

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Freeland Voluntary Controlled Church of England Primary School	Parklands, Freeland Witney OX22 8HX	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good	
Diocese/Methodist District	Oxford	
Previous SIAMS inspection grade:	Good	
Local authority	Oxfordshire	
Date of inspection	17 October 2016	
Date of last inspection	November 2011	
School's unique reference number	123138	
Headteacher	Sarah Nickelson	
Inspector's name and number	Gill Walley	NS 644

School context

Freeland is a small school with 137 pupils on roll. It became one of 7 schools in the Eynsham Partnership Academy in July 2014. The Headteacher took up post in April 2016. The proportions of pupils with SEN, who speak English as an additional language or who are disadvantaged are all considerably below the national average. There are few pupils from ethnic minorities. Most pupils live in the village and approximately half of the families worship in the parish church or churches nearby.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Freeland as a Church of England school are good.

- The Christian character of the school has been strengthened despite the recent changes in leadership because governors and senior leaders regard this as their core purpose.
- Pupils, parents and staff explain the Biblical context of the values and the strong Christian ethos which underpins the school's work.
- There are close links with the parish church and the incumbent leads worship regularly so that pupils feel part of a Christian community.
- Governors have a very accurate understanding of the impact of the Christian distinctiveness because they have a robust programme of monitoring and evaluation and are involved in strategic planning.

Areas to improve

- Develop the role of the Religious Education leader so that she is more involved in monitoring and raising standards so that these are in line with other core subjects and she can be sure that all pupils are making consistently good progress.
- Plan opportunities to increase pupils' understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith so that they have a better understanding of the ways Christianity is lived out in different countries.

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

The work of the school is rooted in the core Christian values of honesty, forgiveness, compassion and love. This drives leaders and staff to support all pupils well, irrespective of their background, so that they make good progress from their starting points. Pupils' attainment has risen in recent years so that they reach and often exceed the levels expected for pupils of their age in all subjects including RE. Pupils are seen as individuals made in God's image and the school meets their specific needs well so that all pupils reach their potential. The school provides abundant opportunities within the curriculum to develop their sense of awe and wonder and to support their social and moral development. Pupils grow in confidence because they 'feel valued as people' and they are encouraged to ask questions and discuss one another's views. The RE curriculum supports this well with its emphasis on enquiry. Pupils enjoy learning about different faiths and discussing the similarities and differences between them. Since the last inspection the school has reviewed the core values with governors, parents, staff and pupils so that the whole community fully understands them in a Christian context. However, they have less understanding of Christianity as a global faith. Attendance is good and pupils behave extremely well. Parents comment on the 'happy and caring community' which the new headteacher has developed and the fact that the Christian ethos is growing stronger. There is clear evidence that the school's procedures when dealing with attendance and behaviour are based on compassion for those families experiencing difficulties. Pupils explain that their behaviour and relationships are based on love and compassion and they show their understanding of these values in a Christian context. For example by explaining compassion in the parable of the Good Samaritan or the way they forgive one another because Jesus forgives us. The values are also displayed on the website and referred to in newsletters so that parents know them and can talk to their children about them at home. They say the values help their children to be more 'outward looking' and prepared for adult life in a multi-cultural society. The environment supports the Christian distinctiveness well by reminding pupils of the values, which are displayed on the Values tree, religious symbols and well used prayer corners in classrooms which help to develop pupils' spirituality. Pupils learn about a range of different faiths but they have less understanding of Christianity in a global context and how differently Christians worship in different parts of the world.

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

Pupils particularly enjoy worship both in school and in the parish church when they are celebrating major Christian festivals. They talk about 'celebrating Jesus' life', and 'learning about the key events in Jesus' life'. Worship is active and engaging, pupils participate well and show how much they know about Bible stories. They exchange a Christian greeting and a candle is lit to remind them that they are in God's presence. Pupils use well known Christian prayers and say these 'help them to remember the values and to use them in their own lives'. They are given times for reflection when they can think about times when they can apply the messages they have discussed. Pupils experience a range of styles of Christian worship because the school regularly invites faith leaders of other denominations to visit. The incumbent leads worship regularly and this helps pupils to understand the links between the school and the parish. He welcomes pupils to visit the church at other times to learn more about it and to feel at ease there. Worship is planned well so that it reinforces pupils' understanding of the values in Christian contexts. Resources are used to convey the key messages in a lively and memorable way. Pupils have become more confident to take part in drama and to answer questions to demonstrate how much they can remember. They now have more opportunities to plan worship and have some opportunities to lead it. They are keen to write and share their own prayers, both in whole school and class worship. Pupils also enjoy learning about other faiths, both during worship and in RE lessons, and feel this helps them to know more about their wider community. Governors and senior leaders monitor worship well so that they can be sure it is appropriate for all pupils and develops their spirituality. Although space is limited, parents are now welcomed to join in with worship, for example in the carol service which is held on the playground.

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

The new headteacher has embraced and strengthened the Christian distinctiveness of the school. She lives out the core values well as an example to pupils and staff and she has established a sense of stability in the community. Parents feel that the school is now more welcoming and inclusive of all pupils and their families. The new headteacher has led the school community in identifying the new core values and ensuring everyone understands and applies them in a Christian context. Pupils feel empowered, for example through the monitoring of worship, so that they feel engaged in implementing the new vision. Governors also evaluate the impact of worship and RE regularly. They have a very accurate understanding of the strengths of the Christian distinctiveness and the impact of the new headteacher in developing it. They talk of her 'growing the Christian ethos'. The school meets the statutory requirements for worship. It has met the recommendations of the last inspection report so that the values are now understood from a Christian perspective and governors now monitor the Christian distinctiveness. Leadership of RE has been developed although the leader has yet to establish robust monitoring of outcomes so that she can be sure that all pupils are making consistently good progress. The school works closely with the Diocese, for example in developing a new RE curriculum which is better suited to the needs of its pupils. The school has strengthened its links with the parish, for example by singing carols at the local nursing home, gardening at the nearby convent. Pupils show a sense of caring for one another and helping those who are less fortunate through fundraising and community projects. The school has hosted the Holiday Bible Club for local schools and this has been very well attended by its own pupils. The incumbent supports staff, pupils and parents pastorally and this has helped the community greatly during the recent changes of leadership. Pupils are very proud of the Christian character of the school and the fact that their logo incorporates the church and school buildings. Staff, including those who are newly appointed, feel very well supported in understanding how to support the Christian ethos well, how to teach RE and to lead worship. They say 'the values run through everything'.

SIAMS report October 2016 Freeland Voluntary Controlled CE Primary School, Freeland, Witney OX22 8HX