

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Tanworth in Arden Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

The Green
Tanworth in Arden
Solihull
B94 5AJ

Diocese: Birmingham

Local authority: Warwickshire
Dates of inspection: 18th July 2007
Date of last inspection: Nov 2001
School's unique reference number: 125695
Headteacher: Philip Jones
Inspector's name and number: Alan Thornsby 137

School context

Tanworth in Arden serves pupils from a range of mainly White British backgrounds. Originally a Victorian building, it has had several extensions, the most recent of which will be completed later this year. The school receives benefits from the Tanworth Education Foundation.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Tanworth in Arden Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School as a Church of England school are good

The headteacher has a strong commitment to the Christian value of service to others that is realised in the everyday lives of the whole school community. Pupils make good personal and academic progress within a Christian context. They develop a good understanding their roles and responsibilities as members of a caring school and wider community.

Established strengths

- The impact of the commitment of the headteacher to the leadership of a school where Christian values impact on the everyday lives of all.
- The development of pupils' positive attitudes of care, respect and Christian love
- The links between school and church

Focus for development

- To evaluate the distinctiveness of the school as a church school to inform strategic planning
- To raise standards in religious education through monitoring and evaluation.

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

The school clearly promotes Christian values and beliefs. This results in a family-like ethos based on care and respect. There is a high commitment to helping and serving others, following the example of Jesus that is recognised by staff and pupils. The self-esteem of pupils is good because of the mutual respect between staff and pupils and the high expectations that staff have for themselves and for the pupils they teach. The learning environment is challenging and effective because a significant number of parents and members of the community help in the school. Care and compassion underpin the daily life of the school and create a calm atmosphere for learning in which all have the equal opportunities to achieve. Children are very friendly, well behaved and confident to pose and answer 'big questions'. They readily articulate the reasons for their successful achievements that are recognised by such events as the Golden Ticket lunch, awarded to one child from each class every half term in recognition of good citizenship, manners and thoughtfulness. As

a five-year old readily explained after returning from lunch 'we all know how to behave in this school.' The school council has an effective voice in school, and their role is emphasised throughout school in posters affirming the value of their work. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good because of cross-curricular links and the wide range of after school activities offered by staff. Pupils are very aware of the importance of moral decisions 'we all learn how to understand and get along.' Pupils spiritual awareness is nurtured through the use of reflective questioning, in displays such as the banners created by leaving pupils that show their memories of the school, and the effective use of the school's outdoor facilities. Pupils enjoy links with a school in Birmingham and describe how these help them towards an understanding of a multicultural society.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Worship has a central role in the life of the school because it is a time when everyone meets together to explore and celebrate its core values. Although monitoring is only carried out informally there is constant attention to the impact of worship. The distinctive nature of this time is clear from the use of a lectern, cross and lighted candle and pupils can explain the significance of each. They understand they are part of a larger worshipping community because they play a role in leading the services shared with the church community. Each class plans and leads a service for a major festival each year and pupils lead the annual Remembrance service on the village green. The weekly celebration assembly takes place in church and is attended by member of the local community. Pupils gain moral insight from the stories they hear because they use the reflection time to consider how the meanings of the stories are relevant to their own lives. The school supports this by arranging worship for different groups of children so that themes can be developed at appropriate levels for year groups and classes.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

The profile of religious education has been raised in the school because of the revision of the policy and syllabus that is based on the locally agreed syllabus. Although given a higher profile there have only been very limited opportunities for the coordinator to monitor and evaluate these changes in order to raise standards even more. However, end of unit assessments show that the achievements of most pupils are at least in line with expectations. The quality of teaching is good overall and pupils make successful progress in learning because of high expectations and effective subject knowledge of teachers. The staff make skilful use of a range of teaching strategies and questioning techniques to extend pupils' existing knowledge. Pupils in year four, for example, recapped their knowledge of the significance of symbols in Sikhism and successfully used this in making suggestions about symbolism used in Christian denominations. RE makes a strong contribution to spiritual and moral development because teachers specifically plan activities for children to explore this dimension of Bible stories. In reception pupils used their knowledge of the story of Joseph and his coat to explore their own emotions and reactions to the behaviour of other people. Although tasks are usually matched to the abilities of pupils, marking does not always give pupils a clear indication how well they are achieving and what they need to do next.

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

The head has a deeply held commitment to a school in which all know the meaning of God's love in their everyday lives. This creates a powerful learning environment that is underpinned by respect for and service to all. In practice there is a distinctive Christian character to the school. In terms of documentation however, it has yet to be fully identified and evaluated by the governing body in order to fully support strategic planning. Parents recognise and value the open door approachability of the head and staff as well as the impact of the school on their children's personal development. There is a strong reciprocal relationship between the church and the school that has an impact on both communities. For example, the strong links between school and church are seen practically in the use of the church for weekly services as well as for music teaching. This is reciprocated by the use of the school by the 'Splash

team' for Sunday school, that involves pupils from school, during family service. The vicar has a role in school beyond leading worship and establishes relationships with children by working alongside them in the engineering club. Other church members show their commitment to the school by regularly listening to children read. When pupils leave the school they are presented with a Bible during a service in church and also take part in a leavers' service at the cathedral. Events organised by the parents association on behalf of the school also involve other members of the wider village community, reflecting the central role of the school in village life.

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