



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Taddington and Priestcliffe Voluntary Aided Primary School School Lane, Taddington, Buxton SK17 9TW

Diocese: Derby

Local authority: Derbyshire

Dates of inspection: November 20th 2014

Date of last inspection: November 20th 2009

School's unique reference number: 112892

Headteacher: Mrs Karen O'Connor

Inspector's name and number: Mr John Clapham 775

School context

Taddington and Priestcliffe school is a smaller than average village primary school with 53 pupils on roll in three mixed age classes. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds and all pupils speak English as their first language. The proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals and children who are in local authority care are significantly below the national average. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is broadly average. A new head teacher joined the school in September 2014.

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

Taddington and Priestcliffe school is characterised by the high level of care and nurture given to children and families. Each child is seen as a unique child of God and is given the support, challenge and opportunity to flourish and use their God given talents to His glory. Though not fully explicit, the school's Christian character has a marked impact on both the academic development and the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of each child. The school has strong support from governors, the church council, parents and the wider community and is becoming highly involved in the life of the church and village community.

Established strengths

- Implicit Christian values are evident in exemplary behaviour and caring relationships throughout the school community.
- The school is very successful in creating a caring, Christian environment in which children thrive, succeed and are happy.
- Children's broad learning experiences contribute very effectively to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The newly appointed head teacher is leading strongly by example, and has quickly developed a shared vision with all members of the school community.

Areas to improve

- Work with all members of the school community to identify, make explicit and clearly articulate the distinctively Christian character of the school's values and the impact they have on the whole life of the school.
- Give greater involvement to children in planning, leading and evaluating collective worship.
- Strengthen standards and progress in Religious Education (RE) through developing a whole school enquiry led approach.

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

The work of the school is informed by implicit Christian values. Adults in the school are good role models for children who report strong, supportive relationships and say that they feel safe, valued and included. The school's mission statement, "We care for each other", is lived out consistently and impacts strongly on the nurturing ethos of the school. This care and respect is not yet underpinned by clearly articulated distinctively Christian values. The polite, well behaved, articulate pupils enjoy attending school because staff are good at meeting their needs. As a result, pupils work and play together very well both in school and on the playground, showing excellent behaviour. The children have a strong self-image and an enthusiasm for learning collaboratively. During inspection, pupils visiting from another school were welcomed and included by all. As a consequence of their desire to live out Christian values, children make a positive contribution to the wider community, showing care and respect for others through a wide range of charity fundraising. Children take their responsibilities seriously in school council activities and in caring for younger children. Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. One parent commented "All staff have high expectations, the children achieve and then some", and another "My child is thriving, I am so grateful to the school for the way that he is growing in confidence". Children know that any issues are dealt with quickly and fairly. As a result they are confident and they feel valued. The school's Christian character results in a secure and caring environment where most children are making good or better progress both academically and in terms of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. RE makes a significant contribution to the Christian character of the school. Children not only have a good understanding of Christian belief, but through the study of a number of religions, are developing a strong understanding and respect of diverse communities.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good.

Children have a good understanding of the nature of worship, the Christian faith, church traditions and practice. Collective worship is well planned to cover a broad range of Christian themes and important Christian festivals and meets statutory requirements. One child commented that "We have [collective worship] because God sent Jesus to save our sins. We need to follow His footsteps so that we can be more like Him". Children are developing a good understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit in worship and were keen to discuss this during the inspection. Collective worship makes a good impact on the attitudes and behaviour of the whole school community. Many of the children are naturally reflective, although there is not yet enough opportunity in collective worship for reflection and response. Children of all ages and abilities are regularly engaged and affirmed through worship. Prayer is highly valued as an integral part of the life of the school. The annual prayer week explores prayer creatively and reflectively and is a much anticipated part of the school calendar. Worship has a high profile in school life, and influences the thinking and day to day actions of the whole school community. Children enjoy contributing within collective worship but currently have limited responsibility in planning, leading and evaluating worship. Recent governor involvement in the evaluation of collective worship is supporting the school in improvement planning. Children and parents value the partnership with the church community and are enthusiastic about celebrating special services both at school and church, with strong support for the recent harvest and remembrance services. Opportunities for joint collective worship between school and church have been mapped out for the whole year, with significant school involvement in Sunday morning services, and well as church involvement in school. This partnership is clearly enriching the whole community and is reciprocal. The school has raised money for the church and the Parish Council have supported the purchase of collective worship resources in school.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good.

Through discussions with children and opportunity to look through RE books, strong attainment and progress in RE is evident, particularly in Key Stage Two. It is also clear that children regularly see the relevance of RE to their own lives and have many opportunities to develop their own spirituality. The whole school learning environment, however, is not yet used to its full potential to make reflection integral to the curriculum. Marking often gives clear developmental feedback, with opportunity for children to respond. Teachers use questioning effectively to gauge children's understanding and encourage them to think more deeply. The children have opportunity throughout school to ask and explore searching questions, with time set aside to prioritise this. A member of the school council observed that "RE helps us to care for each other and understand each other. It makes us think more about other people and respect their beliefs". Most lessons are active and creative, although there is not yet enough opportunity for children to apply their knowledge and skills in RE through enquiry led learning. The school has previously achieved the RE quality mark. The Local Authority agreed syllabus is followed throughout school and adapted flexibly to meet the needs of each cohort. Appropriate assessments systems are in place. The RE curriculum meets statutory requirements, with the teaching of Christianity given prominence. The school has begun to make links with a school in Rwanda to develop children's global awareness and cultural understanding and children are beginning to develop their understanding of Christianity as a multicultural world faith. The subject leader is proactive in developing her role in supporting and challenging staff to constantly improve their practice. Her recent work with a foundation governor on the monitoring of RE has strongly supported the process of self-evaluation and improvement planning.

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

The newly appointed head teacher is leading strongly by example, and has quickly developed a shared vision with all members of the school community. Recent governor involvement in school self-evaluation and improvement planning is contributing to a clear understanding of the school's performance and distinctiveness. Monitoring of RE includes pupil interviews, book scrutiny, learning walks and lesson observations. Self-evaluation is astute and accurate, with well-planned actions in place to move the school forward. These planned actions include strategies to clearly articulate the Christian values that underpin the school and understand them as distinctively Christian. The Christian ethos of the school and the centrality of RE and collective worship are communicated effectively through the school prospectus and key policy documents. This was a focus for development in the previous inspection. The school leadership are working hard to develop opportunities to work in partnership with the church and wider village community, with clear reciprocal benefits already evident and strongly evidenced through discussions with all stakeholders. While the school does not currently receive a high level of support from the vicar, foundation governors, the church warden, the parish council and other members of the church are actively involved in the life of the school. They provide increasingly strong support and work with the school in a meaningful way. This support has enabled the school to work towards addressing the focus for development in the last inspection on partnerships between school and church. Recent professional development dialogues have given staff at all levels meaningful opportunities to reflect on their priorities for development and use their strengths collaboratively for the benefit of the whole school community.