

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Humshaugh CE VA First School

Humshaugh

Hexham

NE46 4AA

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Diocese: Newcastle

Local authority: Northumberland

Dates of inspection: 12 March 2015

Date of last inspection: 9 February 2010

School's unique reference number: 122295

Headteacher: Cath Newson

Inspector's name and number: Mary Cook 811

School context

Humshaugh Church of England First School is a very small school predominantly serving the two villages, Humshaugh and Wall. There are currently 26 children on roll. Strong links have been established with Newbrough Church of England School, as the recently appointed headteacher leads both schools. There is currently a vacancy in the incumbency of the ecclesiastical parish and the school is being supported by the neighbouring Parish of St. George's, Wall. A section 5 Ofsted inspection took place in February 2015.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Humshaugh CE VA First School as a Church of England school are good

- Christian values and practice underpin the life of the school, engaging all the members of the school community, communicating God's love for them and inspiring them in their learning and personal development.
- Well planned and inclusive worship helps to structure the week and contributes greatly to the spiritual development of all involved.
- An able and committed team of adults, led by a transformational headteacher, is working to move the school forward and to shape it as a hub for the local community.

Areas to improve

- Build on from the thought-provoking reflection areas in the school hall by developing an extension of these in the classrooms and the outdoor environment to further enhance the creative and spiritual opportunities available for all in school.
- Put in place a system whereby the children can routinely plan, prepare and lead worship so that they can confidently articulate the Christian values which underpin the life of the school.
- Embed the assessment practice in Religious Education (RE) so that all members of staff understand and can contribute to the tracking system, and the Governing Body are reliably informed of progress and attainment in RE.

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

Humshaugh CE First School's strong commitment to Christian values is clearly seen in the life of the school, notably through collective worship and RE. The headteacher models the commitment to recognise, develop and celebrate the uniqueness and individual worth of each

member of the school made in the school mission statement. Given the number of children on roll, there is a highly personalised and tailored curriculum to meet the needs of those in mixed aged classes. Attainment of the pupils is good, with most pupils making good progress and some individuals making outstanding progress. There are some excellent relationships within school and behaviour is exemplary. The high quality discussions between staff and pupils, shape, strengthen and express the values that are core to the school. There is a mutually supportive relationship between the Clergy and the local congregations who help arrange services that the school can contribute to such as the Christingle Service. Worship and a sense of belonging to a wider community is enhanced in the partnership with other Church of England schools in the area who work together to arrange joint workshops and celebrations in locations such as Hexham Abbey. Children and parents alike talk animatedly about the 'Praise You Worship,' an opportunity for each child to share their learning and talents. Parents are very supportive of the school and recognise 'a renewal of Christianity' and 'a reaching out to the whole community' within recent times. One parent commented: 'Although I have no faith, the school also feels more inclusive now.' Pupils feel safe and find all staff approachable and fair in their responses, whatever the context, however they are still developing their vocabulary in order to describe the values they show each and every day. There are a variety of interactive reflection activities set up in the hall for children to extend their thinking about the world and key stories from the Bible, which could be extended into the outdoor environment. The teaching of RE makes a positive contribution to the overall ethos of the school and has addressed the previous SIAS development point in deepening awareness of other religions and culture.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

A real sense of intimacy is created during collective worship, as the hall is re-arranged to become 'God's House' signifying that this is a special time. Pupils show respect during worship, through excellent behaviour, rejoicing in their singing and responding enthusiastically to interactive moments. The children readily join in with stories from their own experience which helps them to make sense of the worship theme and Bible story. Prayers and greetings are from the Anglican tradition: this prepares the children well so they can fully participate in the church services they attend. The children contribute their own thoughts and prayers when leading the 'Praise You Worship' and worship in church. Worship makes a good contribution to the school's ethos, to the expression of its values and to the development of learners and adults. There are opportunities for parents, families, members of the parish church and governors to share worship time and they speak appreciatively of these occasions and the impact for them and the children. The headteacher plans the worship themes for the year based on; the church calendar, Bible stories and core Christian values and concepts such as the Holy Trinity. Visitors add to the variety of worship experienced in school, all receive guidance about expectations and the school vision for worship. The children have a good understanding of the major church festivals, but less so the Holy Trinity. The school encourages families to attend the Eucharist in church, for example Mothering Sunday, by inviting the children to lead aspects of the worship. The children enjoy preparing materials for the services and taking part in the worship in church. The school has been proactive in monitoring the impact of worship and there is a desire to engage the children further planning, leading and evaluating worship on a more frequent basis.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

The school has invested considerable time and energy into the implementation of the new Diocesan RE Syllabus: this is on-going. A specialist RE teacher is employed on a part-time basis to lead and teach the subject to the two classes. Pupils progress well in their learning about Christianity and other major world faiths and achieve good standards by the end of Year 4. The emphasis given to the teaching of Christianity is strengthened by the learning visits to church, and by involving the visiting parish priest in learning in school. This also offers good opportunities for the pupils' spiritual development. The quality of teaching is good with some outstanding elements. Teaching is often personalised so all children can access the curriculum. Pupils value and enjoy RE lessons: the creative use of 'Thinking for Learning' techniques have sometimes taken them out of their comfort zone in prompting for a deeper

response. The classroom and hall environments reflect the importance of RE to the school with dedicated display space celebrating the children's thoughts and work. One display highlighted the children's personal response to an illustration of the Last Supper another valued the children's views on love. Pupils have an understanding of the practices and beliefs of other faiths and cultures and have benefitted from people of other faiths sharing their beliefs and customs with them. Knowledge of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith could be further extended and linked to the 'Rights and Responsibilities' work currently undertaken across school. The subject leader has ensured assessment systems are in place: these are yet to be embedded. Other members of staff do not currently contribute to RE assessment, and the school would have a more cohesive overview of the children's knowledge and the impact of RE beyond the lesson itself, if they did so. Governors are aware of the new syllabus and are keen to discuss the impact of the changes with the subject leader and to compare results in RE with the other core subjects.

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

The headteacher, staff and governors place Christian values and ethos at the heart of this school; all have been involved in reviewing the Mission Statement and planning at a strategic level to improve the opportunities for the children. Consequently there is greater global awareness and more of an understanding of multi-cultural Britain. The school draws on the experiences of the various members of the wider school community to assist them in broadening the curriculum so that there are enrichment opportunities. This skilful weaving of talents and experience has helped to place the school at the centre of the community and has enhanced the already inclusive reputation. Furthermore, there is a significant impact on children's spiritual, moral social and cultural development shown in their responses to questions posed in RE. Self-evaluation of the school as a church school is shared by senior leaders who keep the governing body up to date. The governors are very involved with the life of the school and have a good understanding of the distinctive ethos: their decision making may now benefit from a more secure evidence base such as the assessment data for RE. The school meets the statutory requirements for both collective worship and RE. The school has excellent relationships with the local Anglican churches and schools: all work together in a spirit of partnership to enhance the Christian aspects of school life. There is a clear understanding of the need to develop future church school leaders, and the school is aware of the leadership training available. Parents are supportive of and involved in, school life. They speak very positively of the care and support given to their children and value the Christian aspects of the school.

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