THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND EDUCATION OFFICE

The Methodist Church

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Chelford Church of England Primary School	
Oak Road, Chelford, Macclesfield SK11 9AY	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	**Outstanding**
Diocese	**Chester**
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Cheshire East
Date/s of inspection	27 April 2017
Date of last inspection	May 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	111254
Headteacher	Alison Scott
Inspector's name and number	Frank Driessen (675)

School context

Chelford CE is a smaller than average primary school with pupils being taught in two mixed-age classes, one of which has pupils in the Early Years Foundation Stage and pupils in Key Stage 1. The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is below the national average as is the proportion of disadvantaged pupils. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups or who speak English as a foreign language is well below the national average. The headteacher has a weekly teaching commitment.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Chelford as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The Christian commitment of the headteacher, staff, vicar and governors in serving the pupils and their families has resulted in a warm, friendly and highly inclusive Christian family that welcomes everyone. The school places the valuing of its children at the heart of its mission and this supports good progress and achievement.
- A belief in the God-given value of each child inspires excellent pastoral care for them and their families. In response, pupils show respect and consideration for others, which results in outstanding relationships throughout the school.
- The strong partnership between the school and parish extends the spiritual experience of pupils and strengthens the church's contact with families. This provides a positive and dynamic Christian witness at the heart of the local community.

Areas to improve

- Ensure that the distinctive Christian vision and character are effectively communicated to all stakeholders so that the school's outstanding distinctiveness can be more widely celebrated.
- Involve governors, parents and pupils in a more systematic evaluation of the school's distinctive Christian character, including the impact of collective worship, in order to secure its continuing improvement as a church school.
- Enrich experiences provided within religious education (RE) by organising, for example, visits, visitors and links with other communities. This will broaden pupils' understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith as well as other faith traditions.

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

Chelford CE Primary School's mission to 'Care for Everyone' is underpinned by clear and explicit Christian values that are embedded into all aspects of school life. These affirm all pupils irrespective of their faith and reinforce the strong, supportive relationships between all its members creating a great sense of community. Pastoral care is outstanding so pupils show a real happiness and enthusiasm for school life. Attendance has consequently risen. Driven by well-practised values of love, compassion and forgiveness pupils' behaviour is also of the highest standard. This has a positive impact on learning and aspirations for all pupils are high. Academic standards continue to improve. Pupils make good progress and achieve well across the school, including in the early years. The school is very effective at recognising pupils' achievements. These are celebrated weekly and emphasise rewarding not only effort and achievement but also those who demonstrate the schools' Christian values. This approach reinforces the daily application of the school's core values and is a great boost to children's confidence and self-esteem.

Pupils enjoy religious education (RE) which is taught in a varied and creative way as a subject in its own right. They find it exciting and engaging. 'It gets my brain working quite hard', said one, very thoughtfully. A stimulating and creative curriculum allows pupils to express themselves through a wide range of activities including art, poetry and gardening. This contributes effectively to the development of their spirituality and enables a seven-year journey of personal growth and development. This is enriched through the Christian character of the school and its delightful pastoral environment, which helps all pupils appreciate the awe and wonder of God's creation.

Pupils are becoming aware of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith through their support for international charities such as the Shoebox Appeal and Comic and Sport Aid. The RE curriculum enables pupils to have an understanding of different cultures and other world faiths. This understanding is enhanced through the pupils' participation in 'A Jewish Child's Day' workshop. The school, however, has identified the need to enrich experiences provided within RE by organising a greater number of visits, visitors and links with other communities. This approach supports a harmonious and caring school and caused one pupil to comment, 'People are all the same regardless of their religion'.

