



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Warkworth CE VA First School, Guilden Road,  
Warkworth. NE65 0TJ

**Previous SIAMS grade: Outstanding**

**Diocese: Newcastle**

Local authority: Northumberland

Dates of inspection: 4 June 2015

Date of last inspection: 30 June 2010

School's unique reference number: 122301

Headteacher: Jacqui Carrick

Inspector's name and number: Mary Pedley NS 361

### School context

Warkworth CE First School is a small school serving a village community and its surrounding area with some coming from outside the catchment. There are 80 pupils on roll: all are White British. 13% of pupils are on the Special Educational Needs and Disability register. Ongoing classroom reorganisation is incorporating the existing pre-school into the main building and so within the school community. After an absence, one full-time member of teaching staff is making a phased return.

### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Warkworth First School as a Church of England school are good

- Pupils' behaviour is very good and relationships throughout the school community are positive and clearly based on Christian values.
- The head teacher has a strong vision for the school as a church school and is supported by a very good team of staff and well-informed governors.
- The Religious Education (RE) and Worship co-ordinator is enthusiastic and committed: though part time, she works positively and collaboratively with class teachers to ensure high quality RE teaching and worship that has a valuable impact on children.
- The school community benefits from a committed governing body who are proactive in supporting and encouraging school improvement.

### Areas to improve

- There is some learning about other world faiths, but long term planning for RE should include more specific study of these in Key Stage 1 and 2.
- Though RE is good, with clear tracking systems in place, care should be given to ensure there is consistency in marking that includes next steps for learning, and assessment that is more clearly linked to the very good evidence already collected.
- The co-ordinator role could be developed further: to include audits for RE and worship that inform the School Self Evaluation (SSE) and School Improvement Plan (SIP); by offering more opportunities for pupils to enjoy some independent planning and leading of worship.
- Governors could enhance the effectiveness of their contribution to self-evaluation through developing a monitoring role for collective worship.

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

The distinctively Christian character of Warkworth First School is good. Christian values very clearly underpin all that the school does to meet the needs of all learners. There are some outstanding features that reflect the strong Christian character: the very inclusive and supportive culture that enables every pupil to achieve their best; Early Years pupils make rapid progress, with Key Stage 1 attainment above average. By the end of Year 4 progress is in line with national expectations. Because respect, care, compassion and forgiveness are at the heart of school life, relationships are good and create a happy school community. Staff ensure that those with personal or special learning needs are sensitively and appropriately supported, resulting in their progress exceeding the national average. Pupils say they feel very safe and they gain much self-esteem and confidence within this Christian context. They behave very well, responding with natural courtesy, respect and consideration, and are encouraged to take responsibility for themselves and for others. They speak well of the School Council, valuing the voice they have through this forum and the changes that have resulted. The children planned and led special celebrations for Easter and St. George's Day and their evaluations led to floor cushions for Worship time.

Both RE and worship contribute much to the Christian character of the school. Pupils gain good spiritual, moral and social development through a range of exciting learning and extra-curricular opportunities, a variety of meaningful worship experiences and valuable RE teaching. Their knowledge of other faiths and cultures could be developed more through greater focus on specific studies of some other major world faiths.

Parents give great value to the Christian ethos, the caring relationship all staff have with pupils, and speak highly of the welcoming open door policy the school has for them. Displays around school provide good evidence of pupils' learning and understanding of Christianity. A very recent Art workshop day for the whole school on Christian values has clearly been an extremely meaningful learning experience for all involved and has resulted in some excellent art work to be displayed as frescoes around the hall. A topic looking at the Magna Carta, with pupils creating rules for society that apply today, reflect not only Christian values but clear awareness of British values.

