

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

### **Edale Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School**

Grindsbrook Way, Edale, Hope Valley. Derbyshire, S33 7ZD

<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Derby</b>
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Derbyshire
Date/s of inspection	4 December 2017
Date of last inspection	May 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary 112813
Headteacher	Nancy Lees
Inspector's name and number	Kerry Palmer (60)

#### **School context**

Edale CE (VC) Primary is an exceptionally small rural primary school, of just two very small classes, serving the Derbyshire village of Edale and surrounding areas. The exclusively White British children come from diverse socio-economic backgrounds. Levels of special educational need and/or disability (SEND) and eligibility for pupil premium support are low. The school is going through a period of rapid regeneration following a challenging Ofsted report. This is under the leadership of a recently appointed acting executive headteacher who is also responsible for Castleton CE Primary School. This situation is currently temporary, and the future leadership pattern is under review. Holy and Undivided Trinity Parish Church is close by.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Edale CE (VC) Primary School as a Church of England school are good**

- The strong, effective leadership of the executive headteacher who works tirelessly to ensure that every child receives a broad, rich education based on clear Christian principles.
- The fervent determination of staff, parents, parish and village community to value and sustain their church school.
- A committed governing body who recognise, value and actively seek to promote and grow education based on the school's Christian values and tradition.
- The expression of Christian love, care and respect evident throughout the school resulting in staff who cherish each child and behaviour which is faultless.

#### **Areas to improve**

- Explore strategies to make it explicitly clear in teaching, documentation and on the school website that this is a school directed by values arising from the teaching and example of Jesus Christ.
- With the support of the diocese explore approaches to teaching about and expressing prayer with children.
- Develop a plan for governor monitoring and review of key aspects of Christian distinctiveness which informs whole school development priorities.

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

The whole local community recognises that Edale Church of England Primary School justifies its claim to be 'a small school offering big opportunities'. After an unsettling period, school leaders and governors rightly believe it is 'bouncing back'. Christian values of service, wisdom and trust are at the heart of this school. All staff recognise and value the worth of each individual child, evident in the professional and compassionate support for those with particular needs or less able. This concern extends to the more able who enjoy challenge and extension opportunities. Examples include an annual residential excursion, a 'wider opportunities' programme and successful Big Lottery bid to finance extended sporting opportunities. Determination and resilience are driving pupil progress recognised by Ofsted and local authority advisers as 'consistent and significant'. Children enjoy school, say they feel safe and cared for, and strive to do well. The whole village community was invited to a recent e-safety event. This enthusiasm is illustrated by children's obvious eagerness to learn throughout the school day and high levels of attendance. Attendance data is skewed by isolated exceptions in small cohorts. Challenge and fortitude are positive drivers. There is a real sense of community and mutual support amongst all who form part of this small school family. Staff know the children extremely well and an increasingly consistent approach to individualised learning in small class groups is ensuring accelerated progress, amongst all abilities. The school actively addresses issues related to respect for diversity. A child spoke enthusiastically about the recent 'Wear it Blue' anti-bullying week message. Compassion and empathy are promoted through the curriculum and a range of charities and efforts support the less fortunate. Examples include participation in the annual village Remembrance commemoration, fundraising for Children in Need and the contribution of Harvest produce to The Arches homeless project at Sheffield Cathedral. Quality religious education (RE), delivered in partnership with Key Stage 2 children at Castleton CE Primary School, contributes significantly to the school's Christian character and children's social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. The school recognises that their children are growing up with limited exposure to the diverse society beyond the village. It therefore actively works to widen their horizons and appreciation of the multi-cultural society that if Great Britain including exchange visits with a Sheffield inner city school. Whilst RE is predominantly focussed on Christianity, as expected in a church school, there is appropriate teaching about other faiths and cultures. A child proudly drew attention to a display resulting from a Key Stage 1 visit to a Sheffield Synagogue, last term. Their knowledge of Christianity as a world-wide church is limited.

