



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Castleton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Back Street
Castleton
Hope Valley
S33 8WE

Previous SIAMS grade: 3

Diocese: Derby

Local authority: Derbyshire

Dates of inspection: 4 December 2014

Date of last inspection: 7 October 2010

School's unique reference number: 112807

Headteacher: Nancy Lees

Inspector's name and number: John Horwood 177

School context

Castleton Primary School is a very small school in a rural community. Most pupils are of White British backgrounds. There are only 15 pupils on roll as the price of housing in this tourist area is preventing young families buying local property. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is low. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is average. Pupils are taught in two mixed-age classes. The headteacher joined the school in January 2014.

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

- The school is at the heart of the community and the focus on promoting Christian values is fundamental to the school ethos.
- The headteacher leads by example. Her strong faith and her determination to ensure that every pupil has an equal opportunity to succeed have helped the school improve.
- Within an 'extended family environment' adults promote Christian values well. Love, care and understanding ensure that pupils are safe and happy. This, in turn, allows them to develop into mature, sensible and caring individuals whose behaviour is outstanding and has a positive impact on their learning and progress.
- The headteacher, the Vicar and the foundation governors have developed a strong partnership between the church and the school. This contributes well to pupils' understanding of Anglican traditions.

Areas to improve

- Provide more opportunities for pupils to learn about a more diverse range of Christian traditions in order to develop a greater understanding of Christianity as a world-wide faith.
- Explore how more opportunities for pupils to lead collective worship can be developed.

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

The school is at the heart of this small and relatively isolated community where links with the local community benefit from the school's Christian values of friendship and community. The new headteacher has a strong and sincere faith which is respected and supported throughout the school community. The headteacher leads by example in ensuring that the care and well-being of pupils is of the highest standard. The low pupil numbers allow the school to operate as an 'extended family' where the Christian values of love and care permeate the whole school. This facilitates the promotion of equal opportunities to every pupil in both their academic and personal skills. Every pupil is treated as a unique and important individual and is able to achieve well. Pupils say they learn well because teachers care for them and ensure that they enjoy lessons whilst working hard. This is shown by their good achievement. Pupils develop close relationships with each other and results in outstanding behaviour. Pupils' spiritual development is supported by the creative use of Christian artefacts around the school and through the curriculum. For example, displays of pupils' art work, developed through the religious education (RE) curriculum, are used to provide a focus for pupils' reflection on spiritual matters. These displays demonstrate the pride that pupils take in their work and the good impact that RE has on pupils' spiritual development. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development overall is good. Pupils learn and understand about Christianity and especially about Anglican traditions. Close links with the Methodist church community broadens their understanding but other denominations are not easily accessible. The curriculum raises pupils' awareness of diversity and prepares them for their future life. Their cultural understanding is a relative weakness because of the lack of cultural diversity in the area. However the headteacher is rapidly addressing this through such activities of African dance and art workshops. Pupils' understanding of Christianity as a world-wide faith is not fully developed. The values of trust and respect are well-embedded in the partnership between the school and parents. Parents are extremely supportive of the school and of the new headteacher. They agree with the inspection findings that Christian values are a natural element of the school day. Those who did not have a deep faith themselves were pleased that their children were being educated in a caring and supportive environment. Christian fellowship is demonstrated by the school and parents working together to encourage good attendance. No pupil spoken to could identify any way the school could be improved – apart from some structural modifications within this old, but well-preserved, building

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is a part of the day pupils look forward to and in which they wholeheartedly join in. Collective worship is well planned and links effectively to Christian values. It is usually based on a 'value' and linked to stories in the Bible which helps pupils relate the Bible to every-day life situations. There are frequent references to God and to Jesus. Pupils have developed a basic understanding of the Trinity and of Anglican traditions, including communion, through collective worship within the school and in the church. This provides a good foundation for a future deeper understanding. All teachers attend collective worship and pupils and adults participate fully ensuring that the Christian ethos is shared by all. Collective worship is presented in a way that is meaningful to pupils and ensures enjoyment and an increased understanding of the impact of Christian values on lives. Information technology is used effectively to do this, for example, by sharing a video of a 'love butterfly' which came into the world to implant love around the world. This demonstrated how understanding and showing love and compassion to others can lead to peace between groups and nations. Questioning and responses within collective worship confirm that pupils have a good understanding of what Christian values mean. Pupils' thankfulness and their understanding of being part of a community are demonstrated by their enthusiasm for singing and their excellent behaviour and respect shown during collective worship. The impact of collective worship is shown by pupils' confidence in discussing their experience of a range of collective worships. They explained how visiting groups have made Bible stories come to life through the use of

puppets and how they have visitors from the local churches to lead collective worship. Services are held in the local Anglican church once a month and for special festivals. This supports pupils' understanding of Anglican traditions and broadens the range of experiences they have of collective worship. Many of the parents attend the church services with their children and are supportive of the Christian values promoted to their children. Prayer and periods of reflection are seen as part of daily life and opportunities for these occur regularly during the day. Collective worship is coordinated by the headteacher in liaison with the foundation governors, the Vicar and staff in accordance with the collective worship policy. Monitoring has improved since the previous inspection and governors are more frequent visitors to collective worship. The low pupil numbers restrict the opportunities that pupils have in delivering collective worship – the congregation would be too small! However they are being given increasing opportunities to contribute and, for example, they take turns at choosing the song, write their own prayers and lead parts of the collective worship in the church.

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

The headteacher, the vicar and the foundation governors are united in ensuring that Christian values support every pupil both academically and with their personal development. As a result all pupils develop into caring individuals well-prepared for moving to secondary schools. Within this small community there is an excellent partnership between the school and the Christian community, including both the Anglican and the Methodist denominations. Governors have made their intentions clear within the school development plan through the improvement criteria – 'ensuring the school is a distinctive and effective church school'. Within the development plan their strategic direction is defined as making provision for personal development and well-being whilst promoting a distinctive Christian ethos. This is being done successfully. The partnerships are so strong that there are often no boundaries as everyone is a friend within the community. Pupils and staff know governors and members of the church community well and they all talk freely and regularly about the school. The church community have, on occasions, supported staff through prayer. They welcome pupils into 'messy church', which further develops their understanding of Anglican traditions and the role of the church. The community often 'gets together' on family days in the village hall which helps to embed the value of community. Leaders know pupils and their families very well and consequently are able to ensure that pupils can achieve to their full potential. The self-evaluation of the school as a church school is accurate and is fully supported by the inspection evidence. Leaders know the school well and have an accurate understanding of the school's performance and distinctiveness. There has been good progress on addressing the issues from the previous inspection. Leaders have ensured that collective worship meets statutory requirements. Pupils show their commitment to Christian stewardship by supporting the local community through fundraising for the Castleton Christmas lights event. The curriculum helps them understand the needs of others in a wider cultural context and they support charities further afield through church activities and in conjunction with other schools. The vicar and foundation governors are actively involved with the school and help pupils understand about wisdom and service. To support the development of future potential leaders of church schools the school works with the diocese to ensure that all teachers are given opportunities for training.