

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### **Croft Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School**

South Parade  
Croft on Tees  
Darlington  
DL2 2SP

#### **Diocese: Ripon and Leeds**

Local authority: North Yorkshire  
Dates of inspection: 29 November 2012  
Date of last inspection: 13 October 2006  
School's unique reference number: 121485  
Headteacher: Mrs Brenda Higgins  
Inspector's name and number: Ruth Packwood 524

#### **School context**

Croft Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School is a popular, over-subscribed village school with 126 children on roll. Children attend from the surrounding farms and villages and a number travel in from south Darlington. Just over 11% of children are on the Special Needs register and 4.4% of children are eligible for free school meals. Since the previous inspection eleven new members of staff, five teachers and six support staff, have joined the school. The school now has a nursery as part of the Early Years and Foundation Stage Unit.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Croft Primary school as a Church of England school are outstanding**

Croft Church of England Primary School has a strong identity as a Church school where Christian values are explicit and underpin relationships and every aspect of school life. Croft Primary School plays an important role in the life of the Church and of the village and is valued by members of the local community. All staff have very high aspirations for each of the learners and put thought and consideration into meeting individual needs.

#### **Established strengths**

- The continuing vision of the Headteacher, governors and staff to develop the school as a Church school so that learners flourish
- Excellent recruitment and induction processes ensure that new staff share and develop the vision
- The strong and effective links that exist between the school, Church and local community

#### **Focus for development**

- To ensure that staff and governors review their provision and impact as a church school in line with the requirements of the new framework for the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools [SIAMS] which will be implemented from April 2013.
- To plan, implement, review and evaluate any necessary changes.

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

Christian values are at the heart of everything that the school does. They are made explicit in displays and in the weekly newsletter and are consistently referred to in appropriate contexts in the classroom and around school. As a result, children are very clear about what is expected of them. Their behaviour is outstanding and relationships throughout the school are excellent. Children feel secure and valued and they flourish in this environment. All children, including those with complex needs, make good or outstanding progress. Parents of other faiths have chosen to send their children to the school because of its values and the

understanding and respect shown to each member of the school community. Children and parents are confident that their concerns are taken seriously and any incidents are dealt with promptly. The school, through School Council, Play leaders and a Buddy system, allows children to take on responsibilities and prepares them well to become responsible citizens. The links with a Christian College in Sri Lanka have had a major impact on learners' understanding of global communities. The broad and interesting curriculum engages learners and offers them a range of opportunities to explore elements of different cultures. This also enhances their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The school's Christian character is now explicitly visible in the range of displays in the school. The Spiritual garden, which the school has developed with the children and local young people, is a lovely space and is well used for quiet reflection and prayer. This and the quiet areas in each classroom make a major contribution to the spiritual development of all learners.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding**

The Headteacher and governors are very clear about the central importance of collective worship in the life of the school and the way in which, together with the teaching of RE, it shapes the thinking and the day to day actions of the school community. As a result the new co-ordinator for collective worship and RE has received appropriate training and is very effective in her role. She and the foundation governor work closely together to plan collective worship. They regularly review the evaluations and use them to inform their plans. Learners are very enthusiastic about collective worship. All teaching staff attend collective worship and are happy to lead it. Staff say that they feel included and affirmed by worship. The worship I attended was planned and delivered by the children with great enthusiasm. Focused on the Christian value of 'Giving', it was pacy and relevant and showed considerable spiritual maturity and awareness from the pupils in years 5 and 6. Their contribution was followed by an extended time for reflection and prayer, led by the Headteacher. The impact on the lives and thinking of the children is evident in the relationships in the school and inspires children to raise funds for those less fortunate than themselves. One child, in a reflection on collective worship wrote, 'I need more time to reflect on how I can put this into practice in my life'. Parents also say that the themes from worship are often talked about in the home. Worship is skilfully linked to the SEAL themes and to the Church calendar. Each week a Christian value is the focus of the Thursday worship and led by one of the classes. Worship is also regularly led by one of the members of the Team Ministry or a Reader, as there is currently no incumbent. A Eucharist is held in school three times a year, and, for significant festivals, the school attend St Peter's Church. In this way the learners become familiar with Anglican tradition and practice. These occasions are well attended by parents and members of the local community.

### **The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a Church school is outstanding**

The Headteacher and governors, through a rigorous cycle of review and self-evaluation, are always striving to achieve the best possible outcomes for all learners. They firmly believe that the best way to do this is within the context of a Church school where Christian values are made explicit and are the basis of all daily interactions. They have effectively shared this vision with staff and parents and children and all can identify the Christian values which underpin the ethos of the school. The significant staffing changes since the previous inspection have been managed skilfully. New appointments have strengthened the teaching team. Croft is a placement school for students from Durham University and some of the newer staff recruits were first introduced to the school through this scheme. The Headteacher mentors new staff and provides all staff with the training necessary to do their work effectively. This has led to a strong, committed staff, totally focused on the spiritual, personal and academic development of learners. From time to time the Headteacher has been asked to lead other schools on a short term basis. The school has the capacity to do this because middle leaders have the opportunity for leadership training and the school has a shadow leadership team. Staff welcome these opportunities to develop their leadership skills and take on additional responsibilities. In these ways, the school contributes to the future leadership of Church schools. The strong partnership between the Church, the school and the local community continues to develop and be valued by all, with joint events during the year.