

## National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

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

Stoney Lane  
Kelsall  
Tarpорley  
Cheshire  
CW6 0ST

#### **Diocese: Chester**

Local authority: Cheshire  
Dates of inspection: May 6<sup>th</sup> 2009  
Date of last inspection: April 6<sup>th</sup> 2006  
School's unique reference number: 111259  
Headteacher: Steve Docking  
Inspector's name and number: Kay Leighton

#### **School context**

Delamere is a small school situated in a rural setting. It has 56 children on roll who are taught in three mixed-age classes. Apart from the headteacher all teaching staff are relatively new to the school. Most pupils live outside the village and many are from relatively advantaged backgrounds and of White British heritage. The percentage of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is in line with the national average but those with statements of educational need is higher.

#### **The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Delamere as a Church of England school are good**

The headteacher and governors ensure that the Christian values of kindness, respect and forgiveness are promoted through all relationships within the school. Parents are very aware of its distinctive Christian character and pinpoint it as an important reason for choosing the school. The ethos of Christian care impacts on the children and ensures good spiritual and personal development.

#### **Established strengths**

- The strong Christian ethos where everyone is valued and cared for equally
- Innovative charitable work and visits to a wide variety of places of worship which enhance the children's learning and development
- The Christian values evident in the excellent behaviour and attitudes of the children

#### **Focus for development**

- To develop the role of the foundation governors to monitor and support the school's Christian distinctiveness
- To include all stakeholders in the evaluation of the school as a church school
- To make clear in documentation the distinction between 'collective worship' and 'assemblies'

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

The school enables all children to flourish in a caring environment where Christian values are used to establish its vision. Children feel safe and valued consequently their levels of confidence and self esteem is high. Teachers plan for the wide ability range generating appropriately differentiated work based on a sound knowledge of individual pupil's achievement. This level of care enables all children to flourish. An excellent whole school topic entitled 'Similarities and Differences' stimulated the learning about the similarities and differences between Christianity and other religions. It gave an excellent appreciation and

remarkable depth of knowledge about themselves, other people and their faiths. It impacted on their sensitivity to their own beliefs and those of different religions. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good. Study of other religions and cultures is a regular part of the children's topic work. Visits are organised to a variety of places to bring their studies to life. The older group learnt a great deal by visiting a mosque in Chester also from a whole school tour of China Town and a Chinese meal. Wonderful displays support the learning, views and experiences. The school does not always use display in the development of its distinctive Christian character. A valuable opportunity to accommodate the spiritual reflection and prayers of the children to its best effect is missed by having a 'wish tree' rather than a 'prayer tree'. Relationships and trust between all age groups and at every level is immediately apparent in school. At playtimes all the children play together moving through the variety of play areas in groups of mixed age and gender. The opportunities for inclusive play foster outstanding Christian care and concern for others. This level of trust and independence is apparent throughout all aspects of the school and develops the children into exceptionally confident individuals who are nurtured and thrive as a result. They readily support the needs of others in a variety of ways ranging from hedge planting in their local community to raising money for people less fortunate than themselves. Many of the ideas for charitable activities are generated from the schools council and well supported by the governors.

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

Worship is central to the life of the school and is the basis of the Christian ethos and spiritual development of the children. The act of worship seen during the inspection was good. Children engaged fully and entered into singing and prayer with reverence. Spiritual development as a result of that worship was good. The vicar leads worship weekly. The children say they enjoy his stories based around the Bible told with the aid of puppets or role play. They can recollect their favourites clearly together with the Christian message that underpins them. Children play their part by sensitively choosing the hymns and music on entry and exit and taking turns to evaluate worship in the assembly book. Music is well used as a means of inspiration and spiritual growth as the children match them to the worship topic. Visits to the church for services at major Christian festivals enhance relationships between the parish and the school. The older children plan and lead these events in performance, prayers and music all of which ensures they experience Anglican faith and practice in action. The parents are very proud to support the children's acts of worship that are a very moving and spiritual experience for all involved. Planning, policy and evaluation of worship is good. The collective worship policy has been improved and updated recently by the headteacher who is the new worship coordinator. It does not, however make clear the distinction between collective worship and assemblies. Staff training has been undertaken but governors were not included.

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

The school has a clear Christian vision. Governors and staff were fully involved in its creation and are also involved in its annual review as part of the schools planning and development cycle. It is displayed in each classroom and provides direction and support for the children through the use of Christian values as a basis for daily life. Staff share the aspirations of the vision and confidently put them into practice. Children know that all staff and the vicar share in the leadership of their Christian community. They have an influential voice but as yet the regular questionnaires do not seek their views or those of parents on church school matters. Exceptionally supportive links exist between the school, parents, church and community. The Christian care and concern of the foundation governors is reflected in the active part they play in running the before and after school club and a mother and toddler group as well as working in the school and supporting fund raising events. The children's artwork is displayed at the railway station and there was a huge response to the community's invitation to the schools birthday party. A good number of parents have renewed their attendance at services at the linked churches and children go to the monthly Sunday school as a direct result of the link with the school. Relationships with other churches and faith groups are enhanced through visits to a variety of places of worship. The role of the governors has been rigorously addressed and they are fully involved in the running of the school, ratifying and discussion of the self evaluation of the school as a church school and recruitment of new staff. Items such as an action plan for RE in the schools current development planning

supports their monitoring role. However the training of foundation governors to help them monitor and develop the school further as a church school has been overlooked. Consequently the monitoring and evaluation of Delamere as a voluntary controlled Church school remains underdeveloped.

SIAS report May 2009 Delamere CE Primary, Cheshire, CW6 0ST