## **The impact of collective worship on the school community is good**

Worship is central to school life, has a clear and valuable impact on pupils' spiritual and moral development and is seen in the care and support pupils have for each other. The co-ordinator is part-time, enthusiastic and continually strives to enhance the impact of worship on the whole school community: it has a strong Christian focus where major Christian festivals are celebrated both in school and in church and regularly includes Biblical material and Christian teaching. Planning is brief with themes based on the Church's calendar with a clear focus on Jesus Christ. Pupils confidently express how worship relates to their own lives. They are engaged and enjoy interaction with different worship leaders, with the parish priest leading worship most weeks. Staff lead worship on a weekly rota basis taking the worship theme through the week. Governors occasionally lead and attend worship, but this is not yet formally monitored as they do for RE. The quality and impact of the worship time observed was outstanding and the impact on pupils' spiritual development was clearly seen: it was exciting and inclusive, with all pupils fully engaged, interacting and participating. Pupils showed a good understanding of the difficult concepts of the Trinity and the effect of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Prayers, singing and reflection are an integral part of worship time and it was impressive to hear children humming and singing the song as they entered the hall for worship. Parents speak highly of the weekly 'celebration worship' and many attend regularly, recognising and appreciating the value and impact gained by their children in spiritual and moral learning and development. Parents also appreciated the children's Holy Week worship in the school grounds and the Christmas Nativity walk through the village, giving an opportunity for this church school to show a Christian presence in the community. An annual audit of Collective Worship, using evaluations and monitoring evidence could add greatly to informing the School Improvement Plan more fully.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is good**

The part-time RE co-ordinator has much enthusiasm and commitment for leading and managing all aspects of RE. She works collaboratively and positively with all class teachers who provide good quality RE to their own class. The Diocesan RE syllabus is implemented through a 2 year planning cycle. RE has equal profile to core curriculum areas and the syllabus focuses mostly on Christianity. Pupils make expected progress in RE and their attainment for RE is in line with and sometimes above the national averages achieved in other core subjects. RE reflects the Anglican Church year through its festivals and seasons. Pupils have good knowledge of these and can explain them in the context of Christ's life and ministry, relating some learning to their own lives. Other major world faiths are referred to but not given a clear focus for study or opportunities for pupils to make links between the beliefs and practices of other faiths. This could be addressed in an RE audit and so inform the School Improvement Plan. Some aspects of RE are outstanding: in particular pupils in all Key Stages enjoy a variety of exciting, interactive and creative learning experiences, where teaching ranges from good to outstanding. Lessons were observed in Foundation Stage and Key Stages 1 and 2. In all three lessons pupils were actively and positively involved through Chatterbox artefact discussion, 'freeze frame' and Godly Play thinking. Teachers share and discuss pupils' RE achievement and this informs future planning, but marking could show clearer assessment of levels achieved and more 'next steps' to help pupils improve and progress. Planning formats are good and used well to show what pupils are learning about and what they can learn from the topic. Assessment systems are in place, but pupils' assessed achievement lacks a formally recorded connection to the very good 'scrap book' of evidence. Class teachers formally monitor each other's RE lessons to discuss further improvement. Governors monitor RE effectively: this informs all governors and impacts on the School Improvement Plan. Good RE resources enhance RE teaching and Godly Play learning.

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

The Christian ethos of the school is seen through positive relationships, care for each other and respect for God; it clearly underpins the daily life of the school. The head teacher's continuously consistent and positive leadership and strong vision for taking the school forward, encourages good collaboration from the school community: the outcome of this has clear impact on pupils' progress, achievement and well-being. Staff and governors benefit from appropriate professional development which strengthens their leadership roles. Governors are constructively supportive in supporting and challenging the head teacher. They contribute well to school self-evaluation processes but could add to this through developing their monitoring roles further to include collective worship. Leadership vision reaches out through effective partnership links with parents, families, the local village and church communities. There are valuable partnerships with the Alnwick Partnership of Church Schools as well as with the Coquet Partnership of schools. Staff, governors and pupils benefit from these links through the positive impact on the school community and sharing knowledge and expertise. Parents greatly value the school, appreciating the Christian values and learning seen in their children. Some parents from outside the catchment area have chosen this school because the Christian ethos and welcoming environment are important features for them. Collective worship and RE contribute to pupils' understanding of the teaching of Jesus and opportunities for spiritual, moral and social development. Cultural knowledge and understanding could be strengthened by clearer inclusion of specific study of some major world faiths. The school is clearly moving forward to become an outstanding school: leaders and governors have good understanding about the role of their church school in the community and are proactive in their vision of how to move the school forward, for example the ongoing classroom reorganisation to include the existing and popular pre-school within the main school building. The school has a lot to celebrate: a caring family atmosphere, the commitment of staff to provide the best education for every child in a Christian context, and the high level of parental satisfaction.