



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Darley Churchtown CofE Primary School

Church Road
Darley Dale, Matlock
DE4 2GL

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Diocese: Derby

Local authority: Derbyshire

Dates of inspection: 26 February 2015

Date of last inspection: 25 March 2010

School's unique reference number: 112839

Headteacher: Janine Stillwell

Inspector's name and number: John Horwood NS177

School context

This is a small school in rural Derbyshire. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is average. The school is very close to the parish church. The headteacher has been in post since September 2014 following the ill-health of the previous post-holder and subsequent executive headteachers.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Darley Churchtown CofE Primary school as a Church of England school are good

- Christian values are the foundation stones of daily life in the school. Parents and pupils recognise the impact these have on the care provided within a happy and safe place.
- The Christian character of the school and the Christian values it promotes provide good support, both through the religious education (RE) lessons and collective worship, to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. As a result, the excellent relationships that develop have led to the caring and supportive ethos in the school.
- Pupils become familiar with Biblical material and Christian teaching through collective worship and are able to explain how the collective worship themes link to their own lives.
- The new headteacher has had an immediate impact by using her strong faith to develop a united team of staff and governors who are ensuring rapid improvement within the school. This is reflected in the excellent care provided and the rising achievement of pupils.

Areas to improve

- Provide more opportunities for pupils to visit, or have links with, other communities to support their understanding of diversity within the Christian community and of Christianity as a multi-cultural faith.
- Increase the impact of collective worship by giving pupils more responsibilities in its planning, delivery and monitoring.

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

The Christian character of the school has enabled the staff and governors to support the pupils' well-being and academic achievement during a period when, since the previous inspection, a headteacher has not remained in post for a complete year. With the support of the diocese, governors have been able to appoint a permanent headteacher who has a strong faith and good theological and professional qualifications. She leads by example in promoting Christian values and is well-supported in this by all the adults in the school. The termly Christian value is celebrated with a wall-display which, at the end of the focus period, is transferred to the church so that the church community can see the work being carried out in the school. The value of 'courage' is the current focus and this is the main theme for both collective worship and RE. Pupils are confident in identifying the different ways courage can be demonstrated both in Bible stories and their every-day lives. This also demonstrates the link between collective worship and RE with the value common to both. The values of love and care are seen throughout the school by the support given to pupils who need extra help, either physical or emotional. The impact of this action is seen by the way other pupils take over the support when the adult is not there. Pupils enjoy taking responsibilities such as being buddies at lunch break. The Christian character of the school has helped develop the excellent relationships that exist at every level in this inclusive school. This ensures very good behaviour throughout the school which has a good impact on the rising attendance and the fact that there has been no need to exclude any pupils from school. To support pupils' spirituality, a reflection area has been developed at the heart of the school which includes a 'worry bag' where pupils can write down their worries which are then discreetly and sensitively followed up. The importance of RE is demonstrated by the many high quality wall displays supporting the subject and celebrating pupils' achievements. Within RE lessons pupils enjoy the curriculum content and demonstrate their understanding by confidently responding to questions, often about Christian values and their feelings. All aspects of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are well-supported through the RE curriculum. However, because of the rural nature of the school there have been only limited opportunities for pupils to explore Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith and to develop their understanding and respect for diversity within the church. The school is currently working with other local schools to develop more opportunities for this aspect.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is well-planned by the headteacher who also has responsibility for RE. Within the planning for collective worship there are clear links identified to enable class teachers to extend and develop the worship themes through RE lessons. The priority given to collective worship is demonstrated by it now being carried out as the first activity of the school day to help prepare pupils for the day ahead. There is a good range of experiences during the week including whole school worship and class worship which is led by the teachers. Whole school worship is led by the headteacher, the vicar or a visitor (for example from the Matlock Area Schools Trust). Anglican traditions are well-presented including the lighting of a candle and a good selection of songs and prayers. There are occasional visitors from other Christian traditions but these are infrequent and have had limited impact on helping pupils understand diversity within the church. Following the previous inspection a 'worship team' was developed to give pupils more involvement organising collective worship. However, during the period of interim short-term leadership this was not continued but is currently being revived as a high priority by the new headteacher. Christian festivals are generally celebrated in the church and are well-attended by parents. Pupils are able to remember past collective worships and express opinions as to why they enjoyed them. In many ways, pupils see the church as part of the school. The vicar is a regular visitor to the school and pupils are regular visitors to the church. Members of the school council took the inspector on a tour of the church describing all the key features and proudly describing the

events that take place in church including activities such as 'messy church' which had been developed for children. Pupils demonstrate a well-developed understanding of Anglican traditions and, through collective worship and RE, are familiar with Bible stories as well as the importance of God and Jesus. Their understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit is developing appropriate to their age. The monitoring of collective worship is mainly informal but because of the small size of the school leaders know what works and what is not effective. The new headteacher has carried out surveys of parents and pupils which confirm the inspector's view that collective worship is an important part of the school day and is enjoyed by the majority of pupils.

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

School leaders, including governors, have an accurate understanding of how effective the school is as a Church of England school. They know that progress on this has been hampered by a period of uncertain leadership but also know that the Christian values are embedded and have been dormant not absent. Governors are excited about having a permanent and skilful headteacher who has revived the values and united the staff to support her vision and stimulate rapid improvement within the school. Parents and pupils support the inspector's view that this is an improving school where pupils' personal skills develop quickly and achievement is rising. The headteacher's vision is supported by her strong faith and shared with the governors and the vicar. Foundation governors are actively involved in supporting the school and the strong links between the school and the church community. All are clear that it is the Christian values that are so well promoted within school, and demonstrated by all adults, that are enabling the improvement in pupils' achievement and the consolidation of the good achievement over time. The love and care provided within the school is successfully ensuring that all pupils are treated equally and that the well-being of all pupils is very well supported. The headteacher has ensured that Christian values permeate every aspect of the school, including the curriculum, to support pupils' development. Most parents support the inspector's view that pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is very well developed. The headteacher provides excellent leadership of RE and collective worship and ensures that the impact of both is good and improving. Parents, the local church and the diocese provide good support to the school in all aspects of pupil development. Staff training has been limited during the transition period but the new headteacher is working closely with the diocese and the local authority to develop staff skills further.

SIAMS report February 2015 Darley Churchtown CofE Primary School, Darley Dale, DE4 2GL