**National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report**

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| **Diptford Parochial Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School**  Diptford, Totnes  Devon  TQ9 9NY  **Previous SIAMS grade: good**  **Current inspection grade: good**  **Diocese: Exeter**  Local authority: Devon  Date of inspection: 30 June 2015  Date of last inspection: 25 June 2010  School’s unique reference number: 113395  Executive Headteacher: Tony Callcut Head of School: Ginny Edmonds  Inspector’s name and number: John Rudge (704) |
| **School context**  This small voluntary controlled school has 83 children attending, mainly from Diptford and the surrounding area. Very few are supported by the Pupil Premium. It is part of the Totnes Federation of Village Schools. This now consists of 4 schools (1controlled, 2 aided and 1 community school with a single governing body for the federation). This includes representatives from each school acting as a link governor. |
| **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Diptford Primary School as a Church of England school are good**   * The school ethos is based on well-established and inclusive Christian values * Religious education and collective worship both contribute effectively to the school’s distinctiveness * School leaders, including governors, have developed an effective pattern of monitoring and evaluation of the school’s ethos and distinctiveness |
| **Areas to improve**   * Involve a wider range of visitors in leading collective worship to ensure children are familiar with different Christian traditions of worship * Extend children’s awareness of cultural diversity within the Christian Church * Involve all stakeholders in developing, clarifying and re-expressing the school’s Christian values, and the Biblical teaching which underlies them |
| **The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is good at meeting the needs of all learners**  Good relationships between staff and children, and between the children themselves, are strongly influenced by the school’s Christian ethos. This, in turn, encourages enthusiasm for, and enjoyment of, learning for all. Consequently, they make good progress, especially in Key Stage 2. Additional support for the small number of vulnerable children and those with particular educational needs ensures that they also make good progress. Support is well targeted to their needs. The school’s seven core values are now well established and familiar across the school community. They are widely represented visually around the school, most strikingly in a prominent mosaic created by the children, as well as in other displays. Some values are better understood than others. For example, the core value of ‘respect’, is evident in relationships throughout the school. Many children are familiar with the Christian teaching which informs this value, particularly the commandment of Jesus to ‘love your neighbour’. In practice, this is demonstrated in the way older children support and help younger ones, ‘looking after them and looking out for them’. It also shows itself in the way children get involved in and enjoy working together in support of charities. They have a well-developed sense of inclusion, so that everyone feels valued. Different groups are treated equally and children show respect to all. They can recognise that some groups may have a different outlook and values which vary from their own, but they can accept that ‘it may not matter to us (that they are different) but we know that it matters to them’. Some other values, such as ‘happiness’, are less easily understood in a Christian context. Some older children, however, understand how having and expressing values is an important part of their spiritual and moral development. Both RE and collective worship contribute to this development and help to enhance their understanding of the school’s values and their commitment to them. The school has a well-developed emphasis on helping children to explore how spiritual and moral values, questions and issues feature throughout the curriculum, and especially in RE. However, children’s awareness of wider cultural diversity within the worldwide Christian community is an aspect of their learning which requires further development. The support of the nearby parish church and its community is another important feature of the social life of the school, and helps them understand what is important in a church school. |
| **The impact of collective worship on the school community is good**  Following the previous inspection, the school has worked hard to ensure that collective worship is a more central feature of the daily life of the school, and extends beyond the formal occasions when the school gathers for worship. Because of limited space, formal collective worship takes place regularly in smaller groups, but also once a week in the parish church. Children are aware that this gives an added sense of importance to the occasion, and helps to familiarise them with some of the words, music and activities of Anglican worship. Children contribute to this in various ways, including through their own prayers. The visual element is a strong feature of worship, and children can explain why certain symbols, such as the cross, are an important part of understanding what Christians believe. Collective worship is carefully planned both to engage children with the school’s ethos and distinctiveness and to help them understand the school’s Christian values. These are reinforced on those occasions when children celebrate achievement through ‘value awards’. Readings and presentations from the Bible, including those which are part of ‘Open the Book’, help children to understand why stories about Jesus are important for Christians. The journey of celebration through the Christian year is another focal point of ongoing planning. Children enjoy taking part in worship, for example through re-enacting stories. However, children would benefit from opportunities to experience worship led by a wider range of visitors to give them a better understanding of Christian diversity. The school takes account of evaluations and suggestions from parents, governors, staff and children. The introduction and development of ‘worship diaries’ helps children to reflect on their experiences and contribute to improvements. Worship in less formal settings through prayer and opportunities for quiet reflection provides a balance which children appreciate. Overall, collective worship continues to develop as an integral, effective and supportive aspect of children’s spiritual and moral development. The school’s new leadership structure, together with regular discussion in the federation to promote best practice, is another channel for securing ongoing improvements. |
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| **The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is good**  Leadership works effectively at a number of different levels to ensure that the school continues to improve. Most children make good progress because they are well motivated and supported. The involvement and support of the church and its leaders in the life of the school is an important factor in this. It helps to ensure that the effectiveness of the school as a church school is recognised and accepted within the whole school community. Church leaders are involved in a variety of ways, including collective worship and teaching aspects of Christian faith and practice. Federation governors and Diptford’s own School Committee observe and report formally on aspects of children’s progress and well-being and on their observations of collective worship. They monitor the ethos of the school as a welcoming and supportive learning environment. Leaders have addressed effectively those areas identified for development in the previous report. Most importantly, the school is now, after a 5-year cycle, at the point of re-evaluating its values and assessing what lessons have been learned from the first cycle. This re-evaluation takes account of those values which have been well understood and others which have led to greater difficulties in understanding because of overlap or where underlying concepts have been difficult to understand or where examples of applying the values have not resonated well with children’s own experiences or have not been easily related to Christian faith or to the teaching of the Bible. Federation leaders have carefully targeted the spiritual and moral dimension to ensure that it remains at the core of school life. Diptford School Committee has responsibility for the school’s ethos and distinctiveness which are prominently explained in the school’s publicity. Leaders expect all staff to explore the spiritual and moral dimension of what they teach. This is one of the factors which helps to stimulate children’s interest in what they learn and curiosity about the world around them. The combined leadership of RE and collective worship through an experienced specialist is an important factor in ensuring that the core values and understanding Christian faith are significant building blocks in a coherent learning programme. The school’s own self-evaluation of its Christian ethos and distinctiveness is broadly accurate and its forward planning is well targeted. There is therefore good potential for further development. |

SIAMS report June 2015 Diptford Parochial CE VC Primary School Totnes TQ9 9NY