



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Fritwell Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

East Street
Fritwell, Bicester
OX27 7PX

Previous SIAS grade: Outstanding

Current inspection grade: Good

Diocese: Oxford

Local authority: Oxfordshire

Date of inspection: 7 May 2015

Date of last inspection: 13 July 2010

School's unique reference number: 123099

Headteacher: Debbie McLeod

Inspector's name and number: The Revd Dr Jason Phillips 598

School context

This is a smaller than average rural church school that serves a number of villages. There are 160 pupils on roll. Pupils are almost entirely White British. Pupils accessing government pupil premium money for less advantaged families and the proportion of pupils with a special educational need are significantly below the national average. The headteacher and leadership team have been in post approximately one year.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Fritwell CE Primary as a Church of England school are **Good**

- The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and ensuring continuous improvement as a church school and in ensuring the church school dimension drives the decision making of the school.
- The inclusion of children of all faiths, social backgrounds, abilities and social needs results in an understanding and thankful Christian community, where children, governors and staff demonstrate their identified Christian values and where children feel free to openly explore religious ideas.
- The drive, commitment and leadership of the senior leadership team and the religious education (RE) subject leader models and supports the school's Christian values for the pupils and wider community and exemplifies the servant leadership expected of Christianity.

Areas to improve

- Demonstrate the impact of the school's Christian character on academic achievement by embedding initiatives of the last year in writing and by accelerating the rate of pupil progress so that by the end of Key Stage 2 (KS2) progress is at least good compared to similar schools in English and maths and the academic needs of all pupils are met.
- Ensure pupils take regular responsibility themselves for age appropriate planning and leading of collective worship and ensure that strategies for pupil engagement in collective worship are widely used to maximize the impact and relevance of collective worship for the children.
- Incorporate regular opportunities in RE for using the arts to engage, inspire and extend pupils' learning and spiritual development, and embed the enquiry approach to RE together with the accompanying assessment system, so that pupil progress is exemplary.

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

The school utilizes its church school ethos to enable positive conditions for learning based upon its identified Christian values that include endurance, wisdom and service. This means that pupils feel safe, cared for and treated with respect. Consequently, all stakeholders are consistently proud of this good and improving church school. Over the last year there has been a focus on driving up standards of progress in writing at KS2 and developing the church school aspect, resulting in most pupils now making better progress in writing. However, this is not yet an outstanding church school because the new initiatives are not sufficiently embedded to demonstrate continued progress and improvement, and to enable progress by the end of KS2 that is good or better in comparison to similar schools. The RE curriculum is good and improving because of the new enquiry approach and topics such as "Diversity". However, opportunities to use the arts to extend and deepen pupils' enquiry are not used as often as they might be. The enquiry approach, together with the school's focus on respect and compassion, results in pupils who are open to different cultures, religions, ideas and pupil abilities. There is an emergent tracking and assessment system for RE but this has yet to make impact as it is new. Children demonstrate a positive appreciation of world faiths including Judaism and Islam and talk readily about them. Pupils have a growing understanding of Christianity and some limited understanding of its international multicultural nature. RE makes a good contribution to the church school aspect and to pupils' awareness of diverse communities both in the UK and further afield because of the school's intentional promotion of multi-cultural awareness. There is an appropriate focus upon charity such as supporting the Helen and Douglas House. This charitable focus helps pupils to develop empathy and responsibility and results in pupils making their own charitable endeavours, for example in supporting earthquake relief agencies working in Nepal. Pupil behaviour is strong and results in positive relations and a calm atmosphere in the school. The school Christian values are starting to inform behaviour choices but this is at an early stage as the values are newly identified. The way the newly identified values are articulated as expectations and guidance rather than rules is effective. It is resulting in children who are beginning to take responsibility for their actions and who are able to engage in internal and communal dialogue about appropriate courses of action. One parent said that, 'I am really proud that my child attends a school where pupil behaviour is so good'. All the staff model and articulate the Christian values. This raises their profile and enables children, staff and parents to make connections between the Christian values and all aspects of school life. The school sees itself as expressing its Christian heart and its values of love and compassion in the inclusion of all pupils. The school commitment to inclusion ensures its Christian values influence an approach to attendance that is compassionate, but also one of high expectations. This results in attendance that is improving. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC), whilst evident and responsive to pupil needs, is ad-hoc which results in missed opportunities for some pupils. One parent commented that the Christian aspect of the school and its development of its Christian values 'really prepares my child for life beyond the school gate developing confidence to excel and compassion towards others.'

