



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

### Greatham Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Egerton Terrace  
Greatham  
TS25 2EU

#### Diocese: Durham

Local authority: Hartlepool  
Dates of inspection: 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2013  
Date of last inspection: 11<sup>th</sup> June 2008  
School's unique reference number: 111673  
Headteacher: Mrs Nicola Dunn  
Inspector's name and number: Mr David Johnson 693

#### School context

Greatham C.E. is a smaller than average primary school and currently has 93 full time places and a 13-place nursery offering 26 part time placements. The school serves the village of Greatham and the surrounding area where the socio-economic characteristics are below average. The majority of pupils are white British. A small number of pupils are from other faiths. Building works are in progress to provide a new dining hall. A recently appointed head teacher has been in post since April 2013.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Greatham Primary as a Church of England school are outstanding

Greatham is a school where leaders have a clear vision based on strong Christian values. Leadership is open, honest and continually strives for a way to improve the lives of children, their families and the community. Children achieve well both academically and personally in an atmosphere of love, respect and forgiveness. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is threaded throughout the life of the school. All stakeholders are proud of their school and its heritage.

#### Established strengths

- Christian values are lived out in action within the school creating an exceptional environment for growth and learning.
- The high quality partnership and strength of relationships between all stakeholders.
- Excellent links between the school, church and local community, offering an enriched curriculum.

#### Focus for development

- Continue the focus on Religious Education so that it fully takes its place as a major contributor to developing the Christian character of the school.
- Develop the excellent professional development for Collective Worship instigated with the assistance of the local vicar and celebrate this expertise by sharing with other church schools.

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

The outstanding distinctive Christian ethos in the school shines through its daily life and clearly underpins relationships at all levels. It permeates every aspect - from documentation and displays through to classroom practice. As a result of a total commitment to the development of the whole child within a supportive school community regardless of their ability, all learners are well supported in order that they achieve their full potential. Academically, all pupils make good progress relative to their starting points, as confirmed both by Ofsted (2013), and the schools own rigorous tracking data on individual performance. Learners achieve well and are enthusiastic about their work. They are motivated, secure in their place within the school family, and as a result, all children across all year groups thrive emotionally, socially and spiritually. Children themselves recognise the support given to them and in turn reflect and return this love, care and respect towards each other and all those adults involved in their school. Children say they enjoy learning; one said, "When I leave this school I will miss everything about it – the people and the things we do". Children readily take on responsibility for the benefit of all. One example of this is the lunchtime activities organised and run by Year 5 children, who have been trained as playground leaders - an important and worthwhile role which impacts positively particularly on the younger age group. Year 6 children have responsibility for the school office. They are proud of their contribution, answering the telephone and taking messages in a very professional manner. Behaviour is outstanding because core values directly affect the choices children make in their day to day living. The well-developed outdoor areas are easily accessible to children allowing them to explore, play, care for the environment and relish the beauty of God's world. Eco club activities, an outside reflection area within a willow structure, a story telling area containing a storyteller's chair were all pointed out to me by the children who were proud of what they had achieved. "Isn't this great! "A child said proudly. Parents are highly supportive of the Christian ethos of the school. One parent commented, "There is an atmosphere of love, respect and self-respect" The children regularly use reflection areas in each classroom focussing on prayer as well as Christian values. Religious Education makes a strong contribution to the Christian character of the school. Children are fully aware that Christianity is a multi-cultural world faith and show respect for diversity and difference both within the church and in other faith communities. Involvement in community events is central to the life of the school; children, staff and governors think of the needs of others and this is reflected in fundraising for various charities. Lent lunches have been an activity where the local church and the school have worked closely together to provide food and fellowship for the parishioners. Governors spend time in the school working alongside the staff and children, and as a consequence, help them to ensure that the school maintains and develops its Christian distinctiveness for the benefit of all.

