



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Darrington Church of England Voluntary Controlled Junior and Infant School

Denby Crest
Darrington
WF8 3SB

Diocese: Wakefield

Local authority: Wakefield
Dates of inspection: 5th December 2007
Date of last inspection: March 2003
School's unique reference number: 108243
Headteacher: Mrs Margaret Young
Inspector's name and number: Mr R D Masterton No. 483

School context

Darrington Church of England Controlled Junior and Infant School is a small school of 96 pupils that serves the village of Darrington near Pontefract, a district of mid socio-economic households. A significant number of pupils also come from neighbouring towns and villages. All pupils are of white British or European backgrounds. Four pupils are on the special needs register and three have statements. The local parish church is immediately adjacent to the school.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Darrington Church of England Voluntary Controlled Junior and Infant School as a Church of England school are good

Darrington CE Primary School provides a high quality inclusive education for its pupils. A Christian ethos of care allied to very effective leadership, management and teaching ensures that all pupils make good progress and reach high standards of personal maturity. Children demonstrate great care for one another. The school can further improve through enriching collective worship, by challenging children to contribute more creatively and extending its reach to more parents and to parish worship.

Established strengths

- The inherent strength and team approach by staff in this Christian inspired school that meets children's needs and realises their high potential for learning.
- The growing importance of collective worship in school life as a way of nurturing children's maturity and the spiritual needs of the whole community.
- The thoughtful, robust and evaluative leadership of the head teacher and senior managers supported by staff of the parish church that ensures quality education provision and high standards of children's personal development.

Focus for development

- Challenge and extend the spiritual and intellectual development of children through their contribution to collective worship by giving them greater opportunities for creativity, expression and response to what they have learned.
- Develop the profile of collective worship within the whole school community including more links with parish worship and with more occasions for parent participation.

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

There is an intrinsic strength of educational provision at Darrington School in terms of a rich curriculum and sound teaching. Children attain well, reach very high standards and grow to

become mature, caring, thoughtful and expressive young people. All children make good progress notwithstanding any personal difficulties that some have to overcome including instances of their previous education being greatly disrupted. Children with learning needs and / or disabilities do very well as a result of the expert individual care that they receive. By the end of their education at Darrington, children are exceptionally well prepared for the next stage of their education. Children's development is helped significantly by the exceptional quality of the relationships in school not just between adults and children but also between the children themselves. A culture of respect and being valued, inspired by the Christian mission of the school, nurtures a climate of mutual care and responsibility. This ensures that all children learn in a happy school with support always available from the adults and other children around. There is a tangible Christian ethos. While children are very conscious and appreciative of the nature of the school they attend and fully play their parts, they do not directly recognise that its culture stems from the Christian message of love and service to others.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship has a central place in the daily work of the school and is a valued time for reflection and prayer. The head teacher effectively directs and co-ordinates worship. Clear planning by teachers, including the contribution made by the parish priest and other church staff has both improved its quality and raised its profile as a very important opportunity for all the school to worship together. The programme reflects the Anglican calendar, incorporates many varied themes and festivals and effectively promotes children's personal development. Children are taught how to pray and they respond enthusiastically. Children greatly enjoy participating in the services, especially through singing and drama. They recognise the links with the worship in the church on special occasions and their teaching in religious education lessons. Worship has reinforced children's understanding of celebrating festivals such as Christmas and they grow to appreciate the significance of and the intellectual dilemmas associated with the Easter story. Their collective worship helps children to develop a prayerful response to the needs of others such as the School Council decision to raise money for 'Children in Need'. The high standards of children's personal development is not sufficiently channelled towards their participation in collective worship by giving them a demanding challenge to contribute; offering much more of their own creative writing, music making, art work etc. and working to design some of the services themselves. The school community worships in the parish church for special festivals but practical difficulties, such as heating, currently prevent greater use of the church. This is currently restricting the possibility of parents joining in collective worship more frequently and the school forging stronger links with parish worship.

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

The commitment, inspiration and leadership of the recently appointed head teacher supported by strong senior managers is further improving this effective school. Staff from the parish church bring considerable experience, insight, expertise, an informed perspective and objectivity to the work of leadership and management. They give considerable time and support to the school especially for collective worship. There is a very high commitment by all staff who together form a team with considerable resilience able to provide seamless provision of high quality teaching and learning. This team commitment is directly inspired by the strong Christian ethos of the school that has been developed by managers and governors. Foundation governors support and promote the Christian ethos of the school and are active in monitoring its quality through their regular visits. Parents value highly the opportunity for their children to attend Darrington citing especially the way that their children mature as well as the standards they reach. They would value more opportunity to contribute to the development of the school through additional consultation and by becoming more aware of its needs. Parents and children know that they belong to a church school. However it is not universally understood, particularly by the children as they become older, that the mission and purpose of the school serving its community is inspired by Christian faith.

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