

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Tipton St John Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Tipton St John
Sidmouth
Devon
EX10 0AG

Diocese: Exeter

Local authority: Devon
Dates of inspection: October 13th 2006
Date of last inspection: November 2001
School's unique reference number: 113438
Headteacher: Mrs Penny Burnside
Inspector's name and number: Mr Andrew Rickett 201

School context

Tipton St John is a small rural primary school with 98 children taught in three mixed aged groups. The majority of children are of white British heritage coming from the village and surrounding hamlets. The school operates on a split site separated by a road. There are plans for a new building on a different site.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Tipton St John as a Church of England school are good

The school's distinct spiritual and moral framework encourages the development of self belief and love for others and creates many opportunities for personal growth of both children and adults. It has created a community in which all can thrive both personally and academically.

Established strengths

- Relationships between all members of the school community are based on Christian values of care and respect.
- Children possess a highly developed sense of self belief and confidence to express their views with clarity.
- The leadership of the school provides a very good model of Christian practice.

Focus for development

- Raise the profile of religious education so that it has comparable status to other core subjects.
- Identify the impact of spiritual reflection on the quality of learning.
- Improve children's experiences of the outside environment with special regard to play.

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

Children at Tipton St John possess the marvellous ability to use language to clearly articulate complex issues. This common language is an intrinsic part of the school and is a direct result of a strong emphasis on Christian values. Children acquire a wonderfully rich vocabulary through which they can explore and express their own feelings and appreciate the views of others. They acquire a personal strength and confidence which makes them very at ease with themselves. This has a huge impact on their personal growth but also gives them the determination to succeed academically. The children at Tipton not only use these modes of expression freely but also practise what they say. The high quality of relationships between children is a reflection of the great sense of care that is a central message of the school ethos. This was seen many times particularly when older children were looking after the

younger ones. The emphasis on self belief has an impact on learning because children find they have the confidence to accept challenges and take risks. This gives them a very positive approach to learning. Children of all abilities are given opportunities to thrive. Those with special educational difficulties and disabilities make good progress. Gifted and talented children are identified early and also progress well. Standards are good by the time children leave the school.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

The quality of worship is consistently good. Children receive a variety of worship experiences including a fortnightly visit to the local church for worship led by the Incumbent. They speak positively about these visits and say that they value this link because it is `their` church. Worship is given a high profile and there is constant commitment to improving it. For example, regular evaluations by adults and children are taken seriously and lead to real change being made. The use of differentiated evaluations for younger and older children means that the process is fully inclusive. The regular use of time for quiet reflection and prayer is a key element in creating a quality experience. This stillness forms an integral part of school life, encouraging children to understand the importance of taking time to think deeply about an issue. The use of the village hall creates a satisfactory environment but difficulties with the layout limits the type of worship that can be offered to the children.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

The quality of teaching and learning in RE is good. All of the lessons observed had moments when the children could either pray or be still for a moment. This gave the children opportunities to reflect on important issues and time to gather thoughts so that the quality of discussion was high. Children enjoy this chance to discuss and express their views and this is one reason why they have positive attitudes towards RE. With the use of skilled questioning from the teacher, very meaningful responses were elicited from the children. Progress in these lessons is good and the school recognises the challenge of how to measure accurately the quality of a discussion. Careful differentiation allows all children to make good progress. There are outstanding elements to teaching. This was seen in a lesson where the teacher had managed to fully engage the children in the lesson by having prepared a magnificent learning environment. This captured their imagination and gave them an opportunity to experience a religious festival first-hand.

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

The Headteacher provides an inspiring role model for the entire school community. Christian values are reflected in the way that she leads the school. This has an impact on the quality of relationships and is a major reason why the school is seen to be special in the eyes of both children and parents. Parents speak of the family feel of the school and the way that it nurtures children. They believe strongly that time at Tipton St John will equip their children with the strength and confidence to face future challenges. The Incumbent has a good relationship with the school particularly through his pastoral care of the whole school community. Links with the church are good and there is a mutual wish to make them even closer. Governors are committed to enriching the Aided status of the school and have a clear grasp of the issues needed to ensure this happens. Co-ordination of RE is satisfactory due to the instability of staffing the role. The leadership has created a community in which Christian values underpin the successful growth of a spiritual and moral dimension which helps enrich the lives of each child.