



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Costock Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Main Street
Costock
Loughborough
LE12 6XD

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Current inspection grade: Satisfactory

Diocese: Southwell and Nottingham

Local authority: Nottinghamshire

Date of inspection: 30 June 2016

Date of last inspection: July 2011

School's unique reference number: 122756

Headteacher: Jane Mellor

Inspector's name and number: Liz Youngman 465

School context

Costock Church of England (VC) Primary School is a smaller than average school of 74 pupils. The majority of pupils are White British heritage and very few have English as an additional language. 17% of the pupils have special educational needs or a disability. A small minority of these have very significant needs requiring additional staffing. Building work to provide a new classroom and staff room has accommodated increased pupil numbers and a new class has opened. The school now has a Reception class plus three mixed age classes. There have been two new teachers this year. The headteacher has been in post since 2009.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Costock Church of England (VC) Primary School as a Church of England school are satisfactory

- The leadership of the headteacher ensures a vision underpinned by Christian values is implicitly at the heart of the school.
- The Christian character of the school is shown in an ethos of caring for each other, promoting pupils' social and moral development and their wellbeing.
- Collective worship is an important part of life in this church school but opportunities to deepen pupils' understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit are missed.

Areas to improve

- Make the school's Christian values more explicit in the life of the school, in religious education (RE) lessons and collective worship, to ensure distinctively Christian provision.
- Access diocesan support and training for staff to fully understand good and outstanding practice in church schools, ensuring time is given to implement necessary improvements.
- Plan for sustained improvement in RE teaching through regular monitoring, evaluation and action planning.
- Develop the school's environment to provide interactive areas for pupils' personal reflections and prayer during the school day.

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

There is a strong sense of belonging amongst pupils and a high level of respect shown between pupils and staff. Moral and social development of learners is an area of strength in this school. For example, children wear their 'integrity award' stars with pride. The motto 'Every Child's a Star!' is lived out and supports the wellbeing of all children. Very high levels of respect are shown by all in the school community for the few pupils with high level needs. Relationships in school and the care for pupils are of a high standard but not related explicitly to the school's Christian character. The school's Christian values of truth, peace, thankfulness and service to God and each other, are clearly evident in documentation but are not widely enough known by members of the school community. An example of this caring attitude and the school's chosen value of service is demonstrated in the actions of a staff member and an older pupil having their long hair cut to donate to a cancer charity. The behaviour and attitude of learners is positive and they say there is no bullying. Pupils say they are confident that adults in school can sort out any issues if they did occur. Attendance is above national average and there have been no exclusions in recent years. Some members of the school community are able to articulate the link between these positive aspects of the school and its Christian character. Academic achievement, the progress of pupils of all abilities and their personal development is strong but is not explicitly linked to the Christian character of the school. There is an understanding of spirituality by some members of staff but learners' ability to respond spiritually is in the early stage of development. This is due to the lack of priority placed on spiritual development in the learning environment and in class teaching over time. RE does not have a high profile in the school's curriculum and therefore makes an inconsistent contribution to the Christian character of the school and the children's respect for diverse communities.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is satisfactory

Distinctively Christian worship is recognised as important in the life of the school and is valued by pupils, staff and parents. It is mostly well planned, usually using Biblical material with Christian values at the core. Children can describe their favourite Bible story, many about Jesus, but have little understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. They engage well, joining in with dramatic Bible stories, enthusiastic singing, quiet reflection, prayers and partner discussions but there is limited evidence of the impact of collective worship in their lives. Christian values are expressed through the worship but children have only a limited understanding on what these values are. Pupils' involvement in monitoring and evaluating worship has led to changes being made in planning. There is some confusion between the purposes of collective worship and RE lessons, with teaching on another faith being included in the worship planning. The main Christian festivals are included, teachers and pupils often lead worship but the responsibility for planning remains largely with the coordinator. Members of the school community including parents, value the celebration of festivals like Easter and Harvest when all gather together in St Giles' Church. These are led by the priest in charge who, along with a reader at the church, has

a strong relationship with the school through leading worship and serving as governors. Opportunities for prayer, reflection and spiritual development for learners outside of worship times are limited, not least by the environment. Some children say they would value the opportunity to have reflection spaces in school and its grounds. Pupils are eager to show their knowledge of their lunchtime grace. They say it helps, 'to remember we are all one family'. They have limited knowledge of the Lord's Prayer. Collective worship makes a sound contribution to learners' moral and social development. Worship meets requirements but the grade is not better because of the limitations of pupils' theological understanding. This hinders their personal spiritual growth.

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

The headteacher articulates a distinctively Christian vision for the school. This is reflected well in its documentation, policies and the website. However the school's chosen Christian values do not explicitly contribute to the academic achievement and relationships. They are also not evident on displays nor widely known by staff, parents and children. Some parents say that staff are very approachable. They value the partnership with everyone at the school and especially the 'fantastic' headteacher. They say they like the church connections even though they themselves are not practising Christians. This is because their children are having similar experiences to those they had when they were at primary school. The school has experienced a considerable time of change including providing well for some children with exceptional needs, having extensive building work done and inducting newly qualified members of staff. Consequently evaluation and strategic planning as a church school has not been given a high priority in recent years by the school leadership, including by governors. The self-evaluation document is descriptive rather than evaluative of the impact of actions and overstates the school's distinctiveness and effectiveness as a church school. The long term future leadership of church schools is being addressed through the development of teachers in middle leadership as phase leaders. One new teacher is being prepared to take on the role of RE coordinator next term. Statutory requirements for RE and collective worship are met. The points for development from the previous inspection have been addressed but there is still further work to be done on addressing children's understanding of other faiths and cultures. Overstretched resources and a small local congregation, mean that church-school links are limited to special services and attendance of the foundation governors at meetings. Creative ways of working across all the churches in the benefice, to enhance school links, are being explored by the relatively new parish priest. Links with the diocese, including access to training, have been adversely affected by the school's tight budget in recent years. The school is committed to improving as a church school and has good potential for positive growth as a distinctively Christian school.

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