



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Croscombe Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Long Street
Croscombe, Wells, Somerset
BA5 3QL

Previous SIAMS grade: Satisfactory

Diocese: Bath and Wells

Local authority: Somerset

Dates of inspection: 15 April 2015

Date of last inspection: 09 September 2010

School's unique reference number: 123829

Headteacher: Stephen Heath

Inspector's name and number: Jane Tibbs 226

School context

Croscombe is a smaller than average primary school with 72 children on roll. They are currently arranged in three class groups. Almost all the pupils are of White British origin. The school was federated with Stoke St Michael Primary School in January 2014 and there is a single headteacher and governing body, both appointed for September 2014. The proportion of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly in line with the national average. The number of pupils entitled to receive pupil premium is much lower than average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Croscombe Voluntary Aided School as a Church of England school are good

- Pupils explore matters of faith and belief with confidence
- There are good links with the church and community
- The commitment of stakeholders to the development of the impact of the Christian character ensures that the school is continually making progress as a church school

Areas to improve

- Ensure that a shared understanding of spirituality is used to identify opportunities to develop pupil's spiritual awareness across all areas of the curriculum
- Further develop the prayer and reflective areas to include outside areas to remind pupils of the presence of God in the midst of busy lives

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

It is obvious as soon as you enter the gate of Croscombe school that this is a vibrant, Christian community. For example, pupils have made a large woven ribbon cross on the gate proclaiming that 'Jesus is Risen!' The leadership and collective vision of the headteacher, governors, church and school communities ensure that the Christian ethos is at the heart of this school. Christian values are shared and celebrated daily in acts of collective worship and are expressed through inclusive and positive caring relationships, resulting in excellently behaved and motivated pupils. There are strong, mutually supportive links with the local church community. These, together with displays throughout the school, portray a value-driven and explicit Christian ethos which has a significant impact on the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all pupils. It was identified that the school's strap-line, 'A community of learners' needed revisiting, and after due consideration and consultation it was extended to better reflect the school's Christian foundation. It now includes 'Four Cs of Christianity': care, contribution, collaboration and curiosity. This brings together more effectively core values, learning skills and an ethos that enhances the quality of education for pupils and develops their well-being and personal spirituality. Croscombe is a happy, caring Christian community where all pupils feel highly valued and special. Distinctive Christian values have an impact on pupils' academic achievement and personal well-being and can be attributed to the way the pupils apply the school's chosen values to their attitudes to learning. Achievement at the school is good, with very good progress made by pupils across the curriculum. A particular strength of the school is the opportunities pupils have to explore questions of faith and belief and the time to reflect on what they think. Parents commented on how "delighted" they were with the school and one expressed joy at the "confidence of the children and their supportive nature". Relationships between children are excellent and this contributes to a 'family feel' which impacts positively on behaviour at the school. There is ample evidence in pupils' RE books that the subject contributes to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development and helps to shape the school's Christian character. Pupils have opportunities to learn about Christianity and other world faiths as well as developing their own spirituality through probing questions in RE. It is clear that those of faith and those with no faith are included and that all beliefs are valued. Global links are evident through a link with Ethiopia and the support of a boy, Abraham. Information on this is clearly displayed and has an impact on pupils' awareness of another culture. The British value of democracy is demonstrated through consultations with pupils and democratic elections for the School Council.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Acts of worship are vibrant and exciting times in the school day during which pupils have opportunities to explore the school's core values through Bible stories and links with Christian festivals. Pupils have a clear understanding of the difference between worship and assembly. They say that collective worship is an important aspect of the way that the school expresses its Christian ethos and is a time to connect with God. Daily acts of worship take place with all staff, the Priest in Charge and pupils contributing. Planning is thorough with Anglican symbolism and practice evident, including the use of responsive liturgy during the candle lighting ceremony. Worship deepens pupils' understanding of the Trinity and they share their thoughts on what it means to them and can do so in considerable depth. Prayer plays a central role in the worship life of the school both in collective worship and through opportunities to pray in the classroom. Pupils have a mature appreciation of the purpose of prayer and articulate sensitively how it can help a person in times of need. One pupil commented, "We pray together, it's really nice." The engagement of pupils in the planning and delivery of worship is outstanding because it makes the worship relevant to them. Following collective worship on the theme of Justice, one pupil asked if she could lead worship about the Pakistani girl Malala Yousafzai, which she did with confidence. The school has robust systems in place to monitor the impact of acts of worship through regular visits from governors and feedback from pupils, which are used to inform improvements.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

