinator knows all the children well and pupils generally reach as high a level in RE as they do in core subjects. Pupils are made aware of their progress and of what they need to do in order to reach the next level, although this needs developing further. High quality displays illustrating Christianity and other faiths are evident around the school, with books and artefacts provided to support learning.

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

Leadership and Management share a clear and passionate vision for the school based on Christian values. A strong Christian ethos is promoted consistently. This is a happy school where children are valued, respected and embraced as "a child of God". Both adults and children speak enthusiastically about the school's Christian character. The Christian ethos is implicit in documentation such as policies. Behaviour is excellent. All staff have high expectations and are effective role models. Pupils are proud to be members of the school and are confident that their opinions are listened to. The leadership of the school has a strong belief that the life of the school family can be lived in the light of the Christian Gospels. Through an efficient system of planning, monitoring and evaluation, these beliefs are lived out day by day. The close links with the local community and parish are a great strength. School leaders work closely together, evaluating and planning how to further advance the education of the learning community at Ellingham in the light of Christian teaching.

