

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### Thurlaston Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Desford Road  
Thurlaston  
Leicestershire  
LE9 7TE

#### Diocese: Leicester

LA: Leicestershire

Dates of inspection: 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup> September 2006

Date of last inspection: 26<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> February 2001

School's Unique reference No: 120201

Name of Head teacher: Mr Gavin Beetham

Inspector's name with N.S. No: Mr David Dunmore (No: 308)

### Context

Thurlaston Church of England School is a small, rural primary school with 115 children on roll. Pupils from Thurlaston and several surrounding villages attend the school. There are a very low percentage of pupils with English as a second language or who are eligible for free school meals. The original school, established in 1833, has been extended and improved and now provides a very good range of accommodation for the children. Close links exist between the school, the local Anglican Church and the Chapel. The present Headteacher took up his appointment at the beginning of the Autumn Term 2006.

### Summary Judgment

**The distinctiveness and effectiveness of this school as a Church of England school are good.**

Thurlaston Church of England Primary School is a good church school, strongly committed to its vision of 'Teaching and Living the Christian Way of Life'. The school provides a caring learning environment, based on Christian values, in which all pupils are valued and encouraged to achieve their potential.

### Established strengths

- A strong Christian ethos is evident throughout the school and the provision for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.
- The school provides a stimulating learning environment with a wide range of learning opportunities and teaching styles to meet the needs of all pupils.
- The children have very positive attitudes to school. They are well behaved and show care and consideration for others.
- There are very close and mutually supportive links with parents, the church and the community.

### Focus for development

- Extend opportunities for the children's active participation in daily collective acts of worship, through drama, role play, and music presentations.
- Draw up and implement an action plan for religious education and worship within the School Improvement Plan to guide the school's future development.
- Formalise and establish a regular programme for the monitoring and evaluation of collective worship and religious education with staff and governors.

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

Thurlaston school has a strong Christian ethos of care, support and guidance, which informs all aspects of its work. Pupils are happy to come to school. There is a very positive climate for learning and children make good progress. 'The teachers are kind; they help us and keep us safe'. Good work and behaviour together with respect and help for others are greatly valued through praise, award certificates and a special celebratory assembly each week. An attractive stained glass window, a prayer table, cross and Bible are on display in the school hall, together with colourful displays of children's work, showing clearly that this is a church school. A warm, welcoming atmosphere greets all visitors. Parents and Governors play a valued role in the life of the school and their views, and those of the children, are actively sought. In addition to stimulating learning opportunities, pupils enjoy a good range of extra curricular activities, including opportunities for sports coaching and specialist music tuition. The Eco Club and Committee enable the children to voice their opinions about their school, contribute to its smooth running and learn more about protecting the environment. Children work together to support a range of charities, for example; NSPCC, Barnardos, Cancer Research, Goats for Africa, etc, and understand the reasons for doing so.

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

There is a commitment to high quality worship which supports the school's vision. Well planned, daily acts of worship, following Diocesan themes, are attended by all teaching staff and children. Very effective use of visual images and ICT helps to enhance children's enjoyment and understanding. Music, songs and a biblical text support experiences of awe, wonder, thanksgiving and reflection. Pupils listen respectfully, offer good ideas and read their own prayers. Providing opportunities for the children to contribute to their daily act of worship through drama, role play and performing their own music would further extend their involvement and enjoyment. Children are happy to talk about being part of 'a special church school', and 'the privilege of being able to talk to God.' The local incumbent and minister from the chapel regularly lead collective worship, which the children enjoy. Parents attend the celebration of major Christian festivals in Church, with pupils playing a leading role.

**The effectiveness of religious education is good.**

Very effective planning, creative and enthusiastic teaching, cross curricular and assembly links and a skilful use of ICT, all contribute to good teaching and learning in Religious Education. Teachers plan their lessons very effectively from the Diocesan syllabus and Leicestershire agreed syllabus. Content is well matched to age group, building on previous learning and answering key questions. For example in a FS2/Year 1 class where pupils were preparing for their Harvest Festival, fruit and vegetables from the school grounds and ICT pictures were used to stimulate discussion, whilst integrating art, music and letter writing. This provided a very enjoyable and meaningful lesson. Children display positive attitudes to RE, collaborate well and contribute thoughtful answers which are valued and respected. Teaching and learning in RE make a significant contribution to each child's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Teachers make good use of the skills of support assistants, who contribute ideas to lessons and planning. Pupils are enthusiastic to learn about other world faiths and information displays and lap-top computers extend learning opportunities. For example, making a virtual tour of a mosque enabled older children to be very proactive in their learning. Lessons observed had a clear plenary and assessment focus at the end for evaluating pupils' understanding and learning. Clear priorities, identified in the school improvement plan, will enable more rigorous monitoring and evaluation within RE.

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

A new Headteacher, effectively supported by the Assistant Headteacher and the Governing Body, is currently working to establish a new leadership and management team for the school, after a one year period of temporary leadership. During that difficult period, the Governors, two Acting Headteachers and a committed and hardworking staff, have provided excellent support to minimise the impact on the pupils and their learning. Headteacher and Governors are building together to ensure that the school's vision, aims and priorities in the School Improvement Plan are implemented effectively to assist the school in moving forward. New teaching staff are supported in their roles. Changes in subject responsibility are being well managed, with the Headteacher and Assistant Head taking responsibility for Worship and Religious Education respectively. There is a strong partnership between the school and the Anglican Church and Chapel, with the Church receiving support from staff, children and parents at special festivals. Links with the community and events organised by the active and committed Parents Association enhance the life of the school.

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