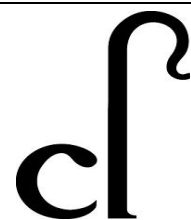


National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Holm Cultram Abbey Church of England School

Abbey Town,
Wigton, Cumbria CA7 4RU



Diocese of Carlisle
Growing Disciples

Previous SIAMS grade:	Good
Current inspection grade:	Satisfactory
Diocese:	Carlisle
Local authority:	Cumbria
Dates of inspection:	3 July 2015
Date of last inspection:	1 July 2010
School's unique reference number:	112249
Acting Headteacher:	Nicola Gallagher
Inspector's name and number:	Penny Hollander 526

School context

Holm Cultram Abbey Voluntary Controlled Church of England school is situated in a remote part of North West Cumbria with some rural deprivation. There are 38 pupils from a range of socio-economic backgrounds including many agricultural families. All pupils are of white British ethnicity. 30% are eligible for pupil premium and 34% have special needs. In September 2014 an acting headteacher was appointed after two years of joint executive headship. This will be a substantive headship in September 2015. The governing body has had long-standing vacancies. There are no foundation governors since the incumbent left in January 2015.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Holm Cultram Abbey as a Church of England school are satisfactory

- Christian values of love, trust and respect are explicitly expressed through the strong nurturing relationships in school.
- The inclusive nature of the school enables all pupils to flourish and results in good personal, moral and social development.
- The links between the school, church and community benefit everyone.

Areas to improve

- Ensure relevant training opportunities are provided for governors and staff so that all can contribute effectively to the strategic development of the school as a church school.
- Ensure that collective worship planning is focussed on promoting spiritual development and benefits from effective evaluation by the children so that it is relevant and promotes their understanding of Christian teaching.
- Develop pupils' awareness of different Christian traditions so that they understand Christianity as a global and diverse faith.

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

Children explain how Christian values affect their behaviour and attitudes. They say that they follow the example of Jesus in how they treat each other. "We try and make sure that we look after one another just as God looks after us". They know that they are all important to God. "Jesus loves everyone equally, whether you believe in him or not". All stakeholders support and value the school's Christian character which underpins everything that happens in school. Christian values of love, trust and respect are fundamental. Parents appreciate the supportive relationships which are based on these values. They say they particularly like the way older children are 'buddies' to younger ones. They recognise the mutual support between church and school, saying that their children value this relationship. Children flourish within a caring Christian environment, make good progress and achieve well. There are opportunities for reflection throughout the school day that help children to think about and express their ideas about God, the world and themselves. Circle Time and collective worship are two examples. Their reflections recorded on a 'Big Questions' display shows that children think deeply about God, the world and themselves. Pupils understand Christian teaching about right and wrong. They ask for God's forgiveness in their 'Sorry String' prayers when they know they haven't behaved appropriately. 'Reflective Time' is another way in which they consider how to put wrong actions right. Children are responsive to the needs of others and contribute to charity fundraising at a local and wider level. Through the Archbishop of York's Young Leaders' Award older children show responsibility and concern for others in organising the collection of food for the local Foodbank. Pupils' links with other schools help them to develop teamwork and collaborative skills. They say that these visits help them "to learn and have fun together". Religious Education (RE) contributes well to the Christian character of the school. Units of work are linked with Christian values. Children learn about different faiths and gain understanding of beliefs which are different from their own. They apply their learning in RE to their own lives. However, they do not encounter traditions and practices from the world church. As a result, they have limited understanding of Christianity as a global faith.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is satisfactory

Collective worship has an important role in school life. Children enjoy worship. They say that learning about Bible stories teaches them about how to live their lives. Collective worship contributes to children's understanding of Christian values. They are engaged in collective worship and participate through singing, role play and answering and raising questions. In an observed act of worship, children presented a puppet show to illustrate the Christian value of respect for all God has created. Pupils take an increasing role in planning aspects of collective worship, choosing hymns that reflect the theme of worship and saying or writing appropriate prayers. They have particular responsibility for planning and leading acts of worship in school services held in church at significant times in the church year. They also contribute to leadership of the Leavers Service. Last Christmas the older children wrote a modern Nativity play which they led and shared with the local community and pre-school. However, there are fewer opportunities for pupils to plan and lead school worship. The school recognises that this needs to be addressed in order that children develop their own ideas and gain a deeper understanding of the meaning and relevance of different aspects of worship. Staff and governors evaluate worship and this informs development planning. Children are beginning to contribute ideas to the evaluation of worship by adding their reflections to the Prayer Tree. However, these reflections are not used to inform future planning to ensure that worship is relevant and exciting for pupils. Pupils have some understanding of the importance of prayer and this is shown

through their prayers on the Prayer Wall. The impact of collective worship on spiritual development is satisfactory overall because planning does not consistently promote this. Children have some Christian understanding of God and the lighting of three candles at the start of collective worship for God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit helps to reinforce this. However, planning for worship does not secure a deep understanding of important Christian beliefs. Clergy and other visitors leading collective worship give children an understanding of different Christian traditions. This is mainly at a local level though and there is no use of material from the worldwide church.

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

Leaders promote a Christian vision for the school. Christian values underpin school life and leaders know that this makes a positive difference to the lives of children in school. However, although the vision for the school is implicitly underpinned by Christian values, this is not clearly expressed in much school documentation. Leaders recognise this and plan to make Christian distinctiveness more evident, including on the school website. Over the last few years, governors have not been fully involved in the strategic development of the school as a church school. The governing body has undergone many difficulties in recent years, including an inability to recruit foundation governors. However, recent changes have put the governing body in a stronger position to implement school improvement. The governors' new action plan has begun this process. Recent diocesan training means that they now have a better understanding of their role in self evaluating the school as a church school. Governors have begun to monitor and evaluate collective worship and RE, but this has not been in place for sufficient time to have brought about sustained improvement. Leaders of collective worship and RE have begun to implement new strategies which are having a positive impact in these areas but need to be fully embedded to ensure continued development. The new RE co-ordinator has benefited from training outside school and mentoring from the acting headteacher in school. Parents are strongly supportive of the school and committed to all activities and events, including church services. The local community is also very supportive of school events and fundraising. The recent 'Pizza and Pasta Night' is one example. Children enjoy the responsibilities they have in school and the school council have selected new playground equipment. The School Council speak proudly of the ways in which they choose charities to support those less fortunate than themselves. Further support and monitoring from the diocese will help the school to maintain these recent developments.