



Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools Report

Roger de Clare CofE First School and Nursery
Station Road, Puckeridge, Ware SG11 1TF

Diocese of St Albans

LA: Hertfordshire
SIAS Inspection: Tuesday 24 April 2007
Previous S23 Inspection: 21 & 24 January 2002
URN: 117406
Headteacher: Mrs Sue Rousell
SIAS Inspector Name: Bob Hopcraft
SIAS Inspector No: 484

School Context

Roger de Clare CofE First School and Nursery is a larger than average school catering for pupils aged 4–9 years. It is set in extensive grounds, adjacent to the neighbouring middle school. Attainment on entry is broadly average, as is the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties. Pupils are from mainly white British backgrounds

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Roger de Clare CE First School as a Church of England school are Outstanding

Roger de Clare CofE First School and Nursery is an outstanding Church School with many strengths of which it can be justly proud. Its Christian vision is embedded in its everyday practice and relationships are outstanding at all levels. It promotes the social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of its pupils outstandingly well.

Established strengths

- The clear vision of the headteacher for the school as a Church school and the strong leadership she provides
- The clear and focused emphasis on teamwork throughout the school
- The promotion of social, moral, spiritual and cultural values through the well-structured PSHE programme and collective worship
- The excellent relationships between staff and pupils at all levels
- The strong and developing relationship between the school, the parish and the local community

Focus for development

- Build on the current informal systems to establish a more formal programme for evaluating the effectiveness and impact of collective worship
- Ensure that strategic plans for the future development of the school's Christian character and collective worship are included in the School Development Plan
- Further promote continuing professional development opportunities for staff to reflect on the school's Christian foundation and to develop their skills in leading collective worship

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

This is because all learners are made to feel valued and special. Pupils, parents and staff speak highly of the school as a Church school and there is an atmosphere of joy and purposeful activity, moving one parent to write of the *“warm school ethos of encouragement and compassion for all”*. There is a strong emphasis on teamwork at all levels and all interested groups have been involved in the development of the school’s Christian vision and ethos. Pupils enjoy their work and all groups of learners reach high standards. The school’s discipline policy, reflected in its *Golden Rules*, is understood and promoted by all, resulting in outstanding behaviour and relationships at all levels. As a result, pupils feel secure, happy and confident and demonstrate high levels of self-esteem. Christian values are central to the life of the school and are embedded in its everyday practice; this is evident in the way pupils support one another, particularly through the play buddy system, the support provided by older pupils for their younger counterparts and the work of the very effective School Council. Spiritual development has a high profile within the school and is nourished through frequent opportunities for quiet reflection and to share in the ongoing celebration of the wonders of the world beyond the classroom. Pupils are exposed to a range of experiences designed to extend and develop their social, moral and cultural awareness, notably through the SEAL and PSHE programmes and the extensive use made of the school grounds to promote an awareness of the importance of the environment. Accommodation and resources are of high quality and displays around the school reflect its Christian character and message. The signs and symbols of the Christian religion are prominent in all significant areas and no-one is left in any doubt that Roger de Clare is a school with the Christian message and values at its heart.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding.

Worship is central to the life of the school, carrying key Christian messages to all who take part. Pupils enjoy worship and speak knowledgeably about the range of experiences it provides. It is exceptionally well planned and its effectiveness is evaluated on an informal basis; however, there is currently no formal process for evaluating the quality of worship or its impact. A wonderful atmosphere is created during worship, with opportunities for active participation interspersed with times of quiet reflection. When pupils participate, they do so with gusto, and the singing is of the highest quality. Pupils know a good range of songs and hymns and can talk articulately about the meaning behind them. Themes followed during worship are extended throughout the school day, with opportunities for discussion in circle time and for pupils to write their thoughts about the day’s story on a board in the school library: for example, following a story about a dragon, one pupil wrote on the board *“I felt sorry for the dragon. I would help him by comforting him”*. Prayer is central to the worshipping experience and the school has a developing prayer life as part of its wider practice, notably in the prayers said at the end of the school day and in the many books of prayers written by the children themselves, which provide an excellent resource. Collective worship takes place in the local Church at set times during the year and pupils, parents and governors speak of these moving and joyous occasions, which are planned and led by the older pupils. Worship is also led by the clergy in school on a regular basis and all staff lead and participate in worship during the school week.

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

This is because there is a clear view of the school’s Christian vision and ethos, which is shared by all. The school’s Christian foundation is evident in its public documentation and the ethos and vision are reviewed on an annual basis by staff and governors. The headteacher provides inspiring leadership and plays a central role in the school’s promotion of its Christian Foundation. She has built a strong team around her, all of who share and support this vision. Governors are particularly active and have been closely involved in the school’s rigorous self-evaluation as a Church school. This self-evaluation is of high quality, with extensive supporting evidence and clearly identified areas for development; however, developments identified in terms of promoting the school’s Christian character and collective worship do not yet feature in the school’s development plan. A range of opportunities have been provided for staff to reflect on the school’s Christian Foundation and to develop their skills as leaders of collective worship, but the school is aware that no systematic programme for continuing professional development is currently in place in this area. Strong links exist between the school and the parish and opportunities have been identified for these to develop still further. Many children from the school attend holiday clubs run by the Church and both pupils and parents speak highly of the quality of this provision. The school promotes a range of experiences for charitable giving in which pupils are encouraged to play a central part. There are also very strong links between the school and the local community, for example the school’s participation in the village May Day celebrations.