The strong promotion of Christian values impacts very effectively on the way in which the pupils live out their daily lives. For example, they relate extremely well to the needs of others not only in the school and their own lives but also in the local community through a good variety of well-planned activities. The school's wide range of charitable works is also well supported with one child quietly pointing out that 'Many people are poor, have lost families or have no hope. They all need our help'. The pupil voice within the school is highly articulate and particularly powerful. The dynamic work of the school council results in many of their ideas being adopted by the school.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Collective worship is a meaningful and positive experience for all pupils regardless of background during which they demonstrate a reverence for its spiritual dimension through quiet respect for, and participation in, prayer and reflection. Pupils are thoughtful, responsive and enthusiastic. 'I love assemblies,' said one child, very enthusiastically. The head teacher plans acts of worship very effectively. Themes include Christian values, the church calendar, topical issues and other faith festivals. There is a strong focus on enabling pupils to develop a firm understanding of the teachings of Jesus Christ through Bible stories and scripture. They participate extensively in other aspects of the worship through art, role-play, music and story. Pupils, however, require greater opportunities to become involved in its overall planning. A range of leaders including the headteacher, staff and the incumbent provide a rich and accessible quality to the school community's worship experience. The worship focus is effectively aided by the Christian values' display at the front of the hall that has been designed by the pupils. The children sing with much exuberance and quality and many are keen to offer opinions and answers when invited. There is a real sense of being part of an inclusive worship experience. One child said, 'Being here makes me feel very special'

Prayer is highly valued and its impact travels beyond the school boundaries. Parents cite examples of their children praying at home for sick relatives. Pupils understand and articulate the purpose and value of prayer and are able to talk about what it means to them. One said, 'It's a time when I talk to God and he helps me understand myself better'. Older pupils have a developing awareness of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Collective worship is set firmly within an Anglican framework with pupils developing a very good understanding of Anglican worship. This is because of the occasions when they attend the church and help to lead services that include Easter, Harvest and Christmas. The excellent involvement of the incumbent helps to reinforce the Anglican experience. Well-planned church events for the pupils such as the creative Easter workshops help deepen their spiritual experience. Many parents and the extended family attend the church services with much enthusiasm and comment on how they feel

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'uplifted' by the experience. These comments reflect the excellent links between the two communities. Festivals from other faiths are celebrated on a regular basis. These enrich the pupils' worship experience and further promote excellent cultural cohesion. There are, however, few opportunities for pupils or other stakeholders to comment formally on their experience of worship.

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

'She really lives out the school's Christian values' is how the parents summed up the personal commitment and quietly understated leadership of the well-respected head teacher. The happy working atmosphere and very welcoming environment reflect the school's people-friendly and family oriented approach which the recently revised Christian values securely underpin. The excellent relationships throughout the school are a direct consequence of this and demonstrate the key role that Christian values play in the community. Parents recognise the school's strong Christian ethos because of the positive impact it has upon their children's lives. They speak highly of the school and its staff who have created 'a really welcoming family community' and who are 'so friendly and understanding'.

Governors are in a well-informed and knowledgeable position to support senior leadership in the continual development of Chelford CE school's distinctive Christian nature. They act as critical friends who help determine the school's strategic direction. Successful examples of this are the redevelopment of the school's mission statement and its Christian values. The recent integration of a monitoring and evaluation role for the governors' curriculum committee regarding the Christian distinctiveness of the school reinforces this approach. The views of pupils and parents are well valued but, as yet, they have not been systematically consulted concerning church school effectiveness. Collective worship and RE are led effectively and support pupils' understanding of how Christians live their lives by following the teachings of the Bible. Shared leadership roles ensure that there is preparation for future leadership in church schools. Some aspects of the areas for development from the previous inspection, however, require completion.

The successful leadership is further enhanced by the very close working relationship between the head teacher, chair of governors and the vicar. Because of this, there are highly effective links between the parish, school and village community, which contribute well to supporting the school's Christian vision. The school has effective links with the diocese and values being a member of the local partnership of schools. This is identified as a forum for sharing effective practice. Reverend Gerri has a strongly collaborative and spiritual presence in the school. She delivers collective worship and provides pastoral support to the school community. Pupils enjoy her role in collective worship and see her as a very important part of the school because she 'helps us to understand the meaning behind Bible stories'. She and the foundation governor work hard to ensure the continued building up of the close relationships and links between the school, church and community. There is financial support for school initiatives from a local educational trust where necessary. Well-produced termly newsletters promote the distinctive Christian nature of the school through mention of charitable giving and other aspects of school provision. The church is used both as a curriculum resource and an area in which pupils' work is displayed. This very strong partnership between the school and parish extends the spiritual experience of pupils and strengthens the church's contact with families. It provides a positive Christian witness at the heart of the local and extended communities and considerably enriches the school's distinctive Christian identity. This is a school that really wears its heart upon its sleeve.

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