

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Thorner Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Kirkhills,
Thorner,
Leeds
LS14 3JD

Diocese: Thorner

LA: Leeds

Dates of inspection: 23rd March 2006

Date of last inspection: 9th – 10th October 2000

School's Unique reference number: 107 994

Headteacher: Mrs Gloria Stone

Inspector's name and number: Peter Marsh

School context

Thorner Church of England Primary School is a Voluntary Controlled school serving the village and immediate surrounding area of Thorner. The majority of pupils live in the village in owner occupied accommodation. About 30% of the children come from families living outside the parish. Free school meal eligibility is 8.9%. 5.4% of the pupils come from British Ethnic Minority backgrounds though none have English as an additional language.

Thorner C of E has 4 classes and all of the 111 children are taught in mixed aged classes. The numbers of children in each class varies greatly and this is due to the uneven pattern of children who enter the school each year on intake, for example 21 children joined Foundation in 2005 whereas the intake from 2004 was 9. The varied numbers on intake carries forward into gender imbalance with only 4 -5 girls in each of the Y1, 3, 5 and 6 year groups. Pupil mobility is high.

Attainment on entry is broadly in line with the national average. 10.8% of the pupils are registered with Special Educational Needs though only one child carries statement funding.

Summary Judgement

Thorner C of E Primary School is a good school with outstanding aspects ranging across its spiritual, moral, social and cultural life. At its very heart is the uniqueness of every individual child. This is born from an exceptional ethos, steeped in Christian values, which permeates the school. The school's Vision Statement provides a living testimony to a caring, learning based community where learning is underpinned by Christian values which shine out for all to see and feel.

Established strengths

- The value placed on the uniqueness of every individual within the school.
- The social, spiritual and moral development of the children in the care of adults in the school provides pastoral care that is outstanding.
- The relationships between adults and children within the school are outstanding.
- Strong leadership which contributes significantly to the Christian ethos of the school.
- Collective Worship is consistently Christian and honours the Anglican tradition.
- Links with the community through charitable fund raising and many other events.
- Teacher involvement in active exchange visits to and from Sri Lanka enables the school to celebrate cultural differences through first hand experience is an outstanding feature.

Focus for development

- Continue to develop strong and productive relationships with the parish church.
- Further develop Collective Worship so as to improve learners' attitudes to this area.
- Continue to develop the good work on the 'Every Child Matters' front by allowing the School Council to take on their responsibilities with growing independence.

How well does the school, through its distinctive Christian character, meet the needs of all learners?

This school, through its distinctive Christian character, meet the needs of all learners in an outstanding way.

The school's Vision Statement is a living example of its distinctive Christian character. The uniqueness of every child is recognised and the school makes good provision to meet the needs of all learners. The emotional care and development of the children through guidance and care based around Christian principles is an outstanding feature of the schools work. This care and emotional security impacts positively on the academic achievement of the pupils who feel affirmed, valued and cared for. Children value their own Christian tradition whilst understanding that learning about other faiths develops tolerance. The displays in the entrance, the school hall and the corridors beyond celebrate the school's Christian appeal openly and honestly and help promote a high quality learning environment within the school. The children through the School and Class Councils have a keen sense of responsibility. Through these forums the children raise funds for charity and support a monthly Fair Trade stall. These activities and the school's Global links with a boys' orphanage and its local school in Sri Lanka provide the children with an opportunity to share Christian values both locally and globally. Teacher involvement in active exchange visits to and from Sri Lanka enables the school to celebrate cultural differences through first hand experience. The prospectus celebrates Thorner C of E as being '*a small school with a big heart*' and this is clearly lived out through the school's strong Christian character.

What is the impact of collective worship on the school community?

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good.

Collective Worship occupies an important place in the life of the school and is a key element in its distinctive Christian witness. Worship, which is well planned, provides time to celebrate achievement, learn about God and provides opportunity for quiet reflection. The focal use of the wooden cross, the burning of a candle and the celebration of God's presence through story and prayer enables Collective Worship to remain consistently and recognisably Christian.

Worship is led by the headteacher, staff members, children, local ministers and lay readers. Parental comment through questionnaires shows they clearly value the opportunity to attend celebratory worship. However, although in the main pupils enjoy the worship and sing hymns with enthusiasm pupil questionnaire evidence and discussions with pupils would indicate the school needs to consider how to ensure that an increasing majority of children openly enjoy this important area of Christian witness. Good use is made of the local Parish and Methodist churches. The Chair of Governors has a clear view of how these links can be reinforced for the future.

How effective are the leadership and management of the school as a church school?

The leadership and management of the school as a church school is good with many strengths.

The quality of leadership has had a strong impact on the success of this voluntary controlled school as a church school. In this mission the headteacher is ably supported by senior management, the Governors and the strong presence of the local Parish Church lay reader who supports in school on a number of fronts. These leadership strengths provide pupils with good role models for living out the Christian life in practice.

The headteacher treats staff with professional respect and leads by example. The headteacher knows all of the children by name and their parents too! The essence is on teamwork where everyone is valued and opinions shared. The school's Christian purpose is also clearly expressed through its Vision Statement, aims, Prospectus, website and communication with parents. The parish vicar, as Chair, and the Foundation Governors are aware of their responsibilities and take an active role in supporting the school. The school has a strong emphasis on sharing and caring which leads to a culture of self review and improvement.