



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Loscoe Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Church View
Loscoe
Heanor
Derbyshire
DE75 7RT

Previous SIAS grade: Satisfactory

Diocese: Derby

Local authority: Derbyshire

Dates of inspection: 23rd April 2015

Date of last inspection: May 2012

School's unique reference number: 112828

Headteacher: Sarah Tew

Inspector's name and number: Alastair Wood 575

School context

Loscoe Primary is a smaller than average primary school. The 155 pupils are taught in six classes and two of the junior classes have mixed year groups. The proportion of pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds is much lower than similar schools nationally and the percentage of pupils with a statement of special educational needs is also below similar schools. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is above similar schools. The headteacher has been in post for less than three years.

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

- The headteacher's leadership is based on distinctly Christian values
- The commitment of the whole staff to the care and nurture of every child as a unique child of God
- The consistency of high quality of relationships and mutual respect

Areas to improve

- Implement a formal monitoring system which ensures the governing body is informed of how effective the school is as a Church school
- Give pupils more opportunities to explore Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith

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

The Christian values which underpin the school's daily work ensure its distinctive character is appreciated by the whole community as everyone strives to do their best for every pupil, nurturing their success as a unique child of God. Parents describe the happiness of their children at school and the family atmosphere where care and respect for each other is given great importance. They say there is genuine love by everyone for every child. The school's unique character enables every pupil, from their different starting points, to make very good progress which is well above the national average. As a result of the school's inclusive and nurturing character, the gap between disadvantaged pupils and others is reducing. Attendance is well above the national average for similar schools confirming that the pupils want to come to school and that they appreciate the work and support of the staff enabling them to feel safe and happy. When there are tensions the pupils say these are dealt with quickly and fairly and that there is a Christian spirit of forgiveness. Spirituality is important to the school and this is expressed in different ways from the decisions about which charities the pupils would like to support to prayers for special events. Each classroom has a special area for reflection where pupils may sit and spend some quiet time. There is a similarly designated area outside, giving pupils the opportunity to spend some quiet time thinking and developing their spirituality. The school has a clear spiritual development policy which links pupils' spiritual development throughout the curriculum impacting positively on the calm, peaceful atmosphere of the school. Pupils' behaviour towards each other and around the school reflects the values and the staff model exemplary behaviour and have high expectations and aspirations for the pupils who say there is always someone they can talk to. The pupil voice is strong and they can influence decisions. The classroom and corridor displays are bright and colourful, they challenge and stimulate helping the pupils to make connections between the different areas of the curriculum. The school celebrates its uniquely Christian character through clear symbols in the entrance hall, throughout the school and on the colourful, symbolic badges on the pupils' sweatshirts emphasising its distinctiveness and celebrating every child's uniqueness. There is an Acts of Kindness box where anyone can take the opportunity to write about a person or event where someone has shown kindness to another; these notes are discussed in collective worship and pupils are nominated for their kindness, reinforcing the values which make the school such a special place. Pupils say they love Religious Education (RE) learning about Jesus and different religions through stimulating and inspirational teaching. As part of introducing pupils to Christianity as a world faith, the school planned a St Barnabas Day where each class looked at Christianity in a different country and in particular, how Easter is celebrated, giving pupils the opportunity to make comparisons with their own understanding of Easter. This is linked to the school's work on diverse communities and is at an early stage of development. The school has strong links with the parish and St Luke's Church and the clergy are regular visitors to collective worship.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Worship is at the heart of the school and is enjoyed and appreciated by all. It impacts on everyone's daily life and is seen as an important aspect of each school day. The pupils' worship group plays a major role in supporting collective worship and giving them ownership. While the worship group play an important part, they do not yet plan, deliver or evaluate collective

worship as a result, their development as leaders is at an early stage. Themes for collective worship are planned carefully from the Values for Life syllabus, shared with staff, clergy and visitors and it is delivered in different and inspirational ways. There is a special atmosphere for worship in the hall and pupils enter singing. Candles are lit by each class in turn; members of the worship group read prayers and the singing is of good quality, clear and enthusiastic adding to the importance and enjoyment of the occasion. All the staff attend and the pupils speak highly of collective worship and say they enjoy searching for things about Christ. The links to Bible stories are explicit which helps the pupils to gain a broader understanding of Christianity and its potential in their lives. A variety of visitors are invited to lead to collective worship these include an inspirational sports coach and local Christian groups all giving the pupils an insight into belief and the Christian way of life. Currently there is no formal monitoring or evaluation of collective worship by the governors or the co-ordinator so it is unclear where development is needed. This was an area for focused attention from the previous inspection. The pupils' understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit is at an early stage and the school is looking at different ways to help pupils better understand the concept. They are familiar with and can sing the Lord's Prayer and some responses; prayer and reflection form regular parts of the day enabling pupils to develop their spirituality through thoughtfulness and care towards others. Staff attend prayer group meetings in school and the school has close links with St Luke's Church through the foundation governors all of whom work in school. Visits to the church are made to celebrate the major festivals and the school uses the church's artefacts as teaching resources, helping pupils to understand the distinctive features of the Anglican tradition. The connections with St Luke's church are strengthened through a member of staff who is also a reader at the church, communications between the parish and the school are through the Village newsletter. Parents attend school services celebrating the major Christian festivals at St Luke's Church and describe them as wonderful.

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

The headteacher leads the school through her clarity of vision and robust commitment to the pupils based on distinctive Christian values and her strong Christian witness. In the relatively short time she has been in post she has made significant changes which have impacted on the whole community. As a result, all share the school's vision and the aspiration and nurturing Christian care for each of its pupils helping them to be the best they can be. The governors play an active role in school and give generously of their time; they note the journey the school has made through the headteacher's vision and describe the impact on the school's Christian character as being more visible now than in the past. The effectiveness of the governors' influence may be summarised through the school's motto: 'We may be small but together we can make a big difference.' While governors have a clear, strategic view of the school and also offer the headteacher appropriate and robust challenge, there is currently no formal monitoring of the school as a Church of England school. The headteacher, clergy, staff and governors worked together on the school's self-assessment giving a sense of ownership to the strategic direction of the school. RE and collective worship are both specified in the school development plan as areas for targeted improvement with a supporting budget. The co-ordinator for both these areas provides good leadership, supporting others and ensuring RE is seen as a priority subject. All the staff teach RE and the curriculum time for collective worship and RE meets statutory requirements. Staff training in RE and collective worship has taken place and further training is planned. Parents value the school as a Church of England school with a distinctive Christian character, one parent values the school's Christian character so much that she passes three other schools in order that her children may attend Loscoe Primary. As parents say: 'It's a school where the individual child thrives and where the staff help them to be the best they can be.'