

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Darley Churchtown Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Church Road,
Darley Dale,
DE4 2GL

Diocese: Derby

LA: Derbyshire

Dates of inspection: 16 November 2006

Date of last inspection: 12-16 November 2001

School's Unique reference number: 289432

Name of Headteacher: Mr Nigel Carr

Inspector and National Society number: Mr Keith Brammer 334

School context

Darley Churchtown is one of four primary schools serving the Darley Dale area of Matlock. Most pupils are from white British backgrounds. Both the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and those eligible for free school meals are below the national average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Darley Churchtown as a Church of England school are good with some outstanding features

The beliefs, teachings and values of the Anglican Church fully permeate all aspects of its work and it develops the special talents of each pupil superbly in a caring and supportive Christian atmosphere. The outstanding leadership of the headteacher is underpinned by a strong personal faith and ensures an exceptionally high level of parental satisfaction. The monitoring and evaluation of its work as a Church school is not rigorous enough.

Established strengths

- The outstanding leadership of the headteacher provides a clear vision of the school as a Church school for pupils, parents, governors and staff
- Christian principles are fully at the heart of every aspect of school life and ensure a happy, secure, orderly and successful learning environment
- Parents praise the school's very special qualities, which enable their children to flourish as individuals and to make the most of their talents

Focus for development

- Inject greater rigour into the monitoring and evaluation of the school as a Church school
- Ensure greater involvement of teaching staff in Worship

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

The Christian ethos is immediately evident on entering the building and is seen in all aspects of school life, from symbols, artefacts and displays through to pupils' behaviour and attitudes. There is a welcoming, bright, happy and secure atmosphere which enables pupils to work cheerfully and effectively together. Smiling and laughter abound in classrooms and playgrounds. Pupils know that their beliefs are respected and that they themselves are special and valued. This is seen in the high quality of relationships, both between pupils and adults, and between pupils; and these strongly reflect Christian values, such as love, trust, tolerance, respect, mutual support and sharing. Older boys and girls readily take

responsibility for helping and guiding the younger ones; and all know right from wrong. Behaviour and attitudes are very good because school rules stress positive behaviour; and this is rewarded, along with pupils' achievement, in regular Celebration Assemblies. Pupils' views are sought through the School Council and they say that they are listened to and receive very good guidance and support. School records show that pupils respond well to an above average range of extra-curricular activities for a small school. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. They are made well aware of other faiths and cultures through Worship, visits and lessons and encouraged to show a strong concern for our environment. During the inspection one class was seen making lamps for Divali, and discussing their significance to Hinduism. Pupils also contribute to an impressive Eco display in the foyer. They are extremely generous in supporting a wide selection of local and national charities. The headteacher, referring to Galatians 5.22, says "We want all our children to be "Wonderful, rounded, happy people in the fruit of the Spirit." – and they are.

The impact of collective worship is good.

Worship is well planned and has an important place in school life. Pupils say that they look forward to it because it is enjoyable, imaginative and inspiring and there are frequent opportunities for them to participate. As a result, Worship is a strong corporate occasion. A visiting clown led an excellent Act of Worship during the inspection; it was lively, energetic and amusing, and very powerfully supported the theme for the week. Pupils enter the hall quietly and respectfully with music, artwork, Christian symbols and lighted candles establishing an atmosphere conducive to immediate responses of reverence and reflection. Pupils like the varied format of worship and enjoy singing, being "all together", learning about Jesus and hearing stories from the Bible. Prayers, some written by the pupils, often show concern for peace and the environment, and ask for guidance on, "How we can be helpful to each other". Pupils also welcome opportunities for reflection as valuable times for personal thinking. Themes are well linked to pupils' own experiences and the National Every Child Matters agenda. Pupils, parents and staff celebrate key Christian festivals, such as Christmas, Easter and harvest, together in the church; and the Vicar takes a weekly Act of Worship in the school. A good range of visitors and groups regularly lead Worship; therefore, pupils are well aware of different styles and approaches to Christianity; however, because not all staff regularly attend, they cannot effectively reinforce points made in it through their own lessons.

The leadership and management of the school as a Church school are good.

The headteacher's leadership is outstanding. He has a strong personal faith and provides a clear vision of the school as a Church school and is an impressive role model who is fully committed to providing the best possible educational experiences for every child. He knows the school's strengths and weaknesses very well and has high expectations of all staff and pupils. Governors are enthusiastic and involved in monitoring, evaluating and developing the Christian dimension of the school, but not systematically and rigorously enough. Links with the community and other schools are very good. This is seen in the particularly effective enrichment and induction programme, which the school runs jointly with local high schools; it also helps pupils make a worry free transition to secondary education. Parents' responses to questionnaires, and in discussions during the inspection, praise both the school's very special qualities and the dedication of all teaching and non-teaching staff which enable their children to flourish as individuals and to make the most of their talents. "We feel privileged that our child has a place at this school," says one family. Links with St Helen's church are good and, with the help of the Vicar, the school is planning an even closer association which will make greater use of its resources and his special expertise.