Seaton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Junior School

Seaton Park
Seaton
Workington,
Cumbria
CA14 1HA

Diocese: Carlisle

Local authority: Cumbria
Dates of inspection: 28/06/2012
Date of last inspection: 19/11/2008
School's unique reference number: 112277
Headteacher: Mike Kidd (Acting)
Inspector's name & number: Jeni Boothman OBE 604

School context

Seaton Church of England Junior School is situated in the large village of Seaton in West Cumbria. Almost all pupils are white British born and from a mixed socio-economic background. There are 220 pupils on roll. There is an Acting Headteacher in post until January 2013.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Seaton Church of England Junior School as a Church of England school are outstanding

The school cares very well for its pupils and their behaviour and personal development are excellent. The acting headteacher and governors work well together and with staff and children to ensure a positive Christian character is maintained and celebrated throughout the school.

Established strengths

- Explicit Christian values evident in all aspects of school life
- Excellent relationships between the whole school community based on Christian values
- Strong and effective partnership with the local church and community
- Pupils’ outstanding social, moral, spiritual and cultural development

Focus for development

- Pupils gain experience and understanding of a wider range of Christian and other faith communities, including the world wide church.
- Children more regularly take a leading role in worship

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

The school’s distinctive Christian character is clearly evident in the excellent relationships throughout the school community. Christian values of care, compassion, respect, tolerance and forgiveness permeate all aspects of school life. This has a positive impact on pupils’ moral and spiritual development which is outstanding. Personal responsibility and acceptance of others are effectively promoted through the Golden Rules and Golden Time which form the basis for pupils’ excellent behaviour. The ‘No Blame Approach’ is very effective in dealing with any inappropriate behaviour where the perpetrator has a chance to put things right with the victim. Pupils’ social development is outstanding and older children take good care of younger pupils through the Buddy System. Pupils talk openly about the importance of supporting each other. Pupils are confident, secure and well motivated resulting in good progress for all pupils, including those with special educational needs. Pupils are well cared for and say they can share concerns with any adults in school in the knowledge that their response will be caring, compassionate and held in strict confidence. Children say they enjoy
school and know they are special. Their views are highly valued and many of their ideas acted upon such as the development of the school grounds. Pupils are taught the need for respect and compassion for others especially those of different faiths as seen in their support of the Guthurani Ranching Special School in Kenya. Gifts brought to the Harvest Festival are made into soup which is sold to parents and pupils and the money raised sent to this Kenyan school. Parents are extremely supportive of the school and cherish the outstanding relationships which exist between the whole school community. There are very effective links with the local church. The school benefits highly from the regular contribution the vicar makes to collective worship and religious education. There are excellent relationships with the local community. The school makes a determined effort to forge positive links through events such as ‘The Over- 60’s Thursday Lunch’, ‘Christmas Carols on the Green’ and the choir’s visits to the local senior citizens’ home. Evidence of the school’s outstanding Christian character can be seen in many Christian displays around the school such as the large cross in the school hall and in every classroom, surrounded by many Christian values. The quiet garden outside provides positive opportunities for peaceful reflection demonstrating the importance the school attaches to this aspect of Christianity.

A pupil said, ‘I am proud to be in Seaton School. A very respectful place. It is a church school and we do not just say this. We are really Christians’.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is a special time for everyone in school and clearly influences pupils’ positive behaviour and attitude towards each other. Whole school and class worship are very well planned around the Christian values on display all around the school. Where possible these are introduced into other curriculum areas such as the study of ‘Coastlines’ which successfully includes respect for the beauty of God’s world. Evaluation of the impact of collective worship on all learners is regularly completed by all staff. Pupils make a valuable contribution towards worship by choosing music and hymns, dancing, playing music, writing prayers and role play. They have not yet organised and led whole school worship. Prayer is an important part of school life and said before lunch and at the end of the day. All children know the Lord’s Prayer and have a good knowledge of stories from the bible. Pupils’ successes both within and outside school are regularly celebrated in ‘Praise Assemblies’ and recorded in ‘The Golden Book’. They say they enjoy worship and the acting headteacher makes it fun. He introduces activities to engage them and helps them to understand. This was seen when coloured Smarties were used effectively to convey the idea that ‘Life is like a tube of Smarties-on the outside different but on the inside we are all the same’. A video of famous people who have overcome their difficulties, such as Beethoven with his blindness and Tom Cruise with his dyslexia, and the story of Jesus healing the lepers provided effective opportunities for all present to reflect on what had been said and what it meant to them. Pupils also enjoy the vicar leading worship in school and the children said, ‘He deals with serious subjects, tells us to keep our faith but still makes assembly fun’. The vicar plans for his monthly service with the headteacher, around the Christian values on display, to ensure continuity. The strong links with the local church ensure pupils’ understanding of the Anglican faith and practice. This was seen when pupils attended the church accompanied by the vicar to learn about Baptism. School services are held in church to celebrate the main Christian festivals and are well attended by parents. Community links are very strong through many of the school- community services such as ‘Church Sunday’ when a year group takes part in the Sunday service each term, sharing poetry, songs, paintings and prayers.

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

Governors and the acting headteacher have a distinctive Christian vision for the school which is understood and shared by all staff. This is the result of effective leadership where governors, staff and pupils contribute towards the school improvement plan and self evaluation. This includes the school’s Christian distinctiveness where Christian values and vision are reviewed every three years. Governors are very proactive and challenge as well as support the school’s leadership team. Collective worship is well led and whole school and class worship plans effectively promote Christian values and the school’s Christian ethos. The new religious education scheme is having a very positive impact on pupils’ spiritual
development. Foundation governors regularly visit school and help to ensure Christian values are well embedded. The vicar monitors the impact of collective worship and the effectiveness of Religious Education through the scrutiny of planning, joint lesson observations and pupil interviews. All curriculum policies reflect the school’s Christian ethos. All members of the school community are valued and staff feel well supported personally, professionally and spiritually. Teachers engage in quality training which helps them to develop skills as members of a church school. The school council has an important part to play in the decision making process and has a positive impact on school development. Parents appreciate the church school status which they say enriches their children’s lives and helps them become responsible citizens. They are often consulted over school matters and their ideas are valued as seen with the focus group presently evaluating the school’s homework policy. Parents endorse the school’s ‘Open Door Policy’ which provides them with informal access to staff and develops a strong partnership between school and home. Communication between school, home and church is successfully promoted through the school’s weekly newsletter and ‘The Villager’ newspaper. Links with the local church and community provide mutual benefit for all concerned. As a result of the school’s rural isolation there are few opportunities for pupils to visit places with different Christian or faith traditions. Pupils have little contact with representatives of other faiths but learn about local diversity through visitors such as Travelling People. Some contacts with the world wide church and global community have been to school but this is an area for development. The school’s distinctive Christian character is emphasised through signs, symbols and displays.

SIAS report June 2012 Seaton Church of England Junior School Seaton CA14 1HA