

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist School (SIAMS) Report

<b>Croft Church of England Primary School</b>	
South Parade Croft on Tees Darlington DL2 2SP	
<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Leeds</b>
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Date of academy conversion	January 2018
Name of multi-academy trust	Dales Academies Trust
Date of inspection	20 March 2018
Date of last inspection	29 November 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Primary Academy 144156
Headteacher	Simon Robson
Inspector's name and number	Mark Edwards 837

### Academy context

Croft Church of England Primary School serves the local villages of Croft, Dalton on Tees and Eryholme. 40% come from villages further afield as well as Darlington. Currently there are 103 on roll with 10 pupils in the nursery. The number of pupils with special educational needs is 11.3% and those with EHCPs is 5.2%. Pupils in receipt of Free School Meals is below national averages. The Head Teacher was appointed in January 2015. The school became an academy in January 2018 and is part of the Dales Academies Trust.

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

- The academy's chosen values which include peace, happiness, koinonia, compassion, reverence, endurance and friendship permeate every aspect of school life and contribute to outstanding behaviour and high academic standards.
- The strong leadership of the headteacher supported by a dedicated staff team sets and achieves high expectations for all the community.
- The supportive relationships between all members of the academy community enables everyone to feel valued and nurtured.
- The strong partnerships with the local church, community and parents supports and upholds the academy's Christian Ethos.
- There are high-quality opportunities for pupils to develop spiritually through displays and reflective areas throughout the school.
- The pupil led collective worship is inclusive and meaningful.
- The way the school supports pupils with special educational needs within an inclusive environment.

### Areas to improve

- Ensure that learners can identify clearly the distinctive features of Christian worship by extending the contribution to collective worship of leaders from different Christian traditions and organisations.
- Enhance the provision of the delivery of RE and its contribution to the Christian distinctiveness of the school by, for example, reviewing the 'Understanding Christianity' resource.

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

The academy's chosen values peace, happiness, koinonia, compassion, reverence, endurance and friendship are embedded and permeate every aspect of the school's life. Pupils articulate well the relevance these values have upon their daily actions. They give clear examples of how the values inform the choices they make in relation to behaviour and supporting each other. The Christian values that are promoted contribute to exemplary behaviour that is backed up by high expectations from staff.

Pupil's spirituality is supported well through displays, reflective areas and a variety of reflective books. Staff change the focus of the reflective areas every half term to create a sense of awe and wonder, pupils say they look forward to seeing these changes. Pupils are given opportunities to answer questions in the reflective areas and as a result they make insightful and often moving responses.

Pupil attainment is consistently high across the school and exceed national averages across all pupil groups.

Religious education (RE) plays a significant part in school life and exceeds statutory requirements. Pupils say they enjoy lessons. The recently introduced RE reflection books enable pupils to have opportunities to explore in more depth topics covered. What is particularly impressive is the way pupils articulate why, in RE, it is important to study other faiths. This contributes to a highly developed sense of respect for other faiths and cultures. Through the academy's link with schools in India and Gambia pupils have an appreciation of Christianity as a multicultural world faith. The academy has a programme of visits to other faiths' places of worship. As a result, parents speak positively about this aspect of the academy's work and cite examples of how their children can talk confidently and respectfully about other regions and cultures.

Excellent relationships exist between all members of the school. All stakeholders speak of the 'family feel' of the school. Both governors and parents agree that this is a result of the school's values and leads to everyone feeling safe and nurtured as individuals.

Pupil voice is a strength of the academy, the school council can eloquently talk about the work they do and are particularly proud of how they raise money for charitable organisations. The school offers lunchtime and after school clubs to support pupils' biblical understanding and spiritual awareness. A well-attended discoverers club led by a worker from the local 'Village Seed Project' enables pupils to develop greater understanding and a personal response to biblical stories.

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

Collective worship is led by a knowledgeable and effective member of staff. Monitoring is systematic, and the school can demonstrate how feedback from pupils, parents and staff has influenced strategic thinking, planning and delivery of collective worship.

To support planning, the school uses 'Living Values Roots and Fruits' as a resource. Christian values as well as biblical material underpins the themes for worship. Pupils have an extensive knowledge of bible stories and understand their key messages and links to the school's values. Pupils articulate how these stories have an impact upon their daily actions.

Pupils take an active role in the planning and delivery of collective worship. Pupils are skilfully supported by a member of the support staff and produce worship of a high quality. Pupils speak of their enjoyment of collective worship when it is led by other children and express how this helps develop their confidence.

The act of collective worship seen during the inspection demonstrates embedded routines that enable pupils to have a clear understanding of the Trinity as it pertains to the Christian faith. High quality pupil led delivery is a strength and pupils take part and answer questions confidently. Children's singing is joyful and contributes to a positive atmosphere in worship.

The opportunities the school gives for pupils to pray is varied and creative in approach. The impact of the school's work in this area is impressive and as a result parents cite examples of their children saying spontaneous prayers in response to events they encounter outside of school. In addition, they value how prayer helps their children overcome loss and sadness within family situations. Pupils can describe in detail the purpose of prayer and value the opportunities the school provides for them to write and lead prayers during collective worship and in church.

The opportunities given for children to experience and explore the main Christian festivals in church enable the children to explain their significance with confidence.

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

The academy is led by the headteacher with integrity and a passion for promoting the school's Christian distinctiveness. He is supported by committed governors and staff team that lead by example to ensure the schools values are lived out.

Standards of achievement over 3 years is high and above national averages. Progress is strong for all groups. A particular strength is the way the school supports a large number of pupils with special educational needs. Parents are clear that the support for their children and family is "second to none" and report their children thrive in the inclusive environment the school promotes.

Accurate monitoring and the subsequent astute evaluation leads to clear action plans and results in initiatives that have a real impact upon the whole community.

Through asking challenging questions and regular visits the governors have an excellent knowledge of the strengths of the school. From records of meetings it can demonstrate the high importance it places upon maintaining and developing the Christian distinctiveness of the school. They play an active role in determining the next steps for the school. Governors are supportive and have accessed appropriate training to lead a church academy.

Staff have opportunities to attend diocesan courses and systematically share learning within the school community. Staff feel supported by a well-informed RE coordinator and as a result RE supports well, the Christian ethos of the school. The school has developed a plan for RE and collective worship that exceeds statutory requirements. It is creative in its approach.

Relationships with parents are strong and they enthuse about the care and attention to detail that the staff pay to support their children. They say this is 'exemplary' and that 'staff go that extra mile'. Parents feel valued in school and have a very clear understanding of the school's values. They appreciate how these have an impact upon the development of their children's character.

The school became an academy in January 2018 and is part of the Dales Academies Trust. They say that it is already bringing benefits through collaboration with the other church schools in the trust.

The school has strong and mutually beneficial links with the local church. The local vicar plays an important role in the school and as a result of her input children's ministry is a strength in school and this has an impact on children's ministry in church.