



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Cranham Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Cranham, Gloucestershire, GL4 8HS

Previous inspection grade: Outstanding

Current inspection grade: Good

Diocese: Gloucester

Local authority: Gloucestershire

Date of inspection: 3 December 2015

Date of last inspection: 9 February 2011

School's unique reference number: 115682

Headteacher: Anne Nolan

Inspector's name and number: Stephanie Boulter 785

School context

Cranham VA is a much smaller than average rural school, with 51 children on roll, serving the village of Cranham and surrounding areas. The school has gone through considerable change since the last inspection, with classes being reduced from three to two, and the appointment of a new headteacher in April 2014. The vast majority of children are of white British heritage, and the proportion of pupils with special educational needs is below average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Cranham VA Primary as a Church of England school are good

- The strong commitment of the headteacher, staff and governors to the development of the school's Christian character ensures that it is making an increased impact on pupil's learning as well as on their spiritual development
- Through a growing embedding of Christian values, the school embraces inclusivity, which ensures that all feel welcome and able to share their views and ideas
- The behaviour of the pupils is of the highest standard and the strong, supportive relationships rooted in Christian values ensure that all pupils strive to achieve their best

Areas to improve

- Provide greater opportunities for challenge in religious education (RE) lessons so that all pupils can fully evaluate and explore the big questions in life and improve their higher order thinking skills
- Implement rigorous systems for the independent monitoring by governors of RE, collective worship and Christian distinctiveness so that they can challenge and evaluate their impact on all areas of school life
- Further develop a shared understanding of spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development amongst staff, so that high quality planning across the curriculum can be undertaken and pupils' spiritual development can be enhanced still further

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

The distinctive Christian character of Cranham is clearly demonstrated through its commitment to the inclusion of all pupils regardless of their ability or background, whether they have faith or no faith. All are made welcome and benefit from being part of an inclusive and nurturing school community where Christian values are linked to Bible teachings and the life of Jesus Christ. Parents speak warmly of the impact of the school's Christian ethos which is made tangible in the care and support their children receive from staff at the school. When reflecting on the charitable organisations which they support, pupils readily articulate that their motivation comes from the fact that Jesus cared for everyone and therefore they should do likewise. Relationships between all members of the school community are built on trust and mutual respect linked to the core Christian values of the school. This impacts positively upon pupil behaviour and levels of attendance that remain consistently above average. Whilst most pupils regard provision in the school environment, worship and RE as ways for them to explore spirituality there are not enough planned high quality opportunities in the curriculum as a whole to enable all pupils to express their views clearly, confidently and in depth. The school recognises its role in supporting pupils' understanding of the diversity of culture and faith in modern Britain, and is exploring links in India and Romania to increase this understanding still further. There is a wide range of after school activities and trips which develop individual talents and skills based upon the view that all children should be enabled to flourish in their potential as a child of God. The collective vision of the school, which is to ensure all children feel valued and that they respect and value all others within a strong Christian foundation, was discussed with all stakeholders and as a result staff, pupils and parents can articulate this shared vision resulting in them feeling empowered and having a clear voice within the school. At the current time pupils have a limited understanding of the worldwide church, although some are able to give examples of Christianity in other countries.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is central to the life of the school, promoting its Christian vision and some of the Anglican traditions of the school. Worship has a positive impact on relationships, ethos and culture with older pupils visibly caring for the younger pupils. They participate eagerly in worship, and the recent formation of a pupil worship group has improved opportunities for them to be involved in the planning and leadership of worship. Pupils talk about worship as a special time where they get a chance to 'talk to God'. They talk about reflection and prayer with growing understanding and sometimes use these in their daily life to ask for help or pray for others. The 'Open the Book' worship team is led by members of the local church community which has a positive impact in creating a sense of Christian fellowship and is a strength of the school. Collective worship is regularly evaluated, but this does not focus explicitly on the impact of Christian values and teaching; as a result, it does not provide insight into how worship influences the life of the school nor does it lead to improvement. The school has renewed its links with St James the Great church, with the vicar now being an active governor and a critical friend to the school. The church is regularly used to celebrate the main Christian festivals and through these services pupils are becoming more familiar with Anglican traditions. Parents fully support collective worship and speak positively about how their children can now link the idea of service to the Harvest festival because of the direct links made in worship to the local food bank and the 'shoe box' appeal. Pupils have a developing understanding of the Trinity with the introduction of an interactive blessing at the end of each act of worship.

The effectiveness of the religious education is satisfactory

RE is highly valued by the school and makes a good contribution to its Christian distinctiveness. Pupils have some understanding of the purpose of the subject in terms of learning about religion and belief and the impact of beliefs on people's lives. Attainment in RE for the majority of pupils is in line with national expectations, although teaching and learning at Key Stage Two does not challenge pupils enough in developing a sense of enquiry to explore

and evaluate the big questions in life on a regular basis. The headteacher, who is RE co-ordinator, has accurately evaluated standards in RE and is addressing the issues of depth and rigour by the introduction of 'solo taxonomy' into teachers' planning. She has a very clear understanding of what needs to be done to continue to take the subject forward. Most pupils enjoy RE and have a growing understanding of diversity by exploring global issues and through the recent introduction of a themed RE week which promotes more depth of learning. The contribution of RE to pupils' SMSC development is very good. Some Year six pupils discussed the Nativity and the complex fact that Jesus had 'two fathers' with great maturity and a growing understanding through their excellent questioning skills. A strength of RE is that it promotes the pupils' understanding of the school's core Christian values with pupils knowing their responsibility to look after each other and the world around them.

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

Since the appointment of the new headteacher in 2014, the school's Christian vision has been clearly identified and the core Christian values have been revisited and chosen by the whole school community. This has resulted in a whole school commitment at all levels to ensure the positive impact of the Christian ethos and values. This in turn has led to a renewed focus on the distinctiveness of Cranham as a church school which is now beginning to impact on every aspect of school life. There is an inclusive, nurturing ethos which is testament to strong Christian leadership at all levels. Parents can identify how the school's Christian values impact on their children's behaviour and attitudes and they feel welcome and involved in the life of the school. They are confident in the school and the way in which, through the positive modelling of Christian values, it gives their children an excellent start in their educational and spiritual journey. The school has excellent relationships with the church, local community and the diocese, with governors in particular accessing training in their role as governors of a church school. This has led to the recent introduction of an 'ethos committee' which feeds back on the impact of the school's Christian distinctiveness to the full governing body. Leaders plan for and make good use of succession planning which shows an excellent capacity for improvement. The school fulfils the requirements for collective worship and religious education. The headteacher and governors fully recognise that the next action is to apply rigorous systems at all levels to monitor and evaluate the impact of its Christian distinctiveness, collective worship and RE so that it leads to further sustained improvement of Cranham as a church school.

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