



CHURCH OF ENGLAND  
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL  
EDUCATION DIVISION



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

### Evenwood Church of England Primary School

New Rd, Evenwood  
Bishop Auckland  
DL14 9QZ

**Previous inspection report: Good**

**Current inspection grade: Good**

**Diocese: Durham**

Local authority: Durham

Dates of inspection: 24 June 2015

Date of last inspection:

School's unique reference number: 114221

Headteacher: Helen Sutherland

Inspector's name: Valerie Hall

Quality assurance: Lyn Field NS 151

### School context

Evenwood Church of England Primary school is a small voluntary controlled school with 97 pupils. The number of pupils eligible for pupil premium is well above average. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage and there are very few speakers of languages other than English. There have been substantial changes in leadership over recent years and every teacher is new to post since the last Section 48 inspection. The deputy headteacher took up post in January 2015. In October 2014 OFSTED judged the school to be good.

### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Evenwood Primary School as a Church of England school are good

- Evenwood Church of England Primary School is a place of highly generous hospitality.
- All members of the school community recognise and live out the values of school. They can say how values drive the success of school, but they don't necessarily link them to biblical teaching.
- Strong relationships between staff, school, parish and community ensure that the needs of those who require support are understood by the school and that influences how the school demonstrates care for others.
- The school is successful at developing a loving and respectful community, which reflects the love of Jesus for others, in which children can thrive.

### **Areas to improve**

- Involve all stakeholders in ensuring the Christian basis for values held by school is shared and understood by all and has links to biblical teaching.
- Establish a formal structure for all stakeholders to review the impact of collective worship and religious education (RE) and their impact on the distinctiveness and effectiveness of the school as a church school
- Increase opportunities for children to plan, lead and evaluate worship in a systematic manner.

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

Evenwood Church of England school is a welcoming and loving community. It expresses a clear set of values that are described as the key drivers for its work. However, a specific Christian basis for their values is not yet articulated. The voice of those who are in need of support is heard in all the school does. The value of perseverance is uppermost in the life of the school and learners are encouraged to do their best and to support each other. In RE, they state that they learn to be respectful because not everyone thinks like them. They are learning to understand diversity and that there are numerous sources of Christian support, such as church, families and school to which they can turn. Relationships between all groups are strong and influential. The parent support adviser and the vicar state that children influence their parents, which in turn influences the whole community. They describe how a family was helped due to the influence of the Christian ethos on children's understanding of neighbourliness in the wider community. Adults explain that the school's Christian influence enables any barriers that may have existed in the past, to have been eliminated. RE teaches children about other faiths and religions. As a result, children see values as human values but not distinctively Christian values. Children engage in lively discussion in RE. They learn about comparisons between their faith and Sikhism and are encouraged to apply lessons learned to everyday life. RE makes a significant contribution to the spiritual moral social and cultural development of children and allows children to deepen their understanding of the experience of people from other faiths and cultures. Displays about values fill the school and they remind children how to behave towards one another. However, not all children make the connection with Bible stories. Achievement in school is good including those children for whom the school receives additional funding. Very small cohorts mean that achievement over time appears highly variable but children make good progress. In particular in 2014, progress in maths was strong and attainment for those children who gained the highest level in maths, was in line with national levels. This reflects the schools close attention to the needs of every child and its strong support for families so that they are able to help children achieve. The school tells compellingly of its journey from limited family involvement to a place where parents choose to send their children. Parents speak of its reputation for warmth and its caring ethos.

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

The whole community speak about celebration assembly with huge enthusiasm. Worship is described as a 'treasured part of the day' and is growing in popularity among parents and the wider community. They describe it as a 'congregation'. Numbers of adults attending worship have risen from 4 to approximately 35. Parents say they like it because they feel 'part of something' and one said 'it makes me feel special'. Children describe a range of worship styles and say how reflection areas are used to help them feel calmer when they are experiencing times of difficulty. Worship is used to promote values particularly in celebration assembly where good behaviour based on values is rewarded. Children enjoy peaceful times in worship, valuing quiet reflection. They say that 'God wanted peace instead of war'. Adults can describe how these beliefs have an impact on children's behaviour and their relationships with others. Staff feel relationships with parents have improved as a result of well attended worship and lessons learned there. Godly play has a significant impact on the life of school, children and church members. Children say they like

going out of school to church because it feels different and they can think about God. A member of the church community described how leading Godly play has caused her to reflect on her own spirituality. She also feels that the church knows its community better as a result of involvement with the school. Godly play was felt to be so successful because the school equips its learners to 'have a handle on Christianity'. However, children are not yet involved in the systematic planning, evaluation and leadership of worship. In an observed collective worship, liturgical colours were used and a candle was lit and the symbolism of these was explained to children. Children are able to reflect on their behaviour as a result of carefully planned worship which responds to their needs. Children write prayers which are used in collective worship. This gives them confidence and they enjoy hearing their contributions read out, then displayed in school. Children are growing in their personal spirituality as they use prayer with confidence. This was shown to effect in an act of worship in class. They look forward to celebration worship and they sing with enthusiasm. The headteacher and other leaders evaluate worship, pointing to where improvements could be made. Children speak convincingly about the Trinitarian nature of God and describe creative ways of remembering it. The headteacher has sought high quality training to support the leading of worship across the school. Her ambition for high quality worship matches her ambition for high standards across school.

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

There has been significant change in leadership which has been managed effectively by governors. A new deputy head has been appointed and the RE leader has been helped by a leader from another school. With the headteacher, new leaders have led significant developments in RE and collective worship. This has had a significant impact on spiritual, moral, social and cultural development across the school. Strategic planning is now taking account of the school's Christian distinctiveness. The Christian ethos through RE and worship now forms part of the school development plan. However, whilst stakeholders describe values and how they influence learners, they do not yet have a shared understanding of their Christian basis. Governors are highly supportive of the school and promote its values by personal example. Leaders adopt high standards which serve as an example to all. They understand that children need to be happy and settled to achieve well. Stakeholders echo children's views when they say they value the peace and calm of an orderly environment in school. Governors receive reports from the head teacher and the RE leader which helps to keep them informed about the school's progress. Governors have reviewed RE scrap books and visited lessons. They know the school well. Governors and the headteacher support emerging leaders well and have enlisted the support of leaders from other church schools to ensure standards are maintained, particularly during a period of change. Governors informally evaluate collective worship in school through discussion and attendance at a range of different types of worship. The headteacher has worked tirelessly to promote links between church and school. She has promoted Godly play in the community which has supported children's developing spirituality. The partnership with the local church is strong and mutually supportive. Leaders describe how church leaders are highly supportive during difficult times and offer help when staff deal with challenging issues. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school, describing how children are changed by faith and belief. Stakeholders describe the vulnerable as 'the most precious'. In RE scrapbooks vulnerable children describe how the school has helped them cope with unimaginably difficult situations. Leaders articulate how the close relationship between church, school and the community helps them achieve things they could not do in isolation. Leaders facilitate the development of community links which is benefit to the whole community. The chair of governors' personal faith inspires his commitment to the school and the clarity with which he explains the Christian mission of the school. The school's Christian ethos can be seen in some policies and is evident in many aspects of the schools work. The school has addressed the issues raised by the previous SIAS inspection and meets requirements for RE and collective worship.

