



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Thurton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Ashby Road

Thurton

Norfolk NR14 6AT

Previous SIAMS grade: Outstanding

Current inspection grade: Outstanding

Diocese: Norwich

Local authority: Norfolk

Dates of inspection: 7 July 2016

Date of last inspection: 19 May 2011

School's unique reference number: 121063

Headteacher: Cassandra Williams

Inspector's name and number: Pat George 845

School context

Thurton CE VC Primary school is a smaller than average primary school located to the south of Norwich. The vast majority of the 99 pupils on roll are White British. The proportion of pupils with additional needs is low and vulnerable pupils, including those eligible for pupil premium funding is very low. However, rural deprivation and high pupil turbulence impact on the school community. The school was graded outstanding by OFSTED in March 2015. It has Religious Education Quality Mark (REQM) Gold.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Thurton as a Church of England school are outstanding

- Christian values underpin every aspect of school life making it a welcoming, supportive and inclusive Christian community.
- The contribution that religious education (RE) makes to the wider curriculum and to children's awareness of faith is significant.
- The Christian vision of the leadership, including governors, leads to a distinctive Christian character and vision that ensures the needs of all learners are met and that children act out the aim of 'Enjoy, Achieve, Believe' every day in school.

Areas to improve

- To further develop with pupils an age appropriate understanding of the Trinity so that they are fully aware of its place in Anglican traditions and worship.
- To increase the range and frequency of monitoring and evaluation by governors and pupils of collective worship and outcomes for spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development including a regular formal link between governors and pupils to ensure that impact is identified and sustained improvements are made.

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

The whole school community can articulate the impact of the distinctive Christian values which are deeply embedded and explicit in the daily life of the school. The high profile is clear on the school website, displays around school (an action point from the last inspection) and in the Home School Agreement which explicitly mentions the school values. Values include hope, justice, forgiveness and kindness. The school aim of 'Enjoy, Achieve and Believe' is explained by children as fun learning, try and do your best and believe in yourself and in faith. Pupils readily talk about how this is what school means to them. Parents and governors talk about the impact on children and how school supports the whole child. They feel the values in school equip the children for life. Parents appreciate the inclusive nature of the school and that the values are a part of everyday life "without making a big deal." Children joining are welcomed, accepted and included. Children support each other. The 'Golden Comments' in the reflection space in the corridor show how the values are embedded. Thanking for help, saying sorry, being a good friend are examples. Relationships in school are excellent and lead to above national attendance and no exclusions. Standards are at or above national for all groups of pupils. 2016 results at Y6 are higher than national. Pupil personal spirituality is enhanced by the quiet areas and prayer spaces available in school, "someone to talk to but there is no one there, talking to God," and visits to cathedrals including St. Pauls for evensong. The Christian character supports pupils to be accepting of difference and diversity. "Everyone can worship and choose what they believe." Pupils are clear there is no bullying because they all get on and everyone is treated the same. RE makes a significant contribution to the curriculum and pupils talk confidently about their learning in RE and how it links to and drives their other learning. Each classroom has an RE board and a reflection space which is frequently used. Y6 pupils could relate their study of progressive revelation in their learning about Baha'i to their journey through school. Displays provide a record of pupil experiences of visitors and visits to enhance teaching and learning in RE. Pupils enjoy learning about different religions and can talk about similarities and differences between religions. Children have a good understanding of Anglican tradition through the high quality teaching of Christianity including festivals and ceremonies eg. YR pupils held a funeral for the class fish including writing their own prayers and making a stairway to heaven so people could visit those they have lost. Their awareness of diversity is developing. Pupils could discuss differences in churches around the world. RE makes a significant contribution to pupil SMSC, enhancing the distinctive Christian character of the school.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

The whole school community values worship and feel that it gives them the opportunity to come together. Themes are planned and linked to daily life and values change according to identified needs within the school, therefore worship reinforces the school values. Parents appreciate being able to join with their children at special times including festivals in the church, which they feel is like a pilgrimage walking up the hill. They say school listens to the views about worship and responds. eg. teaching some traditional songs and prayers. Pupils make links between worship, bible stories and their lives. They feel worship and values give them important lessons for life. Eg. Hope is trying hard for something you want, a wish is when you want something but don't try. They appreciate opportunities to go to church for Anglican festivals and are developing a deeper understanding of the symbolism of colours in the church year. Pupils show a good understanding of the reasons for and the purpose of prayer. They write and share their own prayers and these are included in the reflection spaces including the quiet area outside. Worship involves pupil prayers and the Lord's Prayer. Pupils can explain this in their own words. Older pupils have regular weekly opportunities to plan and lead worship independently, an area for development from the last inspection and since then the number of worship groups has risen from 2 to 8. They choose the music, song and the bible story. Chosen

questions enhance pupil engagement and understanding of the value, an example of this is giving pupils the opportunity to share their hopes, the theme of the observed worship. The focus table and music enhance the spirituality of worship. Visits and visitors enhance the pupil experiences of worship, including Open the Book led by the incumbent. Children speak enthusiastically about the bible stories they learn. The older pupils understanding of the Trinity is developing. They can relate this to the story of Pentecost they heard in worship and discussed how the Holy Spirit helped the disciples. Developing this understanding further and with the younger pupils has been rightly identified as an area of focus by the worship lead and the incumbent. Worship is well planned and led, leading to a high profile amongst the whole school community and the impact is evident in the daily life of the school and the excellent relationships. Monitoring of worship is carried out by governors and staff, however pupil feedback is limited.

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

The excellent leadership of the headteacher and other leaders ensures that Christian values are at the heart of everything the school does. They articulate, act out and promote a vision for the school that upholds the importance of the school ethos. This together with the high quality collective worship has a significant impact on pupil SMSC development and their behaviour and attitudes. The whole curriculum is informed by the distinctive Christian values and RE plays a major role in delivering the curriculum. Parents feel they can contribute to school development through the annual questionnaire, including one on worship. They appreciate the importance of the development of prayer and reflection spaces for their children and spoke positively about the prayer space day. They feel the school is a family and that staff are always accessible and listen to them. Leaders feel that worship and RE in school have a significant impact, allowing children to grow and develop their own ideas. The values have a positive influence on standards, learning behaviours and attendance in school. Governors are well informed about school priorities and the school's distinctive Christian character is part of improvement planning. They contribute to the vision and say that their aim is for children to leave with a set of values based on Christianity that will equip them for life. Governors attend worship regularly as part of their monitoring but feedback and any resulting improvements are not always formally recorded. Pupils don't as yet feedback to the governing body. Governors have planned for the immediate succession of leadership in the school and have rightly discussed issues for the future such as partnership. They are committed to staff development and have identified as an area for focus sharing staff training to broaden their understanding of school development. School has a good relationship with the church and the village community. The incumbent is relatively new in post. He is involved in school daily life and is keen to develop his role further. RE and worship are well led and professional development for both these areas has been a priority. A consequence of this is both have a high profile in school, leading to significant impact and highly effective practice. The impact of working with the Diocesan RE Advisor is clearly evident in the high quality of the RE teaching and learning in school. School has effective links with other church schools through RE networks and the diocese and supports diocesan training and professional development. Strong leadership has ensured all the areas for development from the last inspection are fully met.

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