

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Croft Church Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Brookes Avenue

Croft

Leicestershire

LE9 3GJ

Diocese: Leicester

LEA Leicestershire

Dates of inspection: 10th and 21st February 2006

Date of last inspection: 11th -15th January 2000

URN: 120125

Head teacher: Mr.Adrian Gyles

SIAS Inspector NS 94: Mrs.Mairi Mowbray

Context

Croft Church of England Primary School is a small village primary school of five classes of mixed age (131 learners) to the south of Leicester. Its premises are shared with the community centre, so the building is used by many different community groups during the week, including the Playgroup from which many children transfer to the school. A large number of classes are taught by teachers in job share arrangements.

The new Head teacher took up his appointment at the beginning of January 2006.

Summary Judgement

Croft Church of England School is a successful school with a commitment to the care of the individual. The new leadership has a clear vision for the future of the school as a church school which includes rekindling links with the local church community.

Established Strengths

- Very high standards of attainment and progress in most areas of the school.
- A caring ethos which produces good behaviour and mature learners.
- A well-maintained and pleasant working environment.
- A clear vision for school development.

Focus for development

- Strengthen links with the local church community and make greater use of the Parish Church for School Worship.
- Ensure the Christian content of Collective Worship is clearly evident to learners.
- Make Collective Worship, Ethos and Religious Education part of the school's ongoing self-evaluation and development.
- Be more explicit about the Christian character of the school in documentation.

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

The school has a caring ethos which values each individual. The ethos of Croft is clearly in line with Christian principles although this is not made explicit in the school's aims and policy statements. The school has worked hard in recent years to ensure the very high standards of achievement and progress which are evident in most areas of the school. Learners of all abilities are well cared for. Relationships between staff and learners are very good and learners feel valued as individuals. The Head teacher personally welcomes parents and learners onto the school premises in the morning. Learners are encouraged to take responsibility for their own actions and behaviour and are taught to make appropriate choices. Consequently very good behaviour was observed and the older learners particularly displayed great maturity of thought. There are opportunities to build relationships and care for each other, for example, in the playground through the 'friendship bus stop' and at 'family' tables at lunchtime.

Learners value the School Council because it gives them a sense of responsibility as well as the opportunity to contribute towards improvements in their own environment.

What is the impact of Collective Worship on the school community?

Collective Worship is an important focus of school life at Croft and is an enriching experience for learners. It is generally led by the Head teacher with all teaching staff present. Sometimes classes present a class assembly. Learners enjoy coming together as part of a community and sharing common values. Learners of all ages are engaged with the worship through active listening and participation. They enjoy singing familiar worship songs to piano or recorded accompaniment and the music is often left playing once the learners have left the hall.

Collective Worship follows a clear weekly and termly plan based on Diocesan guidelines. The format of Collective Worship is well balanced in terms of teaching, music, prayer, quiet for reflection and making links with school and daily life, but sometimes the Christian message is a little obscure.

Due to multiple use of the hall, there is no permanent focal point for worship in the room. However, a moveable worship table with a beautiful hand-made cloth bearing the school crest – a dove of peace – a cross and a candle provides a fitting focus for worship.

Weekly 'Celebration Assemblies' acknowledge both sporting and academic achievement but also highlight noteworthy personal qualities and actions.

The Head teacher is keen for the school to build stronger links with the Parish Church and to hold termly acts of worship there. It is also felt that the school would benefit from more support from local clergy in terms of Collective Worship planning and delivery and Religious Education.

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

The Head teacher and Governors provide effective leadership and management of the school. The Head teacher had only been in post for six weeks at the time of the Inspection but is already building on good practice by extending the experiences the school offers to learners to develop the 'whole child', and to staff for professional development. The Head has a very clear vision for the development of the school and has the support of the Governing Body in working this out in practice.

The School has strong links with the community, especially the groups meeting in the community centre – the playgroup and some of the groups serving the elderly, and there are plans for further development. The premises are well used but still maintained to a high standard, providing a conducive learning environment for all.

Links with the Parish Church are not strong at present and at the time of Inspection there was a Foundation Governor vacancy on the Governing Body. There has been lack of commitment to developing the Christian aspects of the school in the School Development Plan.

Standards of achievement and behaviour in the school have considerably improved in recent years and parents are happy with the educational experience their children are receiving.