

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Crowton Christchurch Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Kingsley Road,
Crowton
Northwich,
Cheshire
CW8 2RW

Diocese: Chester

LA: Cheshire

Dates of inspection: 7th July 2006

Date of last inspection: June 2000

School's Unique reference number: 111336

Headteacher: Mrs A E Thacker

Inspector's name and number: Graham H Nuttall

School context

Christchurch C E Primary School caters for pupils ranging from Reception to Y6 with 74 pupils on roll. There are four classes each morning and pupils are organised into three classes during each afternoon. There are very few pupils from the ethnic communities and almost all children are from a white British background. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average compared with schools of similar size. The school is a very small school serving a wide rural catchment area and pupil mobility has been identified as significantly high due to a significant number of families moving in and out of the locality. There have been two changes in the leadership of the school since the previous inspection in June 2000. Most children enter the school with levels of knowledge and skills considered to be broadly average compared to national norms.

Summary Judgement

Christchurch C E Primary School is an outstanding church school with many strengths. Christian values are at the heart of school life and relationships within the school community are of a very high order. Pupils are exceptionally well cared for in a vibrant, warm and friendly environment. Children feel secure and happy in this well-ordered school. The Headteacher and her staff have a clearly focussed vision and high expectations. Parents and members of the community are welcomed as partners in learning and there are close links between home, church and the wider local community.

Established strengths

- A dedicated and collaborative staff team who make effective contributions to the school and reflect its Christian ethos.
- The high quality relationships found within the school.
- The pervading Christian ethos which permeates all aspects of school life and within which pupils are nurtured and highly valued.
- Quality Acts of Worship and RE teaching which directly contribute to pupils' personal, social, moral and spiritual development.

Focus for development

- Establish strategies for assessment within Religious Education.
- Adopt and implement the revised RE Syllabus and devise appropriate Schemes of Work.

How well does the school, through its distinctive Christian character, meet the needs of all learners?

The contribution of the school's distinctive character towards meeting the needs of all its learners is outstanding. Christian values are very evident within Crowton C E School and this impacts directly on the high standard of care to be found within the school. Responses from a school initiated questionnaire strongly indicated that parents considered that all pupils enjoy coming to school and behaviour was of a very high standard. Children work and play collaboratively and co-operatively together; they speak with enthusiasm about the respect shown for them not only by members of the full staff team, but also by each other. There is a strong commitment to inclusion and pupils are exceedingly mindful of those less fortunate than themselves. Some considerable sums of money have been raised for both local and international charities. Pupils' social, moral, cultural and spiritual development is very

good. A quiet, purposeful and calm atmosphere is to be found within the school and this creates a constructive learning environment within which pupils can thrive. There is a positive climate of achievement and pupils are given ample opportunities to take on responsibility and contribute towards many aspects of school life. Learners feel valued and special. The school provides curriculum enrichment in a variety of ways including some residential visits, visits to places of interest and a variety of after school clubs and activities.

What is the impact of collective worship on the school community?

The impact of worship on the school community is good. Acts of worship play a central role within the life of the school. They are well planned and thoughtfully presented. The vicar leads an act of worship at least weekly and major Christian festivals are celebrated within the church. Worship is an important facet within the life of the school and is a key element in its Christian witness. Records are kept of school worship and weekly themes often follow the liturgical calendar and are broad enough in scope to allow for a variety of activities to be included within the worship. The school provides good opportunities for prayers and enthusiastic sung praise. Periods of reflection are often built into planned worship and pupils make thoughtful and positive contributions expressing their thoughts verbally or through extempore prayer. The worship inspected included a presentation of "modern dance" which made the topic "come alive".

How effective is the religious education?

The effectiveness of religious education is good. Staff and Governors regard Religious Education (RE) as being a subject of high importance within the curriculum. The quality of teaching and learning overall is good and the subject makes a distinctive impact on pupils' moral and spiritual development which was recognised by Ofsted (Section 5 Inspectors) as being outstanding. Pupils' behaviour and manners are exemplary. Present Schemes of Work fully reflect the school's Christian foundation with some appropriate weighting being given to some other world faiths. The school is now planning to introduce a new syllabus and Schemes of Work appropriate to the school now need to be evolved and implemented. There are good links between RE and PHSE. Pupils expressed themselves fluently in a discussion of "right from wrong" and "Is it fair?" The school is aware that Assessment strategies within RE are not yet fully in place and that this is an area for future development. Visits, including a pilgrimage to Chester cathedral enhance pupils' knowledge of their world; they enjoy the subject and acknowledge its relevance to their everyday lives.

How effective are the leadership and management of the school as a church school?

Leadership and Management of the school as a Church School are outstanding. Leadership and Management of the school give a clear purpose and direction. The Headteacher and Governors ensure that both curriculum innovations and building developments relate to raising standards. Parents who answered the questionnaire agreed that the school is led and managed well. The Headteacher and Governors work well together and their plans are rigorously pursued and applied. There have been some recent improvements to outdoor areas including a sensory garden and a fitness trail. The Headteacher provides clear and imaginative leadership directives. Parents welcome her leadership style because it emanates from aspiring high standards and an enthusiasm for future developments. She is ably supported by a hard working team of both teaching and non-teaching support staff, some of whom have strong Christian beliefs. Many parents from the wider community consciously opt for their children to attend Christchurch school since it has many special qualities which are so overtly Christian. These qualities impact directly upon learners. The school provides pupils with a strong sense of community identity; pupils learn within a very caring ethos and the school offers pupils some very firm foundations both to their personal development and their continuing education.