

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Church Schools Report

Hugh Joicey Church of England Voluntary Aided First School,

Ford Village,
Berwick upon Tweed,
Northumberland.

TD15 2QA

Diocese of Newcastle

Northumberland LA

Date of S48 inspection: March 6th 2008

Last S48 inspection: February 26 2006

School's Unique reference number: 122291

Headteacher: Mrs Rosie Smith

National Society Inspector: Mary Pedley

National Society inspector's number: 361

School context

Hugh Joicey First School is a small rural school in Ford Village. It serves a wide area of small, mostly agricultural communities. The number of pupils attending has recently increased, with 49 now on roll. Pupils are taught in 3 mixed age classes. The head teacher has a teaching time of 0.8, with 3 other part time teachers to support her.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Hugh Joicey Church of England First School are good.

The Christian ethos permeates all aspects of school life and brings positive values and attitudes to teaching and learning, leading and managing. The school's aims and values are given priority in ensuring that all in the school community respect and value each other. The impact on children is seen through the good quality of their development as valued and happy individuals and in the good standards they achieve.

Established strengths

- A strong ethos that impacts on all in the school community and is reflected in the way children are nurtured and valued.
- The head teacher's positive and collaborative style of leading that ensures all staff are highly appreciated.
- A school environment that offers much to interest and motivate children; that reflects the variety of involvement children enjoy and which enhances their learning and personal development.

Focus for development

- To be explicit in expressing and strengthening the Christian aspects of this church school through more formal evaluation systems that will enhance impact on church school improvement.
- Give greater emphasis to developing children's spirituality through RE and collective worship planning and assessment that takes more consistent account of both attainment targets.

**The school's distinctive Christian character is good
and meets the needs of all learners**

The school has a strong and caring ethos that supports all children, whatever their needs. This ethos permeates the school's life and is reflected positively in how parents, church, village and wider communities all have high regard for their school. Though the ethos is good, the school could give greater emphasis to the Christian elements of being a church school, through developing a stronger sense of spirituality in all aspects of school life. The children are very happy, much enjoy their school time and achieve good standards. The school environment, learning and teaching, care and guidance are all good and ensure that children make clear progress in their social and moral development. Children have a voice through the school council: minutes of meetings show that this is a democratic process which has had a definite impact on improving several areas of school life. They have recently valued a privileged learning experience through being involved in a staff interview. The rural context of the school makes it more difficult to increase children's understanding and experience of multicultural diversity: this is achieved through good RE learning, worship time and visits, where appropriate focus is given to this.

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

Collective worship is an effective start to each day for the whole school. The impact of worship time is good. Staff and clergy work collaboratively in planning and evaluating collective worship, as well as celebratory assemblies, and share the leading of these times to best effect. Some modification to the planning and evaluation for worship could enhance the impact this has on furthering children's spiritual growth. Children participate with enthusiasm in singing, discussion and answering questions. Leaders respond well to children's contributions ensuring that all are valued. Time for prayer and reflection helps children to gain spiritually and children's own prayers are used and displayed. It is clear that children understand the facts about having a faith, but more opportunities could be made to help them understand the relevance of faith in their own lives. Good focus is given to the 'worship area' in the hall and this is used well for topical displays of religious artefacts and books: these make valuable links between worship themes and RE learning. Worship is clearly Christian and helps to increase children's understanding of the Anglican tradition through good use of prayers and through their contributions to festival events in the parish church. Though governors are supportive, a more proactive approach to monitoring and evaluating collective worship, which is reflected in the school improvement plan, could enhance its impact on the school community.

The effectiveness of religious education is good.

The overall effect of religious education is good. Teaching of mixed age classes, which also spans key stages with a wide range of abilities, is good: particularly where the Foundation Stage is gaining RE learning in the context of the six learning areas. Children in all year groups respond positively to a wide variety of good RE learning experiences, supported by good use of relevant resources, including ICT. Following a visit to the parish church, Early Learners were particularly enjoying the recreation of a 'church' role play area, showing some very good learning about this. Children's work shows they are working at appropriate levels for their ages and their behaviour and attitudes to learning are good. The Diocesan RE syllabus is now in place and children's learning is being assessed. A review of this could ensure planning, assessment and recording formats are uniform for all classes, give greater clarity in outcomes for both RE attainment targets and clearer progression in achievement for every child. Though it is clear that children understand the facts about different faiths,

more opportunities could be made to help them understand the relevance of faith to their own and others' lives. Governors are supportive in monitoring RE teaching and learning, but their evaluations of this could have greater impact on further improving standards.

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

The overall effect of leadership and management of the school is good. The head teacher's positive and collaborative style of leading ensures all staff are highly valued. The school enjoys productive and supportive links with the local church community, other community groups and local businesses: these give the children a wider perspective of life beyond their school. There are valued and effective links between the parish church council and the parents association. Children's knowledge and experience of other denominations and faith groups is limited because of the school's rural context, but leaders strive to meet this need through informal contacts which could be further developed. Through good RE learning, which is linked effectively to collective worship, children gain understanding of other major faiths. Though parents and carers speak very positively of the school's ethos, they could be given more opportunity to evaluate the faith aspects of this church school. Governors are positive and supportive in their roles as managers and are keen to give time to learning how they can improve the impact they have on the Christian aspects of school life. There are monitoring and evaluation processes in place, but leaders and managers could ensure that a more formal use is made of these in evaluating the school as a church school, through religious education and collective worship.

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