

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

### Clutton Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

Broxton Road,  
Clutton,  
Tattenhall,  
Chester  
CH3 9ER

#### Diocese

**Chester**

Local authority: Cheshire West and Chester  
Dates of inspection: 28th January 2013  
Date of last inspection: 28<sup>th</sup> February 2008  
School's unique reference number: 111280  
Headteachers (shared role) B Hinds and G Browne  
Inspector's name and number: R Wall (548)

#### School context

Clutton Church of England Primary School is a small school situated in a rural location, a few miles south of Chester. There are 67 children on roll. The school has its own nursery on site. The school serves the local village community and also draws children from the surrounding areas. Children are from a mix of socio-economic backgrounds. The school is regarded as the focal point within the village and very close relationships exist between the school, the church and the local community. The retiring headteacher and an acting assistant headteacher currently share the leadership role.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Clutton as a Church of England school are outstanding**

Clutton CE School has been successful in establishing a clear Christian vision and developing a distinctive Christian character. All children and staff are valued and encouraged to develop as individuals within a caring, supportive and stimulating learning environment, based on Christian principles and values. The school is welcoming, and valuable contributions are made by all members of the school community.

#### **Established strengths**

- The clear vision and strong commitment of the leadership to the continued development of the Christian ethos of the school
- The caring relationships within school and the support which all members of the school community provide for each other, reflecting the Christian values which permeate all areas of school life
- The very strong links with the church and the local community

#### **Focus for development**

- Provide regular opportunities for children's involvement in planning and leading significant acts of worship
- Involve parents in the review of church school distinctiveness through the parents' questionnaire

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

The strong Christian ethos of the school supports the all round development of the children very well. Christian symbols and displays throughout the school reflect the fact that Christian values are promoted here. Parents agreed that all the staff are excellent role models. In the Year 6 leavers' book children spoke of their headteacher (at this time the retiring head was in the role individually) who was 'caring' and 'understanding'. One child commented: 'She has encouraged me to face challenges that are fun and exciting'. Staff spoke about enjoying the 'family atmosphere' where the Christian message 'is put into practice.' Relationships throughout the school are exceptional, with polite and well behaved children who have

positive attitudes to learning. They are self confident because they benefit from the many opportunities provided for them to take responsibility. Children are often observed looking after each other without being prompted. They are encouraged to show care and respect for others through regular charity fundraising which prepares them to become responsible citizens. Parents agreed that the headteachers and teachers were very approachable and that any issues were dealt with swiftly and effectively. Parents said they appreciate that their children are encouraged to make important life choices without undue pressure. Through visits to local places of worship and Chester Cathedral children gain an awareness and understanding of other Christian traditions. Prayer is an important aspect of school life and they are said not only in worship, but in class at various times during the school day. There are examples of how children have responded to spontaneous opportunities to write and say their own prayers, some of which are displayed on the highly visible and well used prayer tree. The school recognises that they do not represent a full range of cultural groups but they are continually looking for opportunities to provide experiences and opportunities which ensure that children develop an awareness, understanding and appreciation of the diverse and rich heritage in the wider world. Religious education has a high profile in the curriculum and fully supports the Christian ethos of the school.

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

Collective worship is an important feature of school life that is valued and enjoyed by all sections of the school community. Christian themes are well planned, developed and applied in all areas of school life. The retiring headteacher explained the value of remaining flexible in order to respond to issues that arise. The school places great emphasis on ensuring that collective worship is inclusive to all. The toddler group are invited to special times of worship during the year alongside the Reception class, which enables them to get involved in the life of the school and helps them to feel at ease within the school environment. The rector is involved in leading worship each week and the children said that they enjoy this time as he makes it fun. In the worship observed he gently and skilfully involved the children whilst putting across an important Christian message. The children listened and responded thoughtfully to searching questions in an atmosphere that was relaxed yet reverent. They sang with enthusiasm and actions were used to emphasis meaning. Children are very familiar with the Lord's Prayer and Anglican responses. The school has successfully addressed the focus for development raised at the last inspection: to work alongside the new incumbent to maintain and further enhance the Christian character of the school. The rector commented, 'This has come on in leaps and bounds'. Additional opportunities for shared worship are now provided, including the 'fun and interactive', 'Allsorts' Sunday service held in school once a month and well attended by school children and others from the community. Children enjoy participating in special celebration services including the 'wedding' which was much enjoyed and talked about by the school community. Older children are entirely responsible for the leavers' service and the school now sees the need to involve them in planning and leading worship more regularly. Children are encouraged to give their views on collective worship and these have informed development planning. Training from the diocese has been beneficial in guiding all teachers in providing quality collective worship.

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

The retiring headteacher is well supported by the staff team and governors and has been highly successful in establishing a Christian model of leadership. The assistant headteacher commented: 'We work closely together to continue the high standards we have set.' Under the effective leadership of the Chair, the governors demonstrate high levels of commitment to the school and much valued challenging support. School development planning includes action on the development of the school as a church school and evaluation is rigorous and on-going. Parents are encouraged to express their views and concerns informally and in an annual questionnaire, although there are no specific questions relating to church school distinctiveness at the present time. Children enjoy the responsibilities they are given and are particularly enthusiastic about their role in decision making through the school council. All children are given the opportunity to express their views on post-it notes which they attach to 'thought walls' in classrooms. They feel comfortable in expressing their views and are confident that their suggestions are valued and taken seriously. Relationships between members of staff are excellent, with everyone's contribution valued and appreciated. The

school is committed to the professional development of teachers to prepare them for future leadership of church schools. The strong link with St Mary's Church is effective in nourishing and challenging children's knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith. The contribution of the rector is highly valued by members of the school community. He provides much valued support and presents a positive image of the church. The parents' group (the 'Friends') is proactive in supporting the school through effective fund raising and organising fun family activities. The school sees itself as at the 'centre of the community' and enjoys the involvement of a large number of regular supporters and helpers. The diocese has made a very good contribution to the leadership of the school as a church school by providing training and support. The school values the reciprocal benefits from its link with a local church school. Clutton School has a clear sense of direction for further improvement and is right to be proud of its outstanding achievements.

SIAS report January 2013 Clutton Church of England Primary School, Chester CH3 9ER