

Crosthwaite Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Crosthwaite
Kendal
Cumbria.
LA8 8HT

Diocese: Carlisle

Local authority:	Cumbria
Dates of inspection:	5 th October 2012
Date of last inspection:	18 th October 2007
School's unique reference number:	112317
Headteacher:	Mr Matthew Jessop
Inspector's name & number:	Mr Stephen Wilfrid Mott National Society No. 733

School context

The school is a small rural village school serving Crosthwaite and surrounding areas within commuting distance of Kendal and south-west Lakeland. Parents come from a background in farming, tourism and the professions. It has 61 pupils on roll, including Nursery. Most pupils are from a white British background and lower than average number on free-school meals. The percentage of children with special educational needs is also lower than average. A new headteacher was appointed in January 2012.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Crosthwaite School as a Church of England school are good

Crosthwaite School has a clear Christian distinctiveness which is summarised in the school motto "enrich, inspire and achieve" and expanded in the school's aims. The school's effectiveness is soundly based and is developing under the new leadership.

Established strengths

- The quality of relationships within the school;
- The vibrancy of the school community and the forward looking qualities of all stakeholders;
- The focus and enthusiasm of the learners for their learning experience.

Focus for development

- To track pupil progress in religious education;
- To further develop the work of all stakeholders in monitoring and evaluating religious education, collective worship and its distinctive Christian character in the school.

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

Christian values are found throughout the school. Learning and behaviour are founded upon the life and teachings of Jesus Christ and this is reflected in the school development plan. Pupils show good manners, mutual respect and are welcoming to visitors. Parents speak about how the ethos provides the children with a moral framework and encourages greater understanding of different communities. Teaching and learning encourages an open and honest approach to lessons. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC) is fully supported by the Christian ethos of the school. All children are empowered to take individual responsibility for learning in the classroom and this extends to supporting all the children to take on roles such as school librarians, worship leaders or playground monitors and roles within the eco-council and the school council. Global concerns are addressed by all stakeholders supporting external charities such as a school in Kenya. Pupils say that this is due to their sense of respect for all and the link with Kenya is regularly maintained by the

children. Pupils demonstrated a great sense of care and service on a visit to their link school for those with Special Needs. Prayer is integral to the school. In addition to prayers at times of worship, prayers are also said at other times such as lunchtimes. Children spoke about how the practice of prayer has broadened over the last year. The curate runs a Christian after-school craft club. Christian values are found in all relationships in the school. Pupils talk about how they support each other in the school and speak about what they have learned through worship. Parents say how the children refer to things learnt in worship in solving differences at home. The vicar, curate and other church members are fully involved in the life of the school. Parents speak positively about worship held for the school in the local church. The church community is represented on the school's website. Pupils make regular contributions to Crosthwaite Exchange a community provision which meets weekly. Children are encouraged to care for the environment through the eco-council and growing vegetables in the school garden which are used by the school cook. The school environment does not yet fully encourage spiritual development, but the prayer board has made a significant impact as it is well used and appreciated by pupils. Plans to further improve the school's environment to encourage spiritual development are included in the school's development plan.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Pupils are enthusiastic and positive about collective worship. A wide variety of worship is offered and regular use is made of visitors. Most staff are involved in delivery of worship. Pupils say that they really look forward to the visitors and they talk about the impact they make. They say that they value highly the worship leadership roles they are offered. Pupils have planned and led worship in church and this is being extended to worship in schools. The recently introduced plan for worship is broad and flexible and is based on the church calendar. Pupils speak meaningfully about the seasons and related them to the colours of the table cloth used. Day to day thinking and actions of the pupils is greatly influenced by worship. Parents talked about their children singing songs of worship at home and about the impact of visitors to lead worship. Steps have been taken to improve the overall environment for worship including a new locally made cloth for the table and a Prayer Board. The pupils speak appreciatively about the Prayer Board. The vicar makes use of the prayer requests and thoughts in worship. An art work frieze of people and stories of the Bible to be placed as a focus for worship is currently being made by the pupils under the guidance of an artist. Parents appreciate the invitation to join "Praise assembly" when it is held in church once a month and this is well attended. Links with the local church and opportunities to worship there are very strong. Both the local vicar and curate are actively involved in the worship and spiritual life of the school. They lead worship and the curate has developed the worship plan and evaluation documents. Pupils provide regular written feedback on worship which includes an opportunity for them to contribute to the planning of future worship. Monitoring and evaluation of collective worship has just begun which forms part of the school's development plan with a link governor in place. Early tasks in the strategic intentions for worship, outlined in the school's development plan, have been met.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Religious Education (RE) is an important part of the school and it is included in the school development plans. It is taught mainly as a discrete subject at Key Stage 2 (KS2) whilst at Key Stage 1 (KS1) opportunities to include it in a topic are taken where appropriate. A newly written policy for RE is in place. The newly appointed RE Coordinator is developing a scheme of work based on Diocesan guidelines for KS2. Positive liaison between staff is demonstrated in the sharing of work practice and a portfolio of pupils' work is being developed. This portfolio and samples of individual pupil's work shows that pupils' standard of achievement is at least in line with other subjects. In the lessons observed, teaching and learning is good, with some outstanding practice. Lessons are taught in mixed age groups and are differentiated by outcome. A significant number of pupils gave above average responses when talking about religious artwork. There was evidence on the day of examples of above average achievement in both lessons, but comprehensive recording of progress is not yet fully developed. Children are reflective and they say they enjoy opportunities to discuss, act and reflect, especially Philosophy for Children (P4C) learning during RE lessons. Pupils do not yet consistently contribute to their own learning and assessment but these are points for action in the school's own development plan. RE contributes meaningfully to the wider

