

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Thundridge Voluntary Controlled Church of England Primary School

Ermine Street
Thundridge
Ware
SG12 0SY

Diocese: St Albans

Local authority: Hertfordshire
Dates of inspection: 14 March 2013
Date of last inspection: 13 March 2008
School's unique reference number: 117408
Headteacher: Miss Paula Greatrex
Inspector's name and number: Ms Chris Westgarth 44

School context

Thundridge is a smaller than average primary school with 90 pupils from Nursery to year 6. The vast majority of children are of white British heritage. There are 13% with a special educational need or disability (SEND) and 4% receive free school meals.

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

Thundridge is a good church school, which is valued by everyone. It is inclusive, all are welcomed and everyone is encouraged to reach their full potential. Staff have the highest regard for one another and for the pupils in their care and this has a significant impact on spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils receive a good education underpinned by the Christian values of love, forgiveness, care and compassion.

Established strengths

- The welcoming ethos of the school that creates a sense of belonging for everyone
- The excellent relationships that promote respect throughout the school community
- The strong church and school partnership

Focus for development

- Further enhance the monitoring and evaluation of Collective Worship through pupil involvement
- Increase the use of interactive and creative opportunities in Collective Worship and monitor its effectiveness (space permitting)
- Fully embed the reflective corners and thinking questions

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

Christian values are clearly evident in the daily life of the school. Their impact on the lives and routines of the school is reflected in the ability of pupils to make clear links between these and the teaching of Jesus. The welcome to visitors from adults and children alike shows the care, love and respect that underpin the ethos of this school. There are excellent relationships between all members of the school community with pupils and parents rightly saying *'Thundridge is a good school...we are like a family'*. There is indeed a strong family feel within the school, with older pupils readily supporting younger ones, through the buddy and young leader system. All staff are

excellent role models for the children. This results in new pupils quickly becoming established in the school and pupils helping each other when there is a need. Behaviour observed was exemplary and learners were polite and showed respect. The bright displays are effectively used to make links between everyday life, Christian values, and areas of the curriculum. Signs and symbols of Christianity are clearly displayed in key locations throughout the school. The school grounds although very small are delightful and the unusual historic tunnel under the road leading to the extensive playing field is particularly pleasing and interesting. The children's council are rightly proud of their achievements and among other things the community tea they organised. Charitable giving is strong both locally and internationally with pupils keen to help those in need, therefore community cohesion is strong.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective Worship is central to the school day and valued by pupils and staff alike. Worship is an integral part of school life. Themes are planned using a range of resources such as themes from the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) and 'A Teachers' Dozen'. There is no school hall and therefore worship takes place in a small room (which is only just big enough for the children to sit and the staff have to stand in the doorway) – this limits activities and pupil movement. Older pupils are involved in setting the hall up ready for worship and for operating the projector and music system. They perform these tasks with great confidence and calmness. Children enter and exit the assembly room quietly and with respect. There are good levels of participation and pupils speak positively about worship. Reflective areas have been introduced in all classrooms and often feature the 'thinking question' that encourages reflection, such as '*What is the recipe for friendship with God..?*'

The church building is used for special services and pupils feel that the church is their church. The dedication, commitment and enthusiasm of the RE Coordinator has a positive influence and there are many good ideas for progression which link with Collective worship. The Headteacher is the collective worship coordinator and therefore plans, monitors and evaluates the sessions. This works well but the school could benefit further from pupil involvement at the evaluation stage. Knowledge and understanding of world faiths is strong and this is enhanced by visits to places of worship. Pupils enjoy writing their own prayers. They say The Lord's Prayer and the school prayer regularly and recognise the importance of forgiveness. Pupils are keen to contribute their own thoughts and reflections. They pray before lunch.

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

The prospectus, policies, website and other documentation promote the school as a church school and are underpinned by Christian values which permeate the whole school. Furthermore staff and governors have an excellent understanding of their school and the wider community. School self-evaluation is strong and the headteacher plays a pivotal role in moving the school forward. As part of a small school partnership, the school works closely with 3 small church schools and this is having a positive benefit. Systems are in place for monitoring the distinctive Christian character of the school, although these are not fully embedded. Governors seek to make a difference through their active involvement. Parents say that the teachers 'know and care for the children so well'. They praise the headteacher who actively seeks parental views and is passionate about the school. Areas from the previous inspection have been addressed, showing how the school has progressed. Rev Barbara is having a positive influence on the school; she is involved in the life of the school and visits fortnightly. The children's council is involved in decision-making and they take their role very seriously. As a result, pupils are able to voice their desires and concerns. The school is highly regarded in the community. Parents speak positively about the links between Church and School and the Christian ethos.