

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Tiffield Church of England Voluntary Aided School

High Street South,
Tiffield,
Towcester,
Northamptonshire
NN12 8AB

Diocese: Peterborough

Local authority: Northamptonshire
Dates of inspection: 3rd July 2007
Date of last inspection: 15th – 17th January 2003
School's unique reference number: 122031
Headteacher: Mrs Heather Goodall
Inspector's name and number: Susan Parkinson 186

School context

Tiffield is a smaller than average primary school situated towards the south of the county. The vast majority of pupils are of white British origin. The number of pupils with learning difficulties is below average. The Headteacher has been in post for four years and is the only full time member of staff. The school building is very small and the mobile classroom used for Foundation / Key Stage 1 children is in a poor state of repair. The governing body has plans to erect a permanent extension when finances are available.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Tiffield Primary School as a Church of England school are good

Pupils and parents value the Christian principles promoted by staff and governors and the close links with the parish church and local community.

Established strengths

- The inclusive nature of the school inspired by the Headteacher's vision of collaboration.
- Effective links with the local church and community.
- An atmosphere of concern and consideration, based on Christian principles which permeate all areas of learning.
- The dedication of the Headteacher and governing body to improve and enlarge the school building to provide much needed spacious accommodation for community as well as school use.

Focus for development

- Construct a clear plan for more formal monitoring and evaluation
- Continue the expansion of church and community relationships.
- Survey views from parents, pupils and local community more frequently.

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

The school places considerable emphasis on its church school status in all its documentation. Staff and governors are committed to promoting Christian values in all aspects of school life but especially in the quality of care for every individual. Pupils feel safe and secure and speak confidently about their relationships with one another and with adults. Standards of behaviour are high and visitors are treated with respect and courtesy. Discussions with pupils revealed the strength of understanding for personal choice, tolerance and co-operation. One pupil firmly stated "there are no bullies in this school". Time for prayer and reflection is built into the school day and staff frequently challenge children to think about their responses to all situations and to discuss options carefully before taking action. Parents speak highly of the Christian character of the school and appreciate the moral teaching provided for the children. Governors have responded exceptionally well to the

“Every Child Matters” agenda and this has been the focus of much deliberation during governors’ meetings. The Friends of Tiffield School responded in a most positive way to the challenge of providing child care facilities within the village by opening “After- School Club” which runs for two hours every day. Parents speak appreciatively of this initiative and the warmth of care provided. Some parents have chosen the school for its Christian ethos although they live much nearer to other schools. The incumbent visits the school to conduct Collective Worship every month and the school community holds a monthly service in church. Links between the church, local community and the school are exceptionally strong. Ecumenical diversity is acknowledged and accepted as a gift which underpins the inclusive nature of the school. The school building is the only place within the village large enough to accommodate any social gathering but its cramped accommodation is limiting. There are no uniformed organisations or other clubs for young people necessitating children having to join groups in the nearest town. Parents believe their children integrate well in such situations and make friends easily reflecting the confidence and security provided by the school.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective Worship is an integral part of school life. Worship is planned collaboratively and delivered by all teaching staff, the incumbent and some visitors. The focus for worship is always a cross and a candle together with other artefacts which reflect the current theme. Lack of space is a serious problem but great care is taken to ensure minimum disruption so worship can take place in a calm and peaceful environment. In the act of worship observed, the children entered the room in complete silence. They sang unaccompanied and responded thoughtfully to questions asked about “How we can read---GOD” They were able to explain that the main source of inspiration and learning for Christians may be found in the Bible but lessons, based on Christian principles can be found in a variety of different texts including videos, music and fictional stories. Time for prayer and quiet reflection is an integral part of every act of worship. Discussions with pupils provided clear evidence of understanding and older pupils were able to identify other materials not mentioned in this act of worship, where the Christian message may be found. Parents, governors and members of the local community are invited to attend services held in church each month. All major festivals are celebrated and wherever possible, linked to Anglican traditions. The vicar wears vestments which reflects Anglican traditions and is appreciated by governors and parents. This year he conducted an Imposition of Ashes service which was attended by the school and members of the congregation. Pupils are able to talk confidently about acts of worship as well as non-Christian assemblies which have taken place. They enjoy active participation both in school and in church and the variety of styles of worship available. Worship is reviewed annually by staff and governors and detailed records are kept. Pupils and parents views are canvassed but currently only every three years. Every opportunity to enhance worship is carefully considered. One parent expressed a desire to be more involved with planning and delivery of worship in the future.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Since the last denominational inspection much has been done to improve the resources and delivery of RE across both key stages.. Teachers are enthusiastic in their approach and RE is considered to be as important as other core subjects. The RE policy is detailed and the school has produced an additional document, “Religious and Moral Awareness Syllabus”. Both documents support the school’s self evaluation that each unit studied contributes strongly to SMSC and to pupils’ awareness and understanding of other faiths and traditions. A recent visit to a synagogue was followed by carefully differentiated activities which were stimulating and engaged all children. The depth of knowledge displayed by all pupils was impressive and they showed genuine respect and sincere interest in Jewish beliefs and customs. Key Stage 2 pupils examined responses to a survey on the Bible which they had devised and circulated following on from a lesson about Mary Jones and her desire to own a Bible. Children were competent in referencing biblical texts, linking quotations to religious songs they knew and stories they had read. Some challenging questions provided evidence of pupils’ considerable interest in RE and relevant answers and explanations provoked quiet discussion for several groups. Staff consider RE to be so important that it is included in all topics within the syllabus. ICT, drama, art and music are widely used to enrich experience and understanding. Pupils are enthusiastic about these cross curricular links and spoke

enthusiastically about a recent Focus Day on Russia which provided them with an insight into a very different culture. Children are very familiar with the village church which is used as a valuable resource. The school also visits other places of worship in the surrounding, thus enabling pupils to experience differing styles of architecture and furnishings. Staff and governors have made good use of Diocesan training opportunities and pupil progress and attainment are monitored verbally and informally.

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

The Headteacher and all staff are fully committed to providing a sound and firmly rooted Christian education for all pupils. This shared vision is apparent through observation of the behaviour of the children and the warmth of relationships within the school. Foundation governors believe the school serves as an important focus for the community and express an unequivocal determination to ensure the erection of a permanent extension to the rear of the premises. This would enhance the co-operation between the local community and the school population which is already well established through shared fundraising activities, concerts for elderly people, articles in parish publications and verbal reports by governors to the PCC. The governors place the issue of further multicultural education as high priority on the action plan. They make frequent visits to the school and offer verbal feedback to staff following their observations. Foundation governors have been actively involved in the Diocesan self evaluation process. They feel strongly that team work and good relationships are crucial to the quality of support provided for the children and that shared responsibility for planning, monitoring and evaluating Collective Worship, RE and SMSC will strengthen the school's capacity to develop further as a church school. All documentation makes clear reference to the school as a Church of England school. There are notices on every doorway also stating this fact. This shows that issues raised in the previous inspection have been acted upon. Written evidence of formal monitoring and evaluation procedure is not easily accessible. This undervalues the strengths of the school. The parish priest is receptive to suggestions which may enhance pupils' spiritual development and he works hard to convey the Christian message to pupils. The Headteacher demonstrates a positive Christian response to the needs of others and pupils speak with great pride about their charitable giving both at home and overseas and the difference their efforts can make to those less fortunate than themselves. The talents of all members of staff are recognised and valued and used to promote Christian teaching and leadership throughout the school.

Tiffield Church of England Voluntary Aided School, High Street South, Tiffield, Towcester Northamptonshire NN12 8AB July 2007