



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Cromford Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

North Street
Cromford
Matlock
Derbyshire
DE4 3RG

Diocese: Derby

Local authority: Derbyshire

Dates of inspection: 16th October, 2014

Date of last inspection: 30th September, 2010

School's unique reference number: 112840

Headteacher: Mrs Liz Foster

Inspector's name and number: Alastair Wood 575

School context

Cromford is a very small primary school of 41 pupils and it draws its pupils mainly from the village. All are white British and there are two classes. 30% of the pupils are eligible for free school meals. The headteacher has been in post for four years and the staffing has been stable during this time. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and statements is above the national average. The school has a spacious hall and is within a short distance of the Methodist Church and about ten minutes from the Parish Church of St Mary's.

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

The school's Christian values and relationships are at the heart of everything it does. Its care, progress and celebration of every pupil as a unique child of God ensures its continuing success. The school provides a Christian presence at the centre of the community and is valued highly by all.

Established strengths

- The school's distinctly Christian character and values underpin all areas of school life
- Excellent links with both the Parish Church and the local Methodist church and their clergy
- The behaviour and relationships between all members of the school's community

Focus for development

- Review the school's vision, mission statement and aims so that all are able to understand and articulate clearly what it means to be a church school
- Enable the pupils to plan and lead acts of collective worship
- Improve pupils' understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith respecting the diversity and difference of other cultures.

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

The school's Christian values of love and care for its pupils ensure that all succeed. The unique qualities of each and every pupil are celebrated and as a result, all feel valued and special. The staff are a vibrant team who work in partnership with parents and governors to ensure every pupil makes good progress from their different starting points and achieves well. Attainment is generally above the national average for both the infants and the juniors and progress is good. The school has an effective tracking system which enables quick identification of any pupils falling behind, further supporting every pupil's achievement. The School Council meets regularly, has a strong voice and pupils' views are important to the school, for example when choosing which charities the school should support. Relationships across the school are outstanding and when tensions arise from time to time, these are dealt with in a positive, Christian spirit of forgiveness. As a result, there is a calm and happy atmosphere throughout the school and pupils feel secure and safe. The remodelled entrance to the school, funded largely by the Parent, Teacher Association, is bright and makes explicit the importance of the school's Christian foundation. Each classroom has a reflective corner where pupils' prayers are displayed and in the older pupils' classroom, a Year 5 pupil explained the significance of the Holy Trinity through three coloured ribbons on the prayer table that she carefully plaited to make one. Pupils' spiritual development is encouraged and supported in their daily lives through bright displays about Jesus and God around school. Pebbles on each classroom's prayer table and prayer beads are used as a focus for reflection when pupils feel they would like a quiet moment or to say a personal prayer, helping to develop their spirituality. Religious Education (RE) teaching is made interesting and active for the pupils so that all could achieve. For example, in the infant classroom, pupils were learning about the creation and the teacher skilfully enabled all the pupils to interact at their own levels through engaging activities that supported each pupil to achieve. The pupils spoke about the Bible story of the creation and explained their learning. Parents are enthusiastic about the school, the importance of its Christian values, its ability to nurture all the pupils regardless of need and be truly inclusive for all. They enjoy the family atmosphere, the openness of the staff and headteacher and know their views are listened to and actioned.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship involves the whole school and pupils prepare the hall with lit candles and a prayer table. They set the music, introduce their own prayers and begin with a prayer and response. The result is a special place with a warm atmosphere where pupils say they enjoy being together and where reflection can take place. Local clergy from St Mary's Church and the Methodist Church lead the worship regularly with planned themes and the staff all take part emphasising closeness of this family-centred school. It is a special time of day where everyone comes together to worship. Both Anglican and Methodist clergy lead worship alternately and link Bible stories to the pupils' own experiences making worship present and relevant. Other visitors to collective worship include the Matlock Area Schools' Trust and pupils talk excitedly about the way guests help them to learn about Jesus. Pupils' views on collective worship are assessed regularly and changes made from their responses, for example, the pupils would like to plan and lead worship from time to time and the school has agreed that they should do this, developing their leadership skills and independence. The resources for collective worship are good and the school uses a variety of contemporary hymns which appeal to the pupils and inspire their singing, increasing their enjoyment and understanding of the Christian faith. The parish church of St Mary's and the Methodist Church are used alternately for major festivals enabling pupils to experience and understand a variety of styles of Christian worship. Recently the school's Harvest Festival took place at the Methodist Church and last year's Christmas celebrations took place at St Mary's these are characteristic examples of churches working together and exemplifying Christian relationships in this close community. Collective worship strengthens relationships across the school and beyond and the pupils gain a deeper understanding of how Jesus' teachings can influence everyone's daily life.

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

The school's Christian vision and values are led by the headteacher whose strong personal faith coupled with her calm and positive manner has enabled the school to thrive during the past four years. She lives the values and leads by example. She has built a very effective team around her who share her vision and belief and this has impacted on all aspects of the school's provision. The governors play a major strategic role in the development of the school and are proud of the school's performance as a church school. The close support of the governors, many of whom are involved in the daily life of the school, ensures that monitoring and evaluation of all areas, from the curriculum to allocating the budget, are independently assessed enabling effective improvements in learning for all the groups of pupils. There are strong links with the Diocese and new governors have attended induction training to support their responsibilities. The previous areas for improvement from the last inspection have all been addressed. RE assessment by the co-ordinator focuses on every child's progress and is closely monitored. Pupils' understanding of multi-cultural world faiths is limited. The unique position and buildings of Cromford school at the centre of the community, closely supported by clergy from both St Mary's Church and the Methodist Church demonstrate both its historical and present importance. The school's Christian foundation is prized by the whole community and many parents and grandparents of pupils demonstrate their appreciation of the school through their generous support and fund-raising activities so that all the pupils may benefit. Parental support is excellent and results from the school's annual questionnaire show an overwhelmingly strong satisfaction with the school. Parents particularly appreciate the work of the teaching staff and the outstanding support from the teaching assistants in nurturing their children. As one governor described the school's special Christian ethos: 'it manifests itself in the people, the school's pupils and the relationships.'

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