



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Cranbrook Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School

Carriers Road, Cranbrook, TN17 3JZ

Previous SIAMS grade: good

Current SIAMS grade: good

Diocese: Canterbury

Local authority: Kent

Dates of inspection: 20 November 2015

Date of last inspection: 8 March 2011

School's unique reference number: 118600

Headteacher: Alison Hatch

Inspector's name and number: Virginia Corbyn 86

School context

Cranbrook Church of England school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium is above average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is higher than average. The interim headteacher, who joined the school in March 2014, was appointed as the substantive headteacher in March 2015. There is a high number of recently appointed staff at the school. The school roll has fallen significantly since 2012 but has now stabilised at 158 pupils. A new incumbent took up her post in November 2015.

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

- The school's five Christian values underpin the recent improvement in pupil achievement, and contribute well to pupils' personal development and wellbeing.
- Collective worship is lively and engaging, and provides clear messages about how Christian values impact on the everyday lives of pupils.
- A committed team, under the strong leadership of the headteacher, model and live out the Christian vision and values of the school.

Areas to improve

- Embed the understanding of biblical values across the curriculum so that achievement is accelerated for all pupils.
- Extend the monitoring and evaluation of worship to all stakeholders to ensure that worship across the week engages and inspires those present.
- Ensure that religious education (RE) includes an appropriate focus on big questions so that pupils develop higher order thinking.
- Develop the skills of all governors so that they are able to play an effective role in the evaluation of the school as a church school.

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

A set of five Christian values kindness, forgiveness, respect, 'everyone matters' and 'shine' were in place when the headteacher took up post in March 2015. They form the basis for good behaviour and positive attitudes in the school. She has worked hard to establish these values, especially in relation to behaviour, in order that the learning environment is calm, ordered and purposeful. As one pupil said, 'Everyone matters because everyone's learning matters'. This has resulted in improved rates of progress for pupils in reception and in years 3 and 4, for example. In other year groups, although there are signs of improvement, too many pupils have gaps in their knowledge and teaching is not consistently good enough to overcome previous underachievement. Progress for some vulnerable groups has yet to improve. The importance of 'shining' because Jesus is the light of the world is an important driver for pupils' learning and for their sense of personal responsibility for themselves and for others. Pupils can explain how some of the values are linked to biblical teaching but not consistently and confidently. However, they live out the values, for example, through an effective buddying system within school. They often respond to the needs of those less fortunate than themselves, such as by raising money for refugees who have been accommodated locally. All staff model and articulate the values in ways which encourage pupils to follow their example. They celebrate and reward the ways in which pupils demonstrate values in a weekly act of worship led by year 6 pupils. The profile of the Christian values is raised using prominent and attractive displays around the school. Parents say that their children put the values into practice at home as well as at school. High quality relationships are evident at all levels in school. Pupils feel safe at all times because they know that all the adults in school can be trusted to help them. Pupils understand that they have a responsibility to show respect and to offer friendship to everyone, including those who are different to themselves. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is promoted well. Pupils understand that prayer is for thanking, saying sorry and for making requests for others. They know that their school values help them to make the right choices. They understand that diversity is a valuable part of their community life, describing their gypsy roma day and their learning about other faiths in RE as special examples of this.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Improvements have been made in the planning and organisation of collective worship since the previous inspection. Pupils describe the positive messages from worship which they remember and put into practice, particularly those about forgiveness and kindness. Worship plays an important part in ensuring that the whole school community can share and articulate the school's Christian values. The variety of experiences provided across the week is generally enjoyed by pupils who understand the importance of praising God through their songs and talking to God through their prayers. However, more regular monitoring is needed to make sure that their views are taken into account about further improvements. Prayer in worship is enriched by lots of other opportunities across the school day. Pupils are encouraged to pray for the needs of others as recommended in the previous inspection. They describe how they have prayed for those who are seriously ill and those who have been bereaved within the school family. They understand that God is always there for them especially in times of loneliness and sadness. Anglican liturgy is a common feature of worship including as a greeting and a sending response. There are regular services in the church which are valued by children and their families. Worship led by the Vine Church, which meets in the school building, is lively, engaging and popular. Pupils demonstrate a secure understanding of the Trinity which is reinforced through worship. The 'leading lights' pupils who help to lead worship are ready to extend their role and to lead worship more frequently.

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

Under the capable leadership of the headteacher, the leaders of the school have addressed the areas for development from the previous inspection. They have a shared understanding of the

vision and values which aim to provide the best outcomes for each child in the school. This has resulted in improved levels of achievement for some pupils although there are still significant gaps in knowledge to be addressed especially in upper key stage 2. There is evidence that teaching is improving and that this is impacting positively on pupils' progress. The outworking of Christian values ensures that the wellbeing of children, their families and school staff is a priority for school leaders. Statutory requirements for RE and for collective worship are met. Self-evaluation is accurate but is not yet fully reflective of the views of all stakeholders. Vacancies on the governing body, including for foundation governors, mean that the full range of skills is not represented. This limits the impact of the governing body on the school as a church school. New staff members are well supported and are clear about expectations of them in relation to the Christian character of school. The needs of staff in relation to RE have been audited and, as a result, training with another local church school is about to take place. The leadership of RE is secure. High expectations for teaching and learning have been met by teachers. These expectations, however, have resulted in a focus on learning about religion and not so much on the big thinking which results from learning from religion. Partnerships with the local churches are strong and appreciated by pupils, staff and families who feel supported pastorally. Joint working with other local church schools has provided valuable training opportunities for staff. Parents speak about the importance of the Christian values for their children. They appreciate the ways in which these values have been shared with them through newsletters and worship. This helps them to support the values in their children's lives outside school. This is a school with capacity to continue to grow as a church school.

SIAMS report, November 2015, Cranbrook VC Primary School, Cranbrook, TN17 3JZ