

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### **Cramlington Cragside Church of England Controlled Primary School**

Cateran Way,  
Cramlington,  
Northumberland,  
NE23 6EX.

#### **Diocese: Newcastle**

Local authority: Northumberland

Dates of inspection: 15<sup>th</sup> July 2009

Date of last inspection: 11<sup>th</sup> January 2006

School's unique reference number: 134473

Headteacher: Mrs Janice Craven

Inspector's name and number: The Revd Nicholas Chamberlain 508

#### **School context**

This much larger than average primary school has recently moved into excellently appointed buildings. This, together with the transition from first school to primary status and upheaval in the teaching staff, has meant that the school has experienced a period of profound turbulence. It is currently in special measures. It has a very high proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Cramlington Cragside Church of England Controlled Primary School is satisfactory**

In affirming the school's self-evaluation as a satisfactory Church of England school, I wish to stress, also, that in my opinion it has the capacity to improve very significantly and quickly. This report should indicate why.

#### **Established strengths**

- A vision for the contribution that can be made by Christian values, worship and ethos to a school has underpinned Cragside Primary during a time of transition and considerable turbulence and is proving to be a key foundation for growth in the future.
- Well co-ordinated, honestly evaluated worship is contributing strongly to the spiritual, personal, moral and cultural development of children and adults alike.
- An approach to leadership that aims high, affirms, cares, and sees team first is beginning to transform both standards of achievement and development for the children and also the experience of belonging to the school for the adults.

#### **Focus for development**

- In completing the move to new premises, take the opportunity to establish dedicated indoor and outdoor spaces for reflection and to ensure that the prayer stations offer progressive opportunities for development.
- Ensure that the children's appetite for involvement in worship is met by increasing opportunities for drama and by projecting/providing words for the hymns and songs.
- As part of the school's honest and courageous self-review revisit the statement of aims, involve all stakeholders in appraising its Christian identity and consider the establishment of a chaplain or chaplaincy team to nurture its ethos.

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

I was welcomed in to the school in a way that made me want to come back, by both children and adults. As I watched the children move around the school and as I spoke with them I felt their positive enjoyment of their environment. They have space, friends, opportunities to learn, opportunities for extra-curricular activities, and staff who are dedicated to their well-being and development. My observation is that forgiveness means just that at Cragside; it is something that goes deep and increasingly more deeply, and is a Christian quality that is enabling a child who may be agitated or angry to find his or her position once again in the whole class. By reviewing its behaviour policy in the way that it has, and by concentrating on this and other related areas, the school is strengthening and renewing a firm foundational

ethos that is tangibly Christian and is enabling of its life. Jesus spoke about entering the kingdom of heaven as a child, and defended those who were young and vulnerable, and this is what I see the staff and other adults associated with the school doing on behalf of their pupils. The children are proud of their school and speak with intelligence and insight about the possibilities of the new building and its grounds. They know that there is work to be done and will be willing partners in the process. The school is helping children to articulate what matters to them, including personal and faith issues and questions, in an appropriate way. The prayer stations are intrinsic to this process. Each class has already established its station, even though the school has only been in the building for a matter of weeks. Prayers such as 'I'm worried in case my girlfriend dumps me for someone else' or 'Dear God, how do you make such wonderful things? How does food fill your stomach? The sky, the atmosphere and the air are brilliant. I wish I was like you. You are an excellent creator' are both honest and heart-felt. They indicate what the school's ethos makes possible in terms of wider growth. The prayer stations should now be structured in a way that will allow progressive development throughout the school. The school should also consider how best to create reflective spaces inside the building and in the outside areas. The School Council is effective and its ideas and comments are valuable and honest. This is a 'happy, friendly, sociable' school that is 'making progress' in the words of two of the children to whom I spoke.

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

The able, enthusiastic and committed co-ordinator for Religious Education and Collective Worship, by leading a revision of policy in this area, has begun also to deepen the impact of worship on children and adults alike. Structured according to weekly themes but delivered in a way that is responsive to need, the worship combines appropriate flexibility and child-focus with an awareness of the pattern of the church and school year and of the wider Christian tradition. The class led whole school worship in which I shared engaged children of all ages because it included an element of drama, something that is clearly and consistently requested in survey and feedback forms. These forms provide evidence that the children value worship as a space in the day in which to reflect, to celebrate and to think. They like to be given responsibility in worship, and to be involved as fully as possible. They like to sing and have strong views about different songs. Their willingness to evaluate worship offers a helpful tool to those whose task it is to plan and to structure worship opportunities. More confident singing will be achieved as the choir is supported but might also be enabled by projecting/providing the words of the hymns and songs. More frequent, appreciatively intended, evaluation by a greater range of adults will help further to build the confidence of those who lead worship. By offering worship in a variety of styles and physical contexts during the course of the week, the school is reinforcing its commitment to encouraging appropriate personal and corporate expression of feelings and faith in a way that will gradually strengthen its caring and Christian ethos.

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

The clear vision and wisdom of the newly-appointed head-teacher, the commitment of the deputy, the burgeoning creativity of the rest of the staff, together with involved governors and an interested partner in the parish church are ensuring that this school is moving forward as a church school. While mottos can sometimes be simply words, I do observe that there is a developing sense of team in Cragside that is already bearing fruit. According to the documentary evidence that I have seen, and validated in conversation, I believe that the school has both a clear understanding of its current strengths and weaknesses and that it is taking the necessary steps to move forward positively. As its rigorous self-evaluation and review process gradually takes into account its statement of aims it will find new ways of articulating and strengthening its ethos. As part of this process it should consider establishing a small group whose specific remit is to nurture the ethos; a group that might include a person or persons who have been given an identified chaplaincy role within the school. This will ensure that the Christian foundation, which I believe to have made a vital contribution to stabilising the school, will continue to be tended as the school also makes progress in tackling standards and achievement.

SIAS report [July 2009] [Cramlington Cragside Primary School, Northumberland] [NE23 6EX]