Pupils make very good progress in religious education (RE) across the school. Standards of attainment are comparable with other core subjects, and by the time pupils leave school at the end of Key Stage 2 the majority have attained standards in RE that exceed national expectations with a significant number achieving at higher levels. All groups of children make at least expected progress in RE throughout the school. Assessment of RE has greatly improved since the previous inspection. Pupils' work is regularly assessed in both their knowledge and their ability to apply what they have learnt. Teachers assess pupils' progress in RE with confidence and accuracy. A comprehensive tracking system is allowing teachers to identify progress over a period of time for different groups of pupils, which helps to ensure that pupils reach their potential. The quality of teaching is outstanding with strengths in the level of questioning by teachers that challenge pupils' perceptions and understanding. In one lesson observed, pupils were encouraged to explore their understanding of Christian symbols through carefully phrased questions which helped pupils to develop their appreciation of the use and representation of symbols. In another lesson, the teacher supported pupils through the questions asked to make links between the Easter story and Easter traditions. Pupils respond enthusiastically to these challenges and have positive attitudes towards the subject. The way in which they use creativity and originality to apply their knowledge and skills in religious education to their own personal reflections on questions of meaning and purpose is impressive. Teachers are committed to teaching RE well and enthusiastically. The consistency of the quality of teaching across the school leads to learning that inspires pupils who respond with enthusiasm to the many opportunities that challenge their understanding. Promoting the school's Christian values in lessons means that pupils are remarkably clear about the links between these values, RE and how they impact on their own lives. Pupils naturally refer to values and what they have learned in acts of worship and in RE lessons and use this to help explain their thoughts and ideas. In this way, the social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of pupils is an integral aspect of RE teaching. The RE curriculum has been carefully adapted by the school so that it more effectively challenges pupils. The RE subject leader is able to observe lessons and enables colleagues to record the progress made by pupils, as well as ensuring that RE has a high profile in the overall curriculum. Religious education makes an important contribution to the Christian ethos of the school through its links with promotion of the core values.

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

The headteacher and governors confidently articulate and encourage a vision for the school which is firmly based on distinctively Christian values. Excellent progress has been made in addressing the focus for development from the previous inspection. Stakeholders are consulted about changes in school policy and as a result feel valued and respected. The introduction of a comprehensive assessment and tracking system ensures that pupils are sufficiently challenged to reach their potential. Plans for maintaining and developing the school's Christian ethos are incorporated in the school development plan and also permeate the teaching and learning policy. Every opportunity is taken to display the school's Christian values and to give them a high profile with all stakeholders. School leaders recognise that the promotion of pupils' well being involves their educational, emotional and personal development, and that encouraging children to understand and practise Christian values gives a strong foundation for this development and also for their academic progress. This results in good class room behaviour and a spirit amongst pupils that it is "cool to learn". High standards of pastoral care and the development of a calm and focussed learning environment based on Christian values enables pupils to flourish, achieve their best and make very good progress. Links with the Diocese are good and effective use has been made of training opportunities in the recent time of transition. There is ample evidence of effective leadership by the federation governing body. Although relatively new, they act as a support to the headteacher but are also critical friends. They visit the school regularly. They have a clear strategic vision for the school

as a Christian community and have taken advantage of training opportunities to support this. There are strong links with the parish church and the active involvement of the Priest in Charge is appreciated by staff, pupils and parents. They value the support and Christian focus which her presence provides. Parents see the school as a caring and inclusive community that puts their children at the heart of its work. They appreciate the moral and religious teaching provided. Arrangements for religious education and collective worship meet statutory requirements.

SIAMS report April 2015 Croscombe C of E VA Primary School, Croscombe BA5 3QL