



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Crich CE Voluntary Controlled Infants School

Bowns Hill
Crich
Matlock
Derbyshire
DE4 5DG

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Diocese: Derby

Local authority: Derbyshire

Dates of inspection: 26th February, 2015

Date of last inspection: March 2010

School's unique reference number: 112867

Headteacher: Julie Kirk

Inspector's name and number: Alastair Wood 575

School context

Crich Infants is a very small school of 55 pupils most of whom come from the village. All are white British. There are two classrooms with one being adapted to teach two separate year groups. The headteacher has been in post for seven years and the staffing is composed of part-time teachers and teaching assistants. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and statements is well above the national average. The school has close links with the parish church of St Mary's and the Baptist Chapel.

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

- Relationships at all levels are warm, positive and enhance the school's Christian character
- The impact of worship on the pupils is evident throughout the school's daily life
- The school's nurturing Christian character enables all pupils to thrive and achieve

Areas to improve

- Ensure governors monitor and evaluate collective worship and RE and give feedback to the governing body
- Enhance pupils' spiritual development through a range of different opportunities throughout the curriculum

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

The school's mission statement of 'caring, sharing and praying together' exemplifies the warmth and importance of the Christian values that underpin the school's approach to everything it does. This is a family centred school which nurtures and values all the pupils for their individual and special qualities. Pupils know they are valued for their unique qualities and as a result they thrive academically and personally from their different starting points. Standards and progress in the school are good and the school is developing a new assessment system to match the new curriculum. Relationships at all levels throughout the school community are positive, supportive and built on trust and respect; the pupils say they feel safe and special. The staff know every pupil and skilfully adapt the learning so that all pupils can make strong progress and realise their potential. Attendance at school is well above the national average clearly indicating pupils' enjoyment and happiness at being there. Where conflict and tensions arise, these are openly discussed and resolved quickly in a Christian spirit of love and forgiveness. The school is calm and happy; pupils' behaviour, politeness and care for each other is evident throughout as they practise and own the values which make the school's Christian character so distinctive. Religious Education (RE) teaching is carefully planned and assessed and contributes to pupils' knowledge of God's world through themes designed to deepen their learning this enables them to make good progress. RE is taught using powerful questioning, for example, the Year 2 pupils were asked why people celebrated religious festivals and their responses showed some strong understanding from young children. Pupils know how to listen and equally know they will be listened to, this enables the pupil council to make changes on behalf of the pupils; for example, the preference to sit on the carpet rather than benches during collective worship and the addition of the climbing wall in the school grounds. The clergy are an important part of school life and both the Anglican and Baptist ministers are regular visitors to the school helping pupils to gain a better understanding of God and the Holy Trinity through imaginative teachings. The pupils visit St Mary's church regularly for worship and also use the church as a learning resource; they can identify important artefacts and aspects of the Anglican tradition. The closeness with St Mary's church is reinforced through the foundation governors who provide unlimited support for the school and its pupils. The village links are very strong and there is clear ownership of the school by the community for whom the school's Christian character is very important. The displays around the school are bright and interesting, for example, there is a large display describing the Holy Trinity; this is clearly a school working together to deepen its knowledge of God. Parents are welcomed into school and there is a true partnership with the school in their children's learning. When pupils arrive at school in the morning they take part in a short daily morning challenge assisted by their parents, this provides opportunities for informal discussions with the staff and reinforces the school's family atmosphere. The school has built global links with orphaned children in Kenya and has raised funds to support fostering for the children as a result pupils understand the importance of helping others less fortunate. The areas for development from the previous inspection have been addressed.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is a special time of calm and thoughtfulness for everyone and begins each day. The worship is skilfully adapted to very young pupils' learning and directly influences and reinforces the quality of relationships, safety and happiness of all in the school community. The pupils enter singing the school song which proclaims the school's Christian values, with vigour and enthusiasm. Collective worship is planned carefully to enable all the pupils to understand and identify with the themes. The impact of collective worship on the pupils is clear from their behaviour and they say they enjoy this time of the day. In a recent pupil questionnaire about collective worship, one pupil described it as 'just perfect.' Although they do not plan worship, the pupils are closely involved leading the prayers and the blessing. A candle is lit at the start of collective worship and used as a focus for reflection throughout, helping pupils' to develop

their spirituality through peace and thoughtfulness. The Bible story of Jesus and the loaves and fishes captured the pupils' imaginations and skilful questions and resources helped them to make connections with the school's value of sharing. The pupils know the Lord's Prayer and there are school prayers before lunch and at the end of the day. While there are opportunities for spiritual development and the school has a policy, this is an area which lacks clarity and has been identified for improvement. All the staff lead collective worship on a rota basis emphasising its importance to the school's character. A variety of visitors enhance worship through different presentations and the pupils enjoy the changing approaches. The close links with St Mary's and the Baptist church reinforce the pupils' sense of belonging and community. The parish is informed of the school's achievements through the foundation governors and the local newsletter: The Crich Area Community News also includes pupils' work and updates about what is happening in the school.

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

The headteacher leads the school through her clear vision and sincere belief that all in her care will succeed. She is supported by a strong and capable staff who share her vision and dedication. Both RE and collective worship meet statutory requirements, have action plans for improvement in the school's development plan and are reviewed regularly by the governors. Governors are integral to the success of the school, they are closely involved on a weekly and daily basis and play an important strategic and independent role. At the moment, governor monitoring and evaluation of RE and collective worship is informal and as a result governors are restricted in their opportunities to offer effective and robust challenge. A number of new governors have taken up their posts recently and some governor training has taken place but in a limited way, however, a training schedule has been planned. Staff training is appropriate and the school has planned for succession within a restricted budget. The PTA is keen and enthusiastic and raises considerable funds for the school through a wide variety of community activities, support from the PTA is seamless and the chair is also a parent governor. The vicar of St Mary's church works with four other local church schools and they plan annual events together emphasising the spiritual closeness of relationships between the church schools and the parish through a mutual love of God. The school raises money for a variety of good causes nationally and globally. Fund-raising for orphaned children in Kenya has focused the pupils' energies and increased their understanding of a multi-cultural world. Parents say they can express their views at any time informally and also through the annual questionnaire, which provides opportunities for them to comment on the school's Christian character. They speak highly of the school particularly in the way it addresses individual pupils' needs. Parents describe Crich Infants as a genuinely inclusive school which fosters and develops every child in its care through strong Christian values exemplified in its vision: 'caring, sharing and praying together.' As one parent described the school: 'Crich Infants provides a loving supportive environment in which children are encouraged to grow in their own unique way.'

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