



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

South Darley Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Cross Green

Matlock

DE4 2JT

Previous SIAS grade: Good

Current inspection grade: Outstanding

Diocese: Derby

Local authority: Derbyshire

Dates of inspection: 17th March 2016

Date of last inspection: 31st March 2011

School's unique reference number: 112842

Head teacher: Paul Wilde

Inspector's name and number: John Clapham 775

School context

South Darley is a smaller than average primary school serving several villages and hamlets in the hills to the west of Matlock and is in close proximity to the parish church. It has a stable roll of 57 pupils in two mixed age classes. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds and speak English as their first language. The proportions of pupils eligible for the Pupil Premium (those eligible for free school meals or who are in local authority care) are below the national average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are below average.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of South Darley Church of England school are outstanding

- The high profile of the school's Christian character has a discernible impact on the children's exceptional behaviour and attitudes, as well as the academic and the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC) of each child.
- Distinctively Christian values are deeply embedded in every aspect of the life of the school, and are central to everything that they say and do.
- South Darley is an inclusive, loving and caring environment where every child is nurtured as a child of God.
- The school is well led, with all members of the school community committed and contributing tirelessly to the sustained progress that South Darley continues to make.

Areas to improve

- Develop global links with other schools and churches to build of children's knowledge of the multi-cultural nature of Christianity and to foster a wider understanding of diversity.
- Increase the creative opportunities for personal reflection across the curriculum and the school site to develop children's spirituality.

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

The distinctive Christian character of South Darley school is evident the moment one walks through the door. The head teacher's description of the school as, "a warm welcoming family where Christian values are consistently lived out," is borne out by the school's deeply embedded Christian character. This clearly informs the ethos, values and decisions that impact strongly on the development of each individual child. As one parent put it, "There is a real feel of family in this school. Everyone looks out for each other and works together, so their confidence and self-esteem is nurtured". All members of the school community clearly articulate the tremendous impact that South Darley's Christian values and ethos have on attitudes, learning, care and confidence across the whole school. This is borne out by the high levels of academic achievement, attendance, and the personal development of all learners, regardless of their ability or background. Parents report that pastoral care is strong, and feel that the staff enjoy school activities just as much as the children. The school is characterised by exceptional care for all members of the school community, with happy settled children who are nourished, challenged and empowered to be themselves. This has a significant impact on the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the children, which is reinforced right across the curriculum. Children's behaviour across school is exceptional because relationships between all members of the school community are respectful and strongly influenced by the Christian character and values of the school. As one child commented, "The school values are in our heads and hearts so that we know how to live, and they change our lives so that we are different on the inside." Children have a sense of responsibility, and have many opportunities to work cooperatively and contribute positively to the life of the school. The children work and play together well and show high levels of tolerance, respect and understanding of each other. Older children take great efforts to look after younger children on the playground and help serve them at lunchtime. The school is establishing a link with a school in India to develop children's global awareness and children are beginning to develop their understanding of Christianity as a multicultural world faith. Visits to a range of places of worship have given children an appreciation of difference and diversity, with a clear understanding of and tolerance of the beliefs and values of others, and how this relates to their own lives. Religious Education is a central part of the curriculum, where children use drama enquiry, reflection and questioning skills effectively to explore their values and beliefs and those of others. Opportunities to explore moral choices, to ask and answer 'big' questions and derive meaning for their own lives are impacting strongly on children's thoughts and actions across school.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

At South Darley school, great value is placed on distinctively Christian collective worship. It is valued as an integral part of the school day and is at the heart of the life of the whole school community. The whole staff team participate fully in worship with the children.

Collective worship is based upon the school's distinctively Christian values and clearly drives and inspires the thoughts and actions of the whole school community. References to God the Father, the person of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit are made relevant to the children and are deepening the children's understanding of God. A school display on the Holy Trinity that links the Trinity to the lives of the children has greatly supported the children's understanding. Children relish the chance to reflect and develop a personal spirituality through a wide range of experiences. Rich prayer activities, including prayer jewels, directional prayers and a wide range of prayers written by the children ensures prayer is vibrant and valued and part of the daily rhythm of the school. Local clergy, church members, school staff and the Matlock Area School's Trust make a significant contribution to collective worship at South Darley. Strong support is given by church members for the monthly family collective worship held in the church (Tuesday Church), where children and parents value this time, and are now

comfortable worshipping together in church. The school values team, made up of willing Key Stage Two children, have worked closely with the vicar and collective worship coordinator to plan, lead and evaluate collective worship. The children have taken such ownership of this that they now plan and lead collective worship in three other church schools and are working with those schools to support them in setting up their own values teams. The values team now also have opportunity to lead worship during Sunday services in three local churches. Children from school are involved in a number of roles in church, which has made collective worship in school even more meaningful for everyone. These strong links between church and school have also ensured that children can identify with Anglican tradition and practice. In the collective worship observed during inspection, many aspects were led by children, including the welcome and greeting, lighting of a candle, prayers, drama and reflection. Clear messages of the relevance for their lives were referred to throughout, with opportunities for children and adults to contribute and be involved. A clear structure is in place for the monitoring and evaluation of collective worship. Feedback resulting from this is valued and is impacting on the quality of provision. Discussions with pupils during the inspection exemplified the positive impact that worship is having on their thinking and day to day actions: "Collective worship makes us more positive because it makes us think about how we treat each other. It calms us down for the day and helps us to be kind and respect people".

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

The head teacher, staff and governors share a clearly articulated vision where distinctively Christian values are central, and impact on the attitudes, aspirations and achievements of the whole school community. Governors freely give time, encouragement and support in all aspects of school life. They take an active role in supporting the head teacher and senior leaders in school self-evaluation and strategic planning, including foundation governors' evaluation of the impact of collective worship with groups of children. Self-evaluation is insightful and highly accurate, giving staff and governors a clear picture of the strengths and areas for development as a school. Annual school self-evaluation evenings, involving school staff at all levels with governors, ensure that the whole cycle of self-evaluation and improvement planning is led with a shared vision and purpose. This has a marked impact on standards and provision throughout the school. Exemplary relationships across the whole school community show the key role that Christian values play within school. Strong partnerships exist between school and church, enriching the lives of both. Joint events are exceptionally well attended, and parishioners offer practical support to the work of the school. The involvement of the collective worship coordinator in supporting the church process of writing their mission action plan has further cemented this close partnership. The school is also characterised by a close working relationship with parents, the wider community and the diocese. Everyone feels valued and all model the school ethos. Partnerships with other church schools across the cluster have provided opportunities for enrichment as well as joint worship services. The previous inspection identified children's involvement in collective worship, and stakeholder involvement in the evaluation of collective worship as areas for improvement. These have not only been fully addressed, but are now strengths of the school. The professional development of all staff and governors is planned strategically, building up a strong team well placed to take the school on to its next stage of development. Particular emphasis is placed on succession planning, where staff are nurtured to fulfil their full potential.