



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

### Capenhurst Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School,

Capenhurst Lane  
Capenhurst  
Chester  
CHI 6HE

**Previous SIAS grade: Outstanding**

**Current inspection grade: Outstanding**

**Diocese: Chester**

Local authority: Cheshire West and Chester

Date of inspection: 28 April 2016

Date of last inspection: December 2010

School's unique reference number: 111271

Headteacher: Claire Green

Inspector's name and number: Mike Graham 286

#### School context

The school is well below average size, but its reception intake this year was the maximum. The school serves a socially diverse community. It is set in a rural area but has a major industrial site nearby. The vast majority of the children are White British. Few children attend from the village, the majority travelling from Ellesmere Port and other nearby towns. A below average proportion of pupils are known to be eligible for additional government funding to support their learning. The proportion of pupils with Special Educational Needs is below average.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Capenhurst CofE Primary as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The headteacher leads with a vibrant Christian vision. The staff and governors give wholehearted support. As a result, children's spiritual development and academic progress are outstanding.
- Christian values are lived, not simply taught. Staff and governors lead by example and the children respond in exemplary fashion. Consequently the school is a beacon of Christian love and care in the community.
- Worship is central in the school's life and makes a significant impact on the spiritual development of the whole school family.
- The inclusive and welcoming Christian ethos enables all to feel warmly accepted.

#### Areas to improve

- Review the mission statement involving the whole school family and devise a concise child-friendly motto. Use both processes to deepen understanding of and encapsulate the Christ-centred ethos of the school.
- Expand teaching on the Holy Spirit, including a gentle encouragement of spontaneous prayer so as to deepen the children's spiritual lives.

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

The school lavishes Christian love and care on the children and their families. The distinctive ethos thus created has established a secure and joyful context within which the children are enabled to give of their best. The school has adopted responsibility, joy, celebration, faith, trust, forgiveness, thankfulness and reverence as their core Christian values. All are clearly rooted in Jesus' teachings. These values are exemplified and taught by the staff and lived by all members of the school family. As a result the children are enthusiastic and secure learners. This leads to their good to outstanding academic progress and excellent personal development. Data shows that the rate of progress for children of all abilities is excellent, and has accelerated over the past two years. A significant factor is the way in which the Christian character of the school supports the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all the children. Understanding of and respect for other cultures and faiths is diligently fostered by excellent teaching in religious education (RE) and visits. A recent example is the visit made to a Mosque. A Year 4 boy commented that it is good to learn about other faiths because 'when you make friends later in life, you would understand the 'weird' things they do!' He qualified this by adding that this understanding would stop them seeming weird. The Christian ethos extends to the attractive and often interactive displays and areas for reflection. These include a prayer tree in the rear cloakroom area, which successfully stimulates faith and prayer. The children's behaviour is impeccable, attendance is good and relationships amongst all members of the school community are outstanding. They readily attribute this to the Christian values at the heart of the school's life, respect being particularly relevant to many. A governor who visits regularly says that everyone in school 'lives values of respect and love'. The warm welcome and loving care given to every child, regardless of their background, is exceptional. RE makes an outstanding contribution to the spiritual development of the children and to the Christian character of the school. It places the values in their biblical context and emphasises that Christ is the source and example of love as the motive for Christian living. There is clear evidence of a Godly presence in work, relationships and attitudes throughout school.

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

Worship is a vital part of school life. The variety in content and leadership styles supports a vibrant, relevant and engaging mix of worship experiences. Christian values, Bible stories and readings, reflection, prayer, drama, humour and excellent singing all contribute to these occasions, enriching the lives of everyone present. The teachings and life of Jesus form the basis for all the Christian values taught. Personal spiritual development is enhanced further through a strong focus on reflection and prayer. A school council member said 'We pray to God and Jesus every day'. Reflection areas in every classroom and the prayer tree encourage children to write their own prayers, many of which are used in whole school worship. Spontaneous prayer is rare however. The children have a sound grasp of the concept of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. They have an excellent age-appropriate understanding of the awe and wonder of God the Creator and Father, and Jesus the Saviour and Son. They are less sure about the person and work of the Holy Spirit. However, a Year 6 girl described some work in RE where she depicted a heart. She included the infinity symbol to represent 'undying love from the Spirit'. Worship brings the whole community together at key points in the church calendar. The Harvest and Easter services, held in Holy Trinity church, have a major impact in sustaining the close partnership between parish and school. The rector leads these services and weekly worship in school, and is keen to include significant contributions from the children. 'He is great. I love it when he plays his guitar!' said one parent. As a result of these strong links, children, staff and parents have a sound knowledge and some experience of Anglican belief and tradition. Members of staff and children plan, lead and evaluate worship which develops their understanding and leads to improvements.

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

The headteacher, leadership team, staff and governors are united in striving to realise the Christian vision for the school. The headteacher's Christian faith shines through in every aspect of her work. She bases her leadership and vision on the example of Jesus, the Servant King, and inspires the whole school family through her positive, open and loving approach. Success has been achieved through exemplary teamwork, with every member of staff living out Christian values to guide, support and inspire the children. The governors regularly review the school's Christian distinctiveness and bring challenge and encouragement to the staff, thus promoting development. Governors are fully involved in the school's work and activities, sharing and helping with designated classes and building close relationships with the children. Their 'pastoral visits' enhance governors' knowledge and expertise through a first-hand experience of the work being done to build the spiritual understanding and academic progress of the children. The lay reader and pastoral governor said, 'They are walking the walk, I know God's here'. Christian values have been promoted vigorously, yet with sensitivity. The areas to improve from the last report have been thoroughly addressed. Leaders prepare for future leadership in this and other church schools through excellent in-service training, teamwork, delegation and coaching. Partnerships and deep friendships with the local parish, diocese and the wider community are strong and mutually beneficial, and include prayerful support for each other. A 'learning together' day during which children worked with staff, parents and grandparents to make Christingles also exemplifies these benefits. The school council leads the way in raising money for local, national and international charities. The school takes delight in sponsoring a vulnerable Kenyan boy. Also, the whole school community including the parents joined in a 'welly walk' to raise funds for 'Farm Africa'. These acts of generosity demonstrate Christian compassion in action. The parents are very appreciative of the Christian care shown. They know that, for the staff, the wellbeing of every child and every family is paramount. Parents are immensely proud of their school, giving excellent support and input. Their comments included 'The head has made such a difference since she came', and 'The teachers are so approachable. The children love them!'

SIAMS report April 2016, Capenhurst CofE VC Primary, Capenhurst, Chester, CHI 6HE