

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools

Thomas Bullock Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Pound Green
Shipdham
Thetford
Norfolk
IP25 7LF

Diocese

Local Authority

Dates of inspection

Date of last (Section 23) inspection

School's Unique reference number

Name of Headteacher

Inspector's name :

Norwich

Norfolk

6th December 2006

January 2001

121127

Mr David Saunders

Mr Thomas Green

Context

Thomas Bullock is a smaller than average sized primary school serving the village of Shipdham and the surrounding area.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Thomas Bullock as a Church of England school are good

The Christian values which underpin the aims and practices of the school make a good impact on its effectiveness as a Church school.

Established strengths

- The shared aims and values of an experienced and hard-working team
- The commitment shown by staff to discover and meet the individual needs of learners

Focus for development

- Leaders to continue to evaluate how best to practically celebrate and explicitly express Christian distinctiveness in the overall development of the school.
- Continue to develop the implementation of the Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education and in particular to identify and promote teaching activities which fully engage pupils of all abilities.

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

The school is good at meeting the needs of learners through its distinctive Christian character. Learners, parents, staff and governors fully support the well publicised aims of the school. Learners, including the disadvantaged, feel welcomed and speak clearly of the way in which they are valued and cared for by school staff and given responsibility. Equally there is a good relationship between staff and other members of the school community. The school's commitment to the 'Healthy Schools Initiative', to music, to involvement in community and charity activity, and its links with the local Anglican church, all support the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. The school environment is well used in this regard with a bold and imaginative cross in the hall. All pupils took part in this project. Elsewhere there is art work which supports spiritual development and carefully crafted RE displays. While there are many other examples of good practice there remain further opportunities such as in a range of school documentation, to express school aims and values as more explicitly linked to Christian heritage, beliefs and practice.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Worship has a good overall impact on the school community. It includes some very good features. Carefully planned themes and guidelines provide leaders with structure yet flexibility. References to the central place of worship within the daily assemblies and the inclusion of prayer, singing, story and time for reflection support consistency. Governors assist the headteacher in overall planning and regular evaluation of worship. Pupils join in well with singing and in the saying of the Lord's Prayer. They speak of their enjoyment of worship. Stories are used well to exemplify the chosen themes and support the moral development of pupils. Seasonal colours from the Anglican calendar and a candle on a table provide a clear physical focus.

The contributions of pupils are valued when they help with a range of tasks or when the recorder group or instrumentalists provide support for singing.

The school values the well established tradition of the involvement of the local clergy who have been closely involved in the life of the school. Pupils, school staff and parents alike value and enjoy the occasions in which the school worships in the parish church. The school draws on other opportunities to participate in Diocesan events such as Education Sunday. While sensitive to the backgrounds of all pupils, the presentation of Bibles by the Thomas Bullock Trust, to pupils within an act of worship signals commitment to Christian distinctiveness. Links to art, music and drama through worship provide for the spiritual development of pupils, and this is very well exemplified in the successful gospel choir.

The effectiveness of the religious education is satisfactory

The overall quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education is satisfactory, with a number of good features. The importance of Religious Education is recognised by the school as an important feature of Christian distinctiveness with RE often a key component of 'cross-curricular' topics. The need for revision of the school's RE policy documentation is acknowledged. The newly adopted local RE syllabus has been strongly welcomed by staff and is already being successfully used in planning. Teachers make good use of artefacts and technology to support their teaching, for example when looking at religious art. As a result many pupils are interested and keen to learn. Although some are capable of deep thinking around relatively complex issues, the interest and attention of a significant number of pupils is lost during extended periods in lessons when few active or individual tasks are provided. Despite this, in one lesson for older pupils imaginative use was made of silence and candle-light to exemplify the central part which meditation plays in Buddhism. The majority of pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of what they have learnt about religions and are able to talk about what they are learning from them. The subject makes a strong contribution to the spiritual and moral development of pupils.

Schemes of work reflect the school's Christian distinctiveness but also, through the teaching of other faiths, supports the schools aims for inclusion and multi-cultural education.

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

The quality of leadership contributes significantly to the effectiveness of the school as a church school. The head and governors work well together and the Foundation governors are anxious to develop the Christian distinctiveness of the school. This is confidently expressed in the early work of school self-evaluation.

Within the School Development Plan there is mention of the school's Christian and Anglican heritage but elsewhere there is little reference to the promotion of Christian distinctiveness, such as in the school brochure. In contrast, through Governor membership of an RE and Worship Committee and in a range of activities linking church, community and school the aims and purpose of the school are advanced. The headteacher continues to maintain good links with the wider Christian community. The implementation of the widely publicised overall aims and values ensures that all staff feel part of a school community where all members are valued and appreciated. As a result parents are confident that learners from all backgrounds can flourish as individuals.