



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Hartington Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Dale Road
Hartington
SK17 0AS

Diocese:

Local authority: Derbyshire

Dates of inspection: 27th November, 2014

Date of last inspection: 7th December 2009

School's unique reference number: 112823

Headteacher: Tracy Blackwell

Inspector's name and number: Alastair Wood 575

School context

Hartington is a very small village primary school of 13 pupils taught in two classes. The headteacher teaches full-time in Key Stage 1 and has been in post for less than one year and the Key Stage 2 teacher has been in post since September. All the pupils are white British and a high proportion have special educational needs.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Hartington as a Church of England school are satisfactory

- A school which is at the heart of the community it serves
- The high quality of relationships and care for each other at all levels
- The links with St Giles' Church

Areas to improve

- Review the school's mission statement and aims in order to celebrate its Christian foundation
- Promote the Christian values of the school so that all understand their importance
- Develop pupils' spirituality through a clear definition and identified experiences
- Enhance pupils' understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith

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

Hartington is a school which focuses on the needs, development and uniqueness of every pupil, as a result, all pupils make good progress from their different starting points through personalised programmes of learning. The pupils enjoy the warmth, care and family atmosphere which enables them to thrive. The bright display in the hall shows the school's Christian values but not all understand their importance or the difference these make to their daily lives. In a religious education lesson, the younger pupils were making the symbol of the cross through flowers and the teacher cleverly integrated God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit

into the learning explaining in a variety of ways and helping the pupils to better understand the nature of the Holy Trinity and its importance to Christian belief. In the hall, a display with a clover is used to represent the Holy Trinity. An extra leaf is added representing the pupils to form a four-leafed clover, symbolising God as integral part of the daily life of all. Standards in RE are good and mirror the pupils' progress in other subjects. The staff are all committed to supporting the pupils' learning and value every pupil's individuality contributing to the warm family atmosphere. The governors play an important part in the life of the school, complimenting the headteacher's full-time teaching commitment through robust support and challenge. The distinctiveness of the school is demonstrated through its values; it provides a centre for the community and regularly offers lunches for the elderly residents of the village. Recently, the value of compassion was exemplified at a lunch which included a game of bingo; one of the pupils won a box of chocolates which, unprompted, he selflessly gave to a guest illustrating that the school's values typically extend beyond the school and into the whole village community. The parish church is used as a resource by the school and as a regular venue for celebrating Christian festivals; two foundation governors provide strong links between the school and church and together with regular visits from the vicar enable pupils to understand the Christian calendar and the importance of Jesus' teachings impacting on their lives. The pupils have a strong voice and all are part of the school council, as a small school they say their voice is heard and acted upon. The school's website and its prospectus do not fully represent the Christian foundation of the school as the mission statement and aims do not explicitly refer to the school's character. The school's newsletter is circulated to parents and members of St Giles' church, helping to share events and news and give mutual prayerful support between school and church. The school seeks parents' views through two annual questionnaires although these do not explore the effectiveness of the school as a Church of England school therefore the school's impact on the learners cannot be fully evaluated. The school has identified the need to broaden pupils' understanding of Christianity as a worldwide faith and develop respect for other cultures. It has links with an inner-city school but its work is at an early stage so it is too early to consider its impact on the pupils. The previous areas for improvement from the inspection in 2009 have been partially addressed and the governors are now more closely involved and better informed of the progress of the school.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is satisfactory

Collective worship takes place in the large school hall and pupils and staff sit together in a circle creating a special atmosphere. Three candles are lit to symbolise the Holy Trinity and a range of symbols such as the large wooden cross help pupils to deepen their knowledge of Christianity. Pupils contribute to worship through prayers and choosing the music but are not yet given the opportunity to plan, lead and evaluate, reducing the development of their leadership and involvement. This was an area for development from the previous inspection. Collective worship is planned through themes and links to other areas of the curriculum, integrating the pupils' learning. Pupils' behaviour is very good and they know the Lord's Prayer and some responses. Some informal monitoring of collective worship takes place but this is not recorded therefore the impact on the pupils is less clear and improvements cannot be easily identified. The school has close links with St Giles' Church and displays in the entrance and in the hall celebrate the closeness and importance of the church through its history. The school visits the church regularly to worship, celebrate the major Christian festivals and as a teaching resource, giving pupils a deep and practical understanding of the Anglican tradition. There are regular visitors to collective worship including the vicar who support and develop the pupils' understanding of Christianity through Bible stories and the use of puppets. Opportunities for reflection are missed and this lessens the development of pupils' spirituality.

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

Despite being in post for only a short time, the headteacher has identified key areas to improve the school's effectiveness. A review of the vision for the school, as a Church of

England school, has been identified as currently the mission statement and aims of the school are not explicit and therefore its Christian distinctiveness is unclear. The headteacher provides a strong lead through Christian values and she articulates these to all in the school. Spiritual development is not clearly defined and as a result, pupils' awareness of spirituality is limited and places and moments for reflection are not provided, therefore opportunities are missed. Planning for RE and collective worship for the current year links to the wider curriculum, integrating the learning. The strategic development of the school as a Church of England school is identified in the current development plan. The governors play an active part in the school's life, giving robust support and challenge to the school. Staff attend training and conferences to support the development of their role as teachers in a church school. The RE co-ordinator is new in post and has implemented the newly agreed syllabus for RE; she assesses pupils' work regularly and ensures they remain on track to make good progress. Governors do not monitor RE and so the impact on the pupils' learning is not shared with the governing body. Parents make a strong contribution to the life of the school; they enjoy the openness and accessibility provided by the staff and the family atmosphere. They speak highly of the school's attention to every pupil, the truly inclusive nature of the teaching and acknowledge the staffs' abilities: 'to get the best out of every pupil.' The impact of parental, governor, community, church and Diocesan links results in a community which is proud of its village school.

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