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

A well-planned programme of collective worship themes embeds Christian values and impacts on children's lives. For example, a series focussing on generosity included Harvest Thanksgiving which was followed by Christian compassion and its impact on anti-bullying. Bible stories are central to the programme. Children have a growing appreciation of the special significance of Jesus. 'Christmas is Jesus birthday,' said a Key Stage 1 child when talking about the Advent wreath in his classroom. 'We learn from the stories Jesus told,' said another. Talking about where babies come from, a child told mum, 'I come from God'. However, age appropriate awareness of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit is not embedded. All staff share leadership of collective worship, although it is referred to as assembly, and there is regular input from the vicar. Festival celebrations, such as Harvest, Christmas and Easter, held in the parish church give children more opportunity to actively contribute and gain an awareness of Anglican tradition and practice. There are no local opportunities to explore other denominations. Festival services are enjoyed and well supported by families and the village community. They are also invited to half-termly celebration assemblies which highlight a range of gifts and talents. Children clearly enjoy collective worship but have insufficient opportunity to plan and deliver it for themselves. Prayer is a regular feature of the school day and there is some use of children's prayers, but this, and their appreciation of the diversity of approaches to prayer are underdeveloped. The use of the rich natural environment, including the development of 'Edale Island', the school's own environmental education area does much to enhance children's recognition of God's creation and their spiritual development, as does the introduction of reflective 'mindfulness' activities. A retreat day at the local diocesan Peak Centre is an illustration of the school's desire to widen children's experience. A foundation governor occasionally leads school worship and governors sometimes attend, especially on special occasions, but, there is little evidence of focussed evaluation or governor monitoring to inform development planning of worship or other aspects of Christian distinctiveness.

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

The vision, energy and professional skill of the executive headteacher is successfully moving the school forward. Along with hardworking, dedicated staff and committed governors a culture of continuous improvement pervades school life. All value it's church foundation and the Christian values lived out in the daily school life, yet these are not explicit in the school's documentation or highlighted in its vision and aims. The school motto, 'The Way Starts Here' misses an opportunity to link with similar Biblical themes. The collaboration with Castleton CE Primary School has expanded valuable opportunities for shared training and professional development. The Key Stage 2

children from both schools gain much from combining each Thursday for RE, science and IT lessons. The RE lead, for both schools, is currently cascading diocesan training about the 'Understanding Christianity' resources via joint in-service training. This follows her implementation of this powerful new approach to RE teaching. Mutual support and sharing of expertise is also valued within the Hope Valley cluster of schools. Following significant changes in membership and leadership, governors now have a clear development plan and effective structure. They are evidently determined in their support for the school's future, scrutinising all considerations critically. Their involvement in scrutiny and development of aspects of the school's Christian distinctiveness does, however, insufficiently structured. The vicar and parish community are much involved in school life and mutual support is at the heart of this small, rural village. Most of the children attend, enjoy and learn from The Holy and Undivided Trinity (HUT) sessions, a local version of Messy Church organised by the parish church. The school has an accurate assessment of its strengths and weaknesses and acknowledges the positive support received from the Derby Diocesan Board of Education and Local Authority since the change of school leadership. Both express confidence that, 'the school has dealt effectively' with identified priorities. However, this does not currently extend to aspects of Christian distinctiveness which need further refining and incorporation into whole school priorities. Parents are very supportive of the school and appreciate the core Christian values which one said, 'give the children a good foundation for life'. They are much involved in discussions of school developments and the recently established parents' forum is indicative of the school's endeavour to work in partnership and consult fully. They also value the attractive and informative new school website. There is active support for the school from the whole village and the Friends of Edale School and events such as the Edale pantomime do much to generate community spirit. The school fulfils statutory expectations for collective worship and RE and, under current leadership, is very well placed to develop its Christian distinctiveness further.

SIAMS report December 2017    Edale CE (VC) Primary School    Edale, Derbys. S33 7ZD