

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Leven Valley Church of England (VA) Primary School

Backbarrow
Ulverston
Cumbria
LA12 8QF

Diocese: **Carlisle**
Local authority: Cumbria

Dates of inspection: 11 & 13/07/11
Date of last inspection: 31/01/08
School's unique reference number: 112356
Headteacher: Mr Ian Nicol
Inspector's name & number: Penny Hollander 526



DIOCESE OF CARLISLE
Board of Education
"Every Child Matters To God."

School context

Leven Valley CE school is situated in a small rural community in South Cumbria. It currently has fifty eight pupils on roll and serves a wide geographical area of surrounding villages and hamlets. These are often socially isolated. Social mobility is high. Children are from mixed socio economic backgrounds and are almost all of white British ethnicity.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of the school as a Church of England school are good

Leven Valley Church of England primary school clearly promotes its Christian character through Christian values which underpin all that happens there. These are well understood and appreciated by all stakeholders and contribute to children's understanding. The strong links with the church underline this commitment and effectiveness as a church school

Established strengths

- Excellent relationships between all members of the school community
- Strong links between the school, church, local and wider community
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Focus for development

- Develop pupils' role in planning and leading worship in school more regularly
- Embed governors role in leadership and management of the school in church school issues

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

Children are very happy and supported in school. They say that they feel safe and really enjoy the family atmosphere of the school. "We all know each other well and help to make

sure that everyone feels included". They talk enthusiastically about all the experiences they have in school, both in the classroom as well as through visits and outdoor activities. Parents are appreciative of all that the school gives to their children, including a firm basis for life in Christian values. They speak of the care, and respect their children receive and recognise that these values not only emanate from Christian teaching but are reinforced through the strong links that the school has with the church community. Members of the church run an after school club for children in the school. Pupils' excellent behaviour effectively demonstrates how they put compassion and forgiveness into action. They openly reflect on "what would Jesus have done" so that any conflicts are quickly and fairly resolved. Relationships between all members of the school community are outstanding. The mutual trust that exists is evident. Pupils say that all staff in school help and support them in every part of school life. Christian values encourage, nourish and challenge children's spiritual moral, social and cultural development. Social and cultural development is good with effective links made with other schools for visits and joint activities such as workshop days at Cartmel Priory. Fairtrade links with the Suma Project strengthens children's awareness and sense of responsibility towards those less fortunate than themselves. The school environment nourishes and challenges children's spiritual development through the use of reflective displays and quiet areas within the school environment.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Pupils are enthusiastic about worship and are fully engaged in all that happens on these occasions. They particularly welcome the regular contribution of the vicar at these times. "He tells really interesting stories from the Bible that we can apply to our lives", says an older pupil. Worship has a very important role in school life. It effectively feeds into what happens in the classroom and playground behaviour. Learners and staff, regardless of background, feel included and affirmed by these occasions. Planning is clear, systematic and regularly evaluated by staff, pupils and governors. The strong links between the school and local and wider church in the area ensure that children understand and use appropriately different Anglican traditions and practice. Worship in the parish church at significant times in the year reinforces this as well as joint services with other local schools at Cartmel Priory at Christmas and Easter. Children appreciate the active role they have on these occasions both in planning and leading parts of the worship. The school recognises that although it has made some progress since the last inspection by involving children in planning and leading worship in church for the Easter and Christmas services and for the leavers service in school, it now needs to develop this more regularly in school worship times. Children are keen to choose their own themes and take responsibility in this area.

The effectiveness of the religious education (RE) is good.

Pupils are very positive about religious education and describe it as "one of our favourite lessons. We do lots of different activities and have really interesting discussions". Pupils are challenged appropriately and make good progress. The cross curricular approach taken in lessons allows children to make important connections with their own beliefs and experiences as well as considering the faiths and attitudes of others. For example in one RE lesson children were challenged to think about the needs of others as well as themselves through a "fair trading" game and then considered the responses of different religions to the given situation. Children can confidently express their knowledge and understanding of Christian faith but also show a respect for the beliefs of others different from their own. Assessment for

learning, both about and from religion, is developed well with portfolios of children's work and the use of 'I can' statements ensures that pupil progress is effectively monitored and developed. This successfully addresses an issue from the last inspection. A fuller use of self and peer assessment will help pupils to understand how they learn and identify ways to improve their learning. Standards in RE are in line with other core subjects.

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

The headteacher is an effective leader of the school with a clear Christian vision for its continuing development. He is well supported by a committed governing body which is proactive in engaging all stakeholders in a review of the school's Christian values. The recent survey of all stakeholders is an example of this in practice. Parent questionnaires show how strongly they support the Christian values the school promotes and how these influence behaviour and attitudes across the school. They clearly appreciate the principles of honesty, love, trust and forgiveness embedded within school life and recognise that Biblical teachings underpin them. The school leadership ensures these values inform and influence all practice in school. Issues identified by stakeholders are addressed and parents say that they are fully consulted on school matters through discussion and questionnaires. Children are proud of their role in school life and the responsibilities they have, such as through the 'buddy system' and the school council. RE and collective worship are well led and make a significant contribution to the school's Christian character. Foundation governors regularly and effectively monitor and evaluate these areas. They are clearly aware of the future development needs of the school as a church school, particularly in relation to succession planning. Parents are very supportive of all that happens within school including those events which reflect the links with the church. The close mutual support between the school, church, parents and local community is demonstrated through joint collaboration in many local events as well as those involving the wider church and global links.

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