

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Tunstall Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Tunstall Road

Sittingbourne

Kent

ME9 8DX

Diocese: Canterbury

Local Authority: Kent

Dates of inspection: 29th – 30th January 2008

Date of last inspection: 10th -12th November 2003

School's Unique Reference Number: 118735

Headteacher: Kate Hutchings

Inspector's name and number: Judy Bainbridge, 328

School context

Tunstall is a one form entry primary school situated in a village just south of Sittingbourne. The main school building dates from the early nineteenth century and provides very cramped and restricted accommodation. Five of the seven classes are housed in temporary classrooms. Pupils attend from both the village and the surrounding area, with many parents choosing the school for its Christian character. Pupils are drawn from a range of backgrounds, with about half coming from relatively affluent families. 8% are from ethnic minorities. The percentage of those with learning difficulties is below average. In recent years, standards of attainment in the national tests at the end of both key stages have been above the Kent and national averages.

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

Tunstall Church of England Primary School is a good Church school.

Established strengths

- Pupils appreciate and articulate clearly the Christian values which underpin the school's strong caring ethos.
- Pupils respond very positively to the messages conveyed in collective worship.
- Religious Education is carefully planned and well taught, enabling it to promote pupils' spiritual development extremely well.
- School and church work creatively together in a mutually supportive partnership.

Focus for development

- Ensure that the school's Christian character, which is already reflected in its life and work, is made explicit in key policies.
- Extend opportunities for pupils, teachers and governors to contribute to the monitoring and evaluation of collective worship.
- Complete the timetable for the implementation of the new Kent Agreed Syllabus for religious education and embed the related assessment strategies, as identified in the School Improvement Plan.
- Ensure that governors and all teaching staff are involved in the process of Church school self-evaluation and related action planning.

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

Tunstall School is a close and happy community that is clearly built upon Christian values. Pupils say they are always treated with fairness and compassion: 'Teachers always give you another chance', one commented. They try to base their own behaviour on the same principles, and can articulate these confidently. For example, they relate their concern to care

for each other to the ideals contained in biblical stories such as the Good Samaritan. Relationships between younger and older pupils are especially good. Pupils thoroughly enjoy coming to school. They say that staff always help them to do their very best, and at the same time encourage their imaginations to 'run free'. Worship, RE and the programme for PSHE all make strong contributions to their personal development. Pupils speak with enthusiasm of the many opportunities the school offers to help them to become responsible young people, for instance through membership of the School Council or working as buddies or playground PALS. Christian symbols and displays in classrooms and common areas serve as reminders of the school's Christian status. The Headteacher and governors must now ensure that the underlying Christian values are made explicit within key policies such as those for behaviour and spirituality

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Worship is well planned. Varied approaches throughout the week engage and involve pupils very effectively. They respond eagerly, singing and joining in prayers with great enthusiasm. They say how much they value the messages conveyed through worship, and readily recall and reflect upon what they have heard and seen. For instance, a number of pupils spoke of the impact the story of Martin Luther King had made on them. Christian content is sensitively related to their own needs and concerns. A prayer book in the library area enables them to contribute their own thoughts and subjects for prayer. Further opportunities for prayer are provided at lunchtime and at the end of the day. All class teaching staff lead worship on a regular basis, but are not currently expected to attend every day. Regular services in church are perceived as 'something special'. In the incumbent's words, they help to give the pupils 'a sense of ceremony and order', thus strengthening their awareness of belonging to a distinctly Anglican tradition. Pupils thoroughly enjoy the many opportunities to take part in these services. Worship is regularly monitored by the subject leader for R.E., who also seeks the views of pupils. Continuing to extend the pupil role in this process, and seeking appropriate ways of involving teaching staff and governors, will ensure the continuing development of good practice in worship.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

Pupils achieve good standards in RE. Attainment is at least in line with the expected levels set out in the Agreed Syllabus, and is often higher in speaking and listening. This is because RE is well taught overall, with some outstanding practice. Teachers have worked particularly hard since the last inspection to develop Attainment Target 2 (Learning from religion). As a result, pupils' spiritual and moral development is promoted well. They are confident in applying their good subject knowledge to their own lives. For example, Year 2 pupils listened to the story of the Prodigal Son, and then devised and acted out their own parables on the theme of forgiveness. Pupils' attitudes towards RE are very positive. They enjoy the range of interesting activities their teachers plan for them. They also recognise the subject's importance in helping them to understand their own beliefs and to respect those of different faiths. RE benefits from experienced and committed leadership. The co-ordinator supports teachers well, and has drawn up a realistic subject plan. A timetable is in place for the implementation of the 2007 Agreed Syllabus and the linked assessment strategy. The embedding of these initiatives in practice will ensure that pupils' attainment is raised further.

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

The Headteacher, staff and governors demonstrate a strong commitment to the school. They value its Church status, and are keen to promote its Christian distinctiveness. In this, they have the support of parents, many of whom choose the school for its Christian character. Parents are valued and their views are actively sought, as are those of pupils. Pupils themselves are encouraged to undertake leadership roles and the School Council gives them an effective voice. The relationship with the parish church is very strong, and mutually supportive. The Headteacher and senior staff have begun to evaluate Tunstall's effectiveness as a Church school. They now need to involve all teaching staff and governors in this process, and link the self-evaluation securely to the School Improvement Plan.