

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### **Chelford Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School**

Oak Road  
Chelford  
Macclesfield  
SK11 9AY

#### **Diocese: Chester**

Local authority: Cheshire East  
Date of inspection: 1 May 2012  
Date of last inspection: 3 – 4 December 2008  
School's unique reference number: 111254  
Headteacher: Mrs Alison Scott  
Inspector's name and number: Ian Newton 273

#### **School context**

Chelford Church of England Primary School has 44 children in two classes. It serves the village and its surrounding rural area in east Cheshire. Pupils are almost exclusively of White British heritage with very few in receipt of free school meals. The proportion of children with special educational needs and disabilities is well below average. Whilst there has been a school in Chelford since 1754, the current building opened in 1999 provides a good environment for learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Chelford Church of England Voluntary Controlled School as a Church of England school are good**

Chelford Church of England Primary School is a happy school. The values that are promoted are based on Christian teaching and are reflected in the good relationships that exist amongst members of the school community. The school benefits from good leadership and strong parental support and community links.

#### **Established strengths**

- The head teacher under whose leadership the school thrives.
- The care and support given to all members of the school community.
- Outstanding relationships amongst children, based on gospel values of care, tolerance and respect, which is evident through their very good behaviour.

#### **Focus for development**

- Review the school's mission statement and aims ensuring that the school's Christian foundation is explicitly reflected.
- Ensure that evaluation of collective worship is embedded into the school's practice.
- Raise the awareness of the school's foundation by ensuring that Christian symbols are evident in all teaching areas.

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

Chelford is a school where every child is valued and nurtured to achieve their full potential. Relationships are very good at all levels of school life. Children like the small size of the school and feel that they get good support when they need it. They interact well with one another and because of the mixed age classes they relate very well to and are tolerant of children who are a different age from them. Their conduct is very good. Both children and their parents commented on the fact that if a problem arose the school dealt with it speedily and effectively. There is good support from parents who hold the school in high regard. They like it because of the family atmosphere that is evident in this small school. They feel that the small class sizes and its involvement with the local community, including the local parish,

benefit the children. A good range of activities and events are organised both within curriculum time and as extracurricular activities in an attempt to meet the needs and interests of all learners. For example, gardening and nature walks are regular features of school life and aid children's awareness and understanding of God's creation. There is a clear Christian ethos pervading the school which is evident through the care and respect shown to one another and children's awareness of those who are less fortunate than themselves. They are aware of the problems faced by people in this country and other parts of the world. They regularly raise money for charities both locally based and those operating at a national or international level, with children making suggestions as to which should be supported. The collection from the Christmas production was donated to a local children's hospice, for example. Working with OXFAM, children wrote letters about their concerns on climate change and stuck them in books being donated to the local OXFAM shop, explaining that the money raised would support the charity. This project has been rolled out nationally. Religious education supports the schools Christian foundation well and follows the Local Authority Agreed Syllabus. Children are not only familiar with aspects of Christianity, but also learn about Judaism, Islam and Hinduism. Children in Key Stage 1 were learning about Judaism and to further their understanding a visit to the Jewish Museum in Manchester was planned for the day after the inspection. The school attempts to make religious education cross curricular. Literacy lessons are used as a vehicle for learning with Bible stories being the focus for study. Children in Key Stage 2 had written poems based on the Creation story which showed good differentiation and skilful use of ICT. Whilst there are some Christian artefacts around the school, provision is patchy. This should be strengthened through displaying Christian symbols particularly in teaching areas. Whilst local community links and those with other local schools are good the school is exploring how it can make effective global links. The link with the parish has resulted in significant numbers going forward for confirmation.

#### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is good**

Collective worship is a central part of the life of this school. The recently revised policy for collective worship provides a good framework for developing and nurturing a spiritual dimension to school life. It is a very comprehensive policy which supports the school's Christian foundation well. Planning of collective worship is good and children relate well to the themes which include Christian festivals, saints days and special days and events such as Remembrance, anti-bullying and the Queen's jubilee as well as aspects of Jesus' life. Children appreciate the way staff make Bible stories relevant to their lives by putting them in a contemporary setting. All members of the teaching staff are involved in leading collective worship. The incumbent's contribution in leading collective worship on a monthly basis is welcomed by children, parents and staff. The part time nature of his post inevitably limits the time he is able to give to this aspect of school life. Usually, twice a year the school attends the church for major celebrations, but the logistics are not easy given the respective locations of church and school. An issue from the previous inspection was to develop and extend the range of prayers used to include ones written by children and from the Anglican tradition. This has mostly been addressed with children taking an active part in contributing prayers to collective worship although it was recognised that their knowledge of prayers from the Anglican tradition was limited to the Lord's Prayer. The act of collective worship that was observed was led by the head teacher. A focal point featured a cross, children's prayer books and candles. It was well planned and took the theme of communication. There was a good, very calming atmosphere with a story which held the children's attention. Children answered questions enthusiastically and contributed a prayer and poem. Parents support what the school is trying to achieve through collective worship and its impact on their children. They think it helps to develop values and morals as well as insights into Christianity and other major faiths. A further issue from the previous inspection related to evaluation of collective worship. This issue has been considered but has yet to be implemented.

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

The school thrives under the leadership of the head teacher. She is held in high regard by children, parents and governors. She is considered to be very approachable and open to ideas and suggestions. The head teacher leads a school where the parents feel that the term "educational" is interpreted in its broadest sense enabling children to develop their potential

to the full. Governors know the school well and provide challenge and support as is appropriate. As part of their responsibility for monitoring the school's work the foundation governors regularly meet with the head teacher. A committee of governors, including foundation governors, was formed to carry out self evaluation of the denominational aspects of the school and were also involved in the formulation of the recently developed collective worship policy. Whilst the school's mission statement and aims are laudable, they do not reflect its Christian foundation. These need reviewing so that Christian values are more explicit. The school has developed good links with the parish, parents and the community, as well as other schools in the area. Parents are clear about what the school promotes: a community spirit, family values and its responsibility towards the children. They considered that these had a positive impact on their children particularly in the tolerance that children showed towards each other, the good social interaction and the way children looked out for one another. Good relationships have been helped by the school keeping the school community well informed through very good quality newsletters, the school website and the village website. Parents also felt that the incumbent had developed a good relationship with the children. The local church provides a children's Bible when they start school and presents them with a Good News Bible when they leave to transfer to secondary education. All staff are supported with training development opportunities and governors attend relevant training to meet their needs and that of the school, although some were not aware that the diocese provided governor training. Opportunities are given for middle leaders to develop their subject leadership expertise.

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