



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Tiffield Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

High Street South
Tiffield
Towcester
NN12 8AB

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Current inspection grade: Good

Diocese: Peterborough

Local authority: Northamptonshire

Date of inspection: 11 March 2016

Date of last inspection: March 2011

School's unique reference number: 122031

Headteacher: Eliza Hollis

Inspector's name and number: Liz Youngman 465

School context

This is a very small village school of 42 pupils. Numbers on roll have almost doubled since the last inspection. Children are taught in two mixed age classes, one for Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 and the other for Key Stage 2 pupils. The school is part of the Forest Federation in which four small schools share the same executive headteacher. The vast majority of pupils are of white British heritage. There are no pupils eligible for pupil premium funding. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs or a disability is above average.

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

- Distinctively Christian leadership by the executive headteacher is effective in maintaining and developing the Christian character of the school.
- The Christian ethos of the school drives its commitment to the achievement of individuals, resulting in good progress for pupils.
- Good quality religious education (RE) enables children to reflect critically on Christianity as well as on areas of shared belief and practice between different faiths.
- Anglican tradition and practice are at the heart of worship experiences, impacting well on learners' personal and spiritual development.

Areas to improve

- Ensure the learning needs of more able and older pupils are met by planning RE lessons that allow for the exploration of deeper, more challenging questions and concepts.
- Involve pupils in planning and leading collective worship to further impact their spiritual development.
- Plan for reflection to be a regular feature within collective worship and at other times in the school day to promote spiritual development.

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

The Christian values of love, trust, forgiveness, friendship, peace and respect are embedded and at the heart of life in this church school. There are very high expectations of the children's behaviour and a compassionate approach to conflict resolution. However conflicts are rare in this environment where older children are very nurturing towards the younger ones. Relationships between all members of the school community are good but are not always directly related to the Christian character of the school. The executive headteacher's Christian vision for the school and drive to improve outcomes, has led to improvements in pupils' academic achievement and the progress of individual pupils. The supportive Christian ethos in school means attendance is above the national average and there have been no exclusions in recent years. The Christian character and values of the school contribute well to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development and the wellbeing of learners. One child explained it well, 'Forgiveness is needed everywhere. It's about saying sorry and caring for each other. Everyone makes mistakes and you have to forgive them'. Good quality RE makes a strong contribution to the Christian character of the school. Learners show some understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith and exhibit a high degree of respect for diversity within other faith communities. They speak enthusiastically about their experience of visiting other places of worship. In particular a recent visit to a Gurdwara to learn more about Sikhism is especially memorable. The school is aware that currently its documentation does not accurately reflect the Christian values that are highly evident within the daily life of the school and well known by members of the school community.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Members of the school community respond well and show high levels of engagement with distinctively Christian collective worship. They see it as an important part of the school day and talk about what it means to them personally. For example children say holding a small cross as part of prayer within collective worship, 'feels nice when you're feeling down'. Worship is rooted in Anglican tradition and practice enriching the spiritual experience for the school community through the use of liturgical colours and focusing on festivals in the church year. Members of the school and wider community gather together for worship in the parish church of St John the Baptist for major Christian festivals like Christmas and Harvest. The 'live' Nativity service is an important highlight in school, church and village life. Worship, regularly led by the parish priest, includes Bible stories and teaching about Jesus enabling learners to make links to their own lives and the school's Christian values. Children show understanding of the Trinity and remember making dough with three ingredients to express this. One child explaining, 'God is in three parts, Father, Spirit and Son but they are all one person'. Older children value the opportunity to use the prayer corner and a prayer tree saying, 'if you are stressed you can go there and pray'. This shows learners developing personal spirituality that is relevant in their own lives. The governors' ethos committee as well as pupils have some involvement in evaluating worship although this is not yet consistently used. Learners are sometimes involved in planning worship but say they would value the opportunity to have greater involvement in planning and leading acts of worship. School collective worship allows little time for personal prayer and reflection so limiting pupil's spiritual development. A new outside reflection area including special carved values chairs to further enhance opportunities for spiritual development, is under construction at the time of inspection.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

RE is jointly led ably and effectively for schools across the whole federation by two teachers working together as subject coordinator. Learners achieve standards at least in line with national expectations, matching their achievements in other core subjects. Pupils understand the value of RE and enjoy learning about other faiths in addition to Christianity. For example one child said that learning about other religions is important, 'so we know how to respect other people. Fights start when you don't agree with each other, that's why we're learning RE'. The quality of teaching and learning is good. The same curriculum themes are taught to all age groups with activities being differentiated to meet the needs of most groups of learners. For example the younger children all participating in role play on the events of Palm Sunday before dividing into groups to complete activities that enable them to show their different levels of understanding. Learners benefit from visits to other places of worship and visitors to their classes from other faiths that enhance the curriculum. The RE curriculum enables learners to reflect on Christianity and the shared belief and practice between other faiths, as required by the National Society's statement of entitlement. Learners display good knowledge about key aspects of Christianity appropriate to their ages, as well as about some main practices and beliefs of other faiths studied. Good assessment procedures inform teacher's planning for pupils' future learning. The wide age range within classes means that the most able and oldest children do not have sufficient opportunity to respond to deeper and more complex questions and concepts.

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

The executive headteacher clearly articulates and promotes a vision for the school, and the federation of schools, that is rooted in Christian values. She ensures that Christian distinctiveness is very evident in the life of the school and the relationships within it. Her Christian vision impacts strongly on pupils' improved standards of achievement. Governors are taking an increased role in the evaluation and strategic planning for the school's development since the last inspection. For example in close partnership with the school's leaders, the ethos committee monitors practice and formulates plans for the development of collective worship and RE. Their learning walks have led to improvements to the school environment that strengthen the profile of its Christian nature, such as the new carved values chairs. The federation enables teachers to be well prepared for future leadership of church schools by developing their roles across schools. For example one assistant headteacher is preparing to fulfil the same role in another larger school in the federation. Staff share work such as curriculum development across the federation enabling the school to benefit from wider expertise. This is reflected in their strap line, 'Small enough to care, large enough to inspire'. The federation also benefits children with enriched experiences that they recognise as valuable saying, 'it's like one massive school but we're not always together' and, 'it gives us the chance to make new friends'. There are strong partnerships with parents who appreciate the way children bring home the Christian values they are taught. There are good links with the parish church of St John the Baptist. For example, the priest in charge offers effective support to the school, leading worship in school or church. She also supports children's learning in RE, such as helping them to understand the special nature of baptism. The school uses the support offered by the diocese very effectively. For example staff attend training events and a support consultant visits termly to advise senior leaders. School policy is developed and shared across the federation but there are few references to the school's Christian character in key policies. The points for development from the previous inspection have been addressed. Statutory requirements for RE and collective worship are met.