Christian character of the school. Pupils talked easily about how the subject has helped them to think more about the welfare of others and how they can help others less well off. Pupils are becoming exposed to a wider range of Christian practice through RE. A recent teaching topic on the Holy Communion has made an impact on the children's understanding of Sunday worship at the local church. The school values other faith traditions and develops the pupils respect for the wider community through sensitive teaching including visits to places of worship of other faiths. Plans are now in place to regularly evaluate and monitor RE by the governors, and a link-governor has been appointed. Regular assessment of progress is still at an early stage and the school recognises this as an area for development.

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

The new headteacher has made good progress in developing the school as a church school. The school leadership has identified the school's distinctive Christian values in its mission statement and all stakeholders are actively involved in their implementation. Policy statements for RE and collective worship are in place. Both RE and worship form distinctive parts of the school's own self evaluation documents and are clearly identifiable within strategic intentions in the development plan. Some of the targets within the plan have already been delivered. Governors are clear about their responsibilities especially in the regular monitoring and evaluating of the school's distinctive Christian character and the importance of RE and worship. Link-governors for collective worship, religious education and ethos are in place. All staff are empowered and speak very positively about their work in driving forward their teaching. Implementation of early targets in the development plan has led to Christian values influencing attitudes and behaviour. The children wrote the school behaviour rules based on the Christian values of the school. Teachers say that behaviour has improved immensely as a result. There is a well-established School Council which reports back to the pupils and action is taken by staff and governors. It is not yet fully involved in the evaluation of the school's Christian values, but members say that they would like to be more involved. Parents speak warmly about the approachability of staff and the fairness which is demonstrated and the strong supportive atmosphere of the school. Christian values such as compassion and care for others is demonstrated through mutual support and pastoral care of staff, parents and pupils. Governors are involved in their own professional development and are aware of the staffing needs of the school community. They have identified future national issues which might affect the school adversely. Very strong partnerships exist between the school and the local church. Children from the school attend Pathfinders and contribute to church worship and there are plans to make this more integrated with the school. Links with the village are strong. The new headteacher has visited the nearest neighbours to talk about the school and build up relationships. Pupils regularly visit and entertain people at "Crosthwaite Exchange" which meets weekly. Local people are a welcome part of the school community and have increasingly become involved with the life of the school, particularly with the reading scheme.

SIAS report October 2012 Crosthwaite School, Kendal LA8 8HT