**The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding.**

Collective worship is explicitly Christian, at the very heart of school life, and is based around a carefully constructed cycle of well-planned themes where the presence of God is acknowledged and celebrated. As a result acts of worship provide for the spiritual development of everyone within its community and the resources used add positively to the spiritual atmosphere. The Collective Worship I observed was well planned and based around the theme of 'God's Beautiful World'. It had a sense of occasion because excellent use was made of wall displays, projector slides and religious symbolic items to indicate that this space and time was special. There was clear Christian content and as a result of the thoughtful and inspirational input, children and staff were absorbed, attentive and participated well. Outside of these special occasions, children are encouraged to maximise the learning gains of worship through planned opportunities in class. The impact of this was very clear in discussion later in the day; children were reflective and able to speak confidently and knowledgably about how collective worship affects them, the school community and their life at home. The children see the importance of worship and R.E. and all that they offer; in their discussion, they demonstrated that they understand that there is a range of beliefs represented in the school and that they need to have respect for them all. "Worship helps us to live our life the way God wants us to."

Elements of Worship are distinctively Anglican, as noted in the school altar cloth, which is

changed according to the church calendar. Children, parents, governors and staff help with the self-evaluation of this important time in the school day; outcomes tell school leaders that Collective Worship is engaging, helps the children to explore their own beliefs, and has a clear structure which those participating find helpful. The local church is an important venue for worship and children feel both welcome and comfortable there. Liturgical colours, opening greetings, prayers based on the Anglican tradition, and jubilant and joyful hymn singing are elements used to help the community to focus on God and experience the joy of His love. The involvement of the parish priest and a number of other people provide a wide variety of useful contributions, and because of this all members of the school community parents, pupils, staff and governors, said they felt included in worship and spoke appreciatively about the variety of people who lead it.

Evaluation has led to a clear action plan of ways to continue the development of worship in the school. For example, the parish priest as ex-officio member of the governing body has been involved in collective worship training with the staff to develop their skills. 'Godly Play', a creative approach to Christian story telling focus, has become a format which is in the process of further development. Further training is planned and it is hoped to involve other schools in the area.

In the previous inspection the focus for development relating to both formalising evaluation and providing professional development opportunities for stakeholders has been completed. All classes have reflection areas and understand the importance of prayer and contemplation outside the more formal whole-school worship sessions. Holding crosses are made available to either support prayer or provide comfort. As a result, children understand the purpose of prayer and value its place not only within collective worship but also at other times of the day. The school contributes to the local church/community magazine and school work is displayed in the church.

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

The head teacher, through her clearly articulated vision, is maintaining and developing a 'Christian' school at the heart of its community. She is well supported by a committed and hardworking staff, including a recently appointed and enthusiastic R.E. Co-ordinator, together with loyal and knowledgeable governors. This enables a coherent expression of the school's Christian foundation and an ethos that puts God at the heart of school life. Everyone feels safe and valued as a member of this school family.

Governors have recently worked with the head teacher in reviewing the mission statement as well as the school improvement plan (SIP) and they all have a clear understanding of the distinctive character they want to further evolve. Both R.E. and Collective Worship are a high profile aspect of this planning. Governors are very clear about the strengths of the school because of the clarity of the head teacher's input and because of the first-hand experience they have of the school day to day. Governors are regular visitors; they spend time both within the classrooms and also attending and leading Collective Worship. Succession planning at all levels, including roles within the governing body, is well met by developing an understanding of the management roles required for the future. A Foundation Governor who was in school for the day working with children commented, "We are preparing individuals for life through their faith."

The school's website, documentation, signs and displays as well as the caring behaviour of both staff and pupils continually promote the school's Christian values.

Rigorous self-evaluation means the school understands where further development is needed to guarantee the highest standards. Head teacher, staff and governors provide excellent role models for learners. This has led to close 'family relationships' which enrich the school, providing an excellent framework for support and excellent pastoral care.

The school has first-rate relationships with parents who speak highly of the achievements and well-being of the children and of their complete satisfaction with the partnership created between home and school. One parent said "The school is very caring and knows every child. Christian values have an impact on our children's behaviour and respect for others and attitude towards life and work."

The issues in 'Focus for development' from the last inspection (2008) have all been fully met with positive outcomes for learners.

SIAMS report July 2013 Greatham C.E. Voluntary Controlled Primary, Greatham TS25 2EU