



**Eyam Church of England (VC) Primary School**

Church Lane  
Eyam  
Derbyshire  
S32 5QH

**Diocese: Derby**

Local authority: Derbyshire

Dates of inspection: 22<sup>nd</sup> May, 2014

Date of last inspection: 20<sup>th</sup> May, 2009

School's unique reference number: 112816

Headteacher: Mrs Helen Cook

Inspector's name and number: Mr Kerry Palmer (60)

**School context**

Eyam Church of England Primary School serves the rural village of Eyam and surrounding area. It is a smaller than average primary school whose 76 pupils are almost all of white British heritage. Less than average are in receipt of pupil premium support. However, the number with recognised disability or special needs is above average. The original Victorian building and outside areas have been extended and imaginatively adapted to provide an exciting and stimulating learning environment.

**The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Eyam Church of England (VC) Primary School as a Church of England school are good**

- The professional dedication of headteacher and staff, driven by Christian values, ensuring excellent education for every child
- The recognition of each child as a unique part of God's creation driving a fully inclusive school which does its best for children of all abilities and aptitudes.
- The quality of religious education (RE) which successfully promotes social, cultural, moral and spiritual development
- The strong links with the parish and clergy which reinforce the Christian foundation of the school in the community

**Areas to improve**

- Draw up an action plan to make Christian distinctiveness explicit in all aspects of school life so that stakeholders are able to articulate this naturally.
- Along with relevant stakeholders, review the development of children's prayer life as they progress through the school so as to promote deepening spirituality.

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

Trust, friendship and service are embedded in relationships between all stakeholders and ensures high quality provision for pupils of all abilities. This is a truly inclusive school living up to its aim to recognise each child as a unique part of God's creation. The Christian character of Eyam Primary School has significant impact on pupils' achievement. Data shows that many make better than expected progress and reach higher than average levels of achievement. Perseverance and teamwork successfully promote enthusiasm for learning and cooperative work throughout the school. Attendance is good and effective, positive behaviour management is supported by Crusader awards. However, the school's vision and values which underpin the effective work of the school are not expressed or widely understood as distinctively Christian, arising from Biblical teaching. Children have a growing understanding of other faiths and the concept of a world-wide church. Empathy is engendered for the needs of the less fortunate leading to learners investigating and supporting the work of a number of charities, Christmas shoe boxes are a regular feature as is the Fairtrade stall. One child wrote 'It doesn't matter who you are – it doesn't matter how you look – don't worry – everybody is the same – everybody is different.' The school has active links with a school in Gambia and contrasting city schools. There are an abundance of clubs and enrichment activities, some organised by the pupils, serving the talents and interests of all. Pupils are given opportunities to develop responsibility by applying for a variety of jobs or becoming mini-leaders for lunchtime activities. The school's values support social, moral, cultural and spiritual development in many aspects of school life although these are not expressed as overtly Christian. Through its cross-curricular approach, religious education (RE) has a positive impact on the wider curriculum, children's spiritual development and the Christian nature of the school. Younger children reflected Christian values through role play and older children pondered, in school and church, the nature of God, linked to an art project. In a lesson one response to a 'what to do?' question was 'what my heart and God told me to do'. The school is not yet outstanding because their Christian values are not made explicit or articulated distinctively and the school's understanding of spiritual growth is not clear.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is good**

Collective worship is recognised as important and plays a major role in developing the school's values; it is distinctively Christian with the regular use of Bible stories, prayer, reflection, Christian songs and some use of a liturgical framework. A calm, reflective setting is successfully created with display, music and projector images. Hall displays include the current topic 'Super Heroes' with a clear Christian focus, self-portraits of 'the school family', Fairtrade, the school and Lord's Prayer. Themes linked to school topics and church festivals are led by headteacher, staff, clergy and children. Most children respond positively and participate willingly. Worship is referred to as 'assembly' by most of the school community limiting the extent to which they understand this time as Christian worship. In the worship observed, two children successfully researched and delivered 'Christianity around the world' as part of the school's Spanish week. There are also Christian focal points in each classroom and the school entrance area which link pupil's RE with worship. Pupils know that Jesus is special and the school is successfully supporting a developing understanding of the Trinity. Evaluative pupil questionnaires indicate that more children would welcome the opportunity to plan and present worship. Worship clearly impacts positively on school life supported by festival services in church which are well supported by families. Prayer and reflection are a regular feature of the school day and year, including a prayer box in the entrance area. Optional Advent and Lent prayer activities, in church, were well supported; the children found them memorable. However, there is insufficient development of prayer activities. Collective worship is insufficiently coordinated to ensure vibrant worship that raises a high level of spiritual reflection. The school meets current statutory requirements for RE and collective worship.

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

The headteacher and staff work as a dedicated professional team, who model Christian values, striving to provide the best for every pupil. Their vision drives continuous improvement, supported by robust systems of review and evaluation, and a deep concern for every pupil resulting in happy, confident learners who do well. Whilst Christian values are embedded, the school does not articulate Christian distinctiveness as based in the life and teaching of Jesus, nor is it explicit in documentation or on the website. Insufficient emphasis is given to ensuring that all stakeholders recognise that the school's strength come from its church foundation. Nonetheless, the headteacher and effective RE and worship coordinator actively move these areas forward. Staff welcome training opportunities offered by the Local Authority and diocese enhancing professional development and potential for further responsibility. Input from the rector and parish family worker significantly enhances the pupils' experience and the Christian life of the school. Both are trusted friends of the school and community. Foundation governor activity has been more focussed since the last inspection, they monitor RE and worship, report to the full governing body and play a part in evaluation and development planning for these areas. Parents speak highly of the school, headteacher and staff. They are fully involved with regular consultations and workshops. 'It has a lovely family feel,' 'the teachers are firm but fair, professional but approachable' 'I like the end of day quiet prayer', were some comments. Parent and church helpers are welcomed, supporting many activities, including the popular work of the forest school. The PTA raises fund to ensure all pupils benefit from visits and enrichment activities. The school plays an active part in parish and village life. School children sing at Sunday services from time to time, church children's clubs are well supported and the village fun run is a big local event. The potential for further positive development is good.

SIAMS report – May 2014 – Eyam CofE (VC) Primary School, Derbyshire, S32 5QH