

St Bartholomew's CE VA Primary School

Front Street
Longbenton
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE12 8AE

Diocese: Newcastle

Local authority: North Tyneside
Dates of inspection: 6th July 2009
Date of last inspection: 19th May 2006
School's unique reference number: 108615
Headteacher: Mrs Gillian Surtees
Inspector's name and number: Miss Lesley Richardson 394

School context

St Bartholomew's is an average sized primary school, with 218 pupils on roll, serving an area of social advantage. The pupils come from a wide range of social backgrounds. The number of pupils on free school meals is below average. Approximately one third of the children attend St Bartholomew's church.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Bartholomew's as a Church of England school are outstanding.

The Christian ethos underpins every aspect of school life. The children know where they fit into the local and global community and can see the value of belonging. The whole school reflects love, respect and enjoyment of God's creation and living Christian values.

Established strengths

- Inspiration leadership and Christian vision of headteacher who is well supported by governors and staff.
- Strong supportive links between school, church, clergy and local community.
- High quality Collective Worship and Religious Education which impacts on children's spiritual development.
- Children who are excellent ambassadors of the school.

Focus for development

- To explore the exciting challenge of co location with St Stephen's RC school – sharing staff training, activities including music, sport, dance and facilities.

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

This is an inclusive school where every child is welcomed and feels safe, valued, special and nurtured. "The children are encouraged to make sense of the world with a developing faith." Children of other faiths share their own beliefs and practices knowing they are respected and valued. "every child is special at St Bartholomew's," "everyone has their point of view in school." The children are confident, caring, aware of the world around them and are well equipped to cope in a world of differences. They know how people make them feel valued and how to value others – different cultures, generations, physical differences – work in their RE books and children's comments support this. "we learn in this school it doesn't matter what you look like on the outside it's what you're like on the inside that matters." They are also aware of the consequences of their own actions and the place of God in their lives. "God shines on the path of life as the batteries make the torch shine on darkness." Displays and symbols around the school emphasise the distinctive Christian character of the school celebrating God's creation and Christian values. The PCC present Bibles to children in Year 2, these are then used throughout Key Stage 2 and taken by the children into Secondary School. The church is used for visits, lessons and services and the children enjoy their time in church. Relationships throughout the school are excellent "when there's a problem teachers don't just react they ask the child first what would be best way to handle. "

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

The Collective Worship is well planned on a 2 year cycle covering the Christian calendar, Saints, SEAL and values and contributes powerfully to children's spiritual development. Evaluation is done by children and staff. SEAL evaluation provides teachers with an understanding of children's emotional responses. There is a daily act of worship led by a number of staff and includes class, key stage and whole school worship. Prayer is embedded into the life of the school and there are reflective areas within each classroom "I like saying prayers for my family and friends". During the Collective Worship children participated fully – dancing, singing, working ICT and all staff shared reflective experience with the children. The theme of 'Don't get lost in life' led to the children building a prayer cairn and reading their own prayers. This was a very powerful experience and the cairn and suitable stories were used to illustrate the message that God and Jesus show us the way to lead our lives. In Reception and Key Stage One the children celebrated the story of the Very Hungry Caterpillar and the amazing transformation into a butterfly. Reflection was based on the amazing world created by an amazing God and changes within our own lives. Parents are invited to worship in school and church and are very supportive of the staff and children.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding.

Religious Education is given high status in the curriculum. The Diocesan Syllabus is followed and is well planned with monitoring and assessment in place. Teaching and learning are of a high standard and children are animated during lessons. They are actively involved in their learning and progress well with good attainment. During a lesson about Bede children showed very good knowledge and understanding of the lives of monks. Pupils were encouraged to think through answers for themselves and reasons for their answers. The teacher shared her enthusiasm and love for Religious Education with the children. The children were encouraged to ask questions to push their knowledge "If they believed in God and the teaching of God why did they use whips and chains to keep the boys in order?" A child was put in the hot seat as Bede and answered questions both factual and imaginative from the rest of the class "Do you get tired of dedicating your life to God?" This showed the confidence of the children in the subject. Reception children were encouraged to link music and pictures to the feelings associated with the sea and participated in the story of The Calming of the Sea. Children showed good prior knowledge and were able to display AT 1 and AT2 skills. When asked how the disciples might have felt when Jesus calmed the storm one child answered "They might have been a bit frightened of Jesus" which led to discussion of Jesus' power and the relationship he had with the disciples. Other faiths are covered well. In one class a Muslim child contributed photographs of himself during prayer in the Mosque to the display on Islam.

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

The shared Christian vision of the school is set by teachers, governors and the headteacher and revisited when evaluating the school. Frequent governors visits, regular discussions and meetings with staff and evaluation at governors meetings ensure the vision is present in everyday practice. The governors are fully committed to the school and are always available through e mail and telephone. This ensures that school self evaluation is accurate and up to date. The Son Seekers Club organised by a local Methodist church provides children with opportunities to explore the Bible and their own faith. Links with the local community include charities, visits to local pension office, community care centre and residential homes. Staff contribute substantially to the spiritual, moral and emotional well being of pupils. All children see themselves as empowered to affect decisions within the school and direct their ideas to the School Council to ensure action if appropriate -as one child stated "we're always going to listen as the School Council but not always able to act on it – if it's not safe or too expensive like juice at lunchtime." "Everyone has their point of view in our school" and "we all care for each other". Children are independent members of society able to cope with conflict and qualities to lead successful lives and influence others.