

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: 13th October 2006

Date of last inspection: 19th – 21st March 2001

School's unique reference number: 121485

Headteacher: Mrs Brenda Higgins

Inspector's name and number: Jane Rutledge 424

School context

The school is set in attractive landscaped grounds in the small village of Croft, four miles south of Darlington. It currently has 109 pupils on roll, and is organised across 4 classes, with a Pre Reception class each summer. The Head teacher has been in post for 8 years. The majority of children come from out of the school's catchment area, and many transfer from other schools. As a result the school has children with a diverse range of backgrounds and experiences. Currently 20% of the children have been identified as having Special Educational Needs. There are few from ethnic minority backgrounds.

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

The dedication and commitment of all members of the school community creates an ethos of pride and praise. Christian values underpin every aspect of school life. Learners and their families are highly valued, and support of them is excellent. Spiritual development is promoted strongly through a wide range of enriching experiences. Learners speak enthusiastically and positively about their school, appreciating their teachers and lessons. The school has a happy, caring and welcoming atmosphere.

Established strengths

- The inspirational leadership of the Head teacher working with a dedicated team of staff and governors creates a strong Christian ethos
- Excellent relationships between all members of the school community are an outstanding feature of the school
- Close, supportive and effective links that exist between the school, church and local community
- The active involvement of the Chair and Foundation Governors in ensuring that the school's Christian character contributes to its overall effectiveness

Focus for development

- Develop appropriate strategies to make the school's Christian character more explicitly visible
- Extend opportunities for prayer to enhance existing reflective experiences

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

The school provides a caring, secure and happy environment. Christian values and an ethos of inclusion permeate the life of the school. Learners of all abilities make very good progress through the high quality support and commitment of both the teaching and support staff. All adults in school know their children and families well, and provide an atmosphere of support and nurture. An extensively enriched curriculum offers creative and spiritual experiences through art, music, sport and drama. This is further enhanced by the popular Discoverers Club run by an enthusiastic member of staff, ably supported by members from the local

church. One child described it as “like Sunday School, but on a Tuesday!” Learners enjoy being given roles of responsibility. One explained how she attended a course to become a Playleader at lunchtimes. Positive attitudes, efforts and high achievement are rewarded and celebrated. All adults are exemplary role models to the children in their care. The attractive landscaped grounds and picturesque local environment are used well to inspire spiritual development. Global and cultural awareness is promoted strongly through fundraising activities and close links with a school in Africa. The school has recently been awarded the International Schools’ Award for the second time. The children receive letters from this school, and some of these are currently displayed in the church as part of the recent Harvest celebrations.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

High quality Acts of Collective Worship are central to the life of the school. Thoughtful planning and participation is a key feature of its effectiveness. Learners speak positively about worship, describing it as “a quiet time, when everyone can be together and ‘we think and listen’ A clear distinction is made between the Act of Worship and Assembly, described eloquently by one child, and effectively demonstrated by the Act of Worship observed which was led by the Head teacher. Services are held regularly in church, and family Eucharists are held twice a year in school to celebrate significant points in the Christian calendar. The vicar is a regular and welcome visitor in school, and is one of the Foundation Governors. The Foundation Governors, Head, and Collective Worship co-ordinator work closely together to plan, monitor and evaluate the impact of Collective Worship. As a result of this thoughtful consideration, the school is encompassing materials from the SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) project, Circle Time and the church to further develop and enhance the impact that worship has on the life of the school.

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

The Head teacher, Chair, Collective Worship co-ordinator and Foundation Governors work in close partnership and provide excellent leadership. The school’s strong Christian ethos is shared, understood and supported by all. Both adults and children speak enthusiastically about the school’s Christian character. One boy was keen to point out the school prayer and proudly explained the initials on his sweatshirt logo CPS, meant St Peter’s Church when reversed. New members of staff are made explicitly aware of the foundation of the school and value being part of its community. A Foundation Governor is present at all staff appointments. Parents are widely consulted about policies and the school’s Values and Aims. The Mission Statement is reviewed annually and included in all the school’s documentation. A well-established working party consisting of the Head, Collective Worship co-ordinator and both Foundation Governors is instrumental in evaluating the effectiveness of the school’s Christian character. All regularly attend training to enhance their understanding and contributions. The Christian vision and ethos is evident through the high quality relationships, behaviour, expectations and nurturing of all members of the school community.