

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Coatham Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Coatham Road

Redcar

TS10 1QY

Diocese: York

Local authority: Redcar and Cleveland

Dates of inspection: 13th June 2011

Date of last inspection: 15th July 2008

School's unique reference number: 111672

Headteacher: Mrs Sue Radcliffe

Inspector's name and number: Sue Foster 146

School context

This average sized primary school is set on the North East edge of Redcar. The catchment area is mixed, bordering an area of high deprivation. There are currently 208 pupils on roll and most are of White British heritage. The proportion of children entitled to free school meals and with special educational needs and disabilities is above average. The headteacher has been in post for 5 years.

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

Coatham Primary is a good learning community where the ethos of love, care and well-being is firmly rooted in Christian values. This has created a successful school where children are thriving. Learners are confident, articulate and extremely welcoming. Relationships throughout the school are exemplary. Parents and pupils say this is a wonderful school and comment how special it is, strongly supporting the learning climate and Christian ethos.

Established strengths

- Relationships across the school community are exemplary
- Pupils are happy and thriving in this caring school which both nurtures them and helps them to succeed
- A strong and committed staff team that works collaboratively and co-operatively

Focus for development

- Consolidate plans to involve pupils in planning and delivering regular acts of worship in school
- Provide training for foundation governors to enable them to understand and fulfil their statutory responsibilities

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

This school has a warm, friendly and positive atmosphere that reflects a true belief in Christian values that can be felt as soon as one enters the building. The headteacher, together with the staff and governors, has developed a clear vision, underpinned by Christian values which can be seen throughout the school. "Children are at the heart of everything we do" according to the school's motto and it is obvious that they are happy and feel safe and secure. Learners feel valued and special and are quick to engage in conversation with visitors. They are obviously proud of their achievements and of the whole school. When asked about the distinctiveness of the school, one pupil said "We talk about God and pray a lot" and "you can see in all classrooms we have a cross". Displays throughout the school are excellent and the learning environment outstanding. The dramatic stained glass window in the foyer provides a central Christian focal point for the children, encouraging them to love one another. Lessons are purposeful and calm with pupils being actively engaged in high quality learning experiences. For example, in an inspirational science lesson they displayed

imaginative and creative problem solving skills. Spiritual development is enhanced through well planned collective worship and religious education and by the range of displays and reflection areas. Foundation stage children, in particular, benefit from a special reflection room in their outdoor area which offers a tranquil oasis with seating, mobiles and prayers. Everyone says positive things about the school and parents were eager to express their feelings that Coatham is a special place. No pupil in this school is at a disadvantage. The level of care and support provided by staff is a strength of the school and behaviour and attitudes are excellent. Relationships within the school community are exemplary and characterised by Christian care and concern for others. Many charities benefit from the commitment of staff and pupils. Staff work collaboratively and co-operatively and feel their views are taken seriously. Accommodation and resources have a positive impact on the quality of spiritual reflection, prayer and worship. Evidence of the Christian character can be found across the school. A wide range of clubs and extra-curricular activities are appreciated and well attended.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Worship occupies an important place in the life of the school. All pupils have the opportunity to worship every day, either in a whole school or classroom setting. There is a weekly theme based on Christian values. The whole school worship observed was good with pupils being involved from the moment they entered the hall. Pupils are comfortable with the ritual surrounding collective worship and understand the symbolism associated with the lighting of the candle. This helps to develop a sense of belonging to the school community. Singing is robust and with feeling and the school prayer, which children know by heart, reflects its Christian foundation. Collective worship is consistently and recognisably Christian and honours the Anglican tradition. The school enjoys good links with the local church. Regular school services are held in Christ Church to celebrate the main Christian festivals. These services are frequently planned and led by pupils with support from members of staff and the vicar. A parents' group has been set up to support the strengthening links. As a result of this initiative, the Church has introduced a fortnightly family service, which welcomes young families to join the regular worshippers. Recently several children and one parent were confirmed. Adults usually lead worship in school, with pupils actively engaged in answering questions, singing and saying prayers. Discussion with pupils revealed that they are keen to plan and lead worship in school themselves; this is already an action point in the school improvement toolkit.

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

The quality of leadership contributes significantly to the success of the school as attested in the recent Ofsted report. The headteacher is fully committed to further developing the Christian dimension of the school. The governing body, ably led by the chair, supports its headteacher fully. Foundation governors are keen to work more closely with leaders and managers to enhance understanding of their specific roles and responsibilities in relation to promoting Coatham's distinctive Christian character. There are already established links with the church locally and plans are in place to strengthen them by more regular visits from the vicar and involvement in religious education and collective worship. Staff support the strong vision underpinned by Christian values. Parents feel that the school has a special quality enabling learners of all backgrounds to flourish. The children benefit from excellent care, guidance and support. Teachers are accountable for pupils' progress and middle leaders are becoming more effective in monitoring teaching and learning in their areas. Data shows that the great majority of learners are achieving well in relation to prior attainment and social background. This is due to high expectations, clear guidance, mutual respect and the motivation and inspiration shown by leaders and managers. Links with the local community are good. Coatham School's symbol of a church is on all documentation showing that this school is proud to be a church school. The senior leadership team has very effectively evaluated the distinctive aspects of the school and understands the next steps required to consolidate further development. Working more closely with the vicar and foundation governors will enable this aspiration to come to fruition.