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is a positive experience that all stakeholders value because it brings them together as a Christian community. It brings cohesiveness to all aspects of school life, fostering pupil self-esteem, enabling spiritual development and a sensitivity to awe and wonder, and exemplifying expectations of the school values. The importance the school gives to periods of reflection and the value children place upon the opportunities to be still and reflect enhance these outcomes. Collective worship is planned carefully and utilizes the expertise of the rector to weave biblical examples and the school values into the themes. However, the planning is not varied enough over a pupil's whole school journey and does not involve pupils sufficiently. This results in collective worship that is predominantly adult led with limited opportunities for pupils to plan and lead acts of worship that they shape for themselves. This is why collective worship is not yet outstanding. Pupils' views are sought from time to time concerning the impact of collective worship upon them. They speak positively of the involvement of clergy in collective worship and of the opportunities to worship in church as well as school, for example for the Festival of Easter. An appropriate consideration of other religious traditions, such as the marking of the Jewish Rosh Hashana gives pupils a broader understanding of worship and how faith traditions express this. Prayer is a long-standing strength of collective worship at the school and highly valued by pupils because they are taught to appreciate its

significance. They are given opportunity through the beautifully constructed 'prayer tree' to contribute to the prayer life of the school. One child said that prayer helps them, 'to listen to God and what he wants of us, to live our lives rather than how other people want us to live our lives.' This shows that the ideas of Christianity, Anglicanism and the school's Christian values are increasingly influencing choices and behaviour. There is an emerging understanding of God as Trinity by the children as this is beginning to be modelled and explored during collective worship and supported by RE learning such as the topic on Pentecost. An understanding of God as Creator is much more prevalent amongst the children arising in part from the rural context and the school's eco-school work. This understanding of God as Creator in collective worship is enhanced and explored in curriculum work. An example of this is creative writing about the creation resulting in pupil responses such as, "Darkness roamed. Father started to paint a picture of my vision of colour." The forms and themes of collective worship are appropriate and relevant to the children and model Anglican practice ensuring collective worship has a good impact on the whole school, including parents and staff.

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

Governance is a key strength of the school because governors are actively involved in establishing the school's Christian vision. They are effective in evaluating the strengths of the school and challenging it to improve further. The governors and staff have made a demonstrable difference since September by building upon previous good practice and establishing a renewed sense of direction for the school. This renewed sense of direction is strongly underpinned by its Christian values and vision. The senior leaders have a vision for pupils at the school to experience an education that allows them to develop as a 'whole' person and to go forward into life with the Christian values, enabling well-rounded and confident children who excel. In the last year, they have reviewed the school's vision and values with all stakeholders reinvigorating the school's understanding of itself as a church school. This means that the school's identified Christian values are again consciously informing aspects of practice, the environment and pupil behaviour. However, this is at an early stage. Due to the drive of current school leaders to improve standards, effective staff and governor training and diocesan support, most pupils are now making better progress in writing. However, this is not yet an outstanding church school because the new initiatives in writing are not sufficiently embedded to demonstrate continued progress and improvement, and enable progress by the end of KS2 that is good or better in comparison to similar schools in English and Maths. The leadership has addressed the development points from the last inspection but improvements in writing had not been embedded and so have recurred as a developmental issue. The governors' work in strategic decision making, such as working with the local authority planning committee, is skilful and expresses their determination to secure the church school aspect and the school's future success and growth. The development of church school leaders, for example through the application of the diocesan led 'Inspired to Lead' programme is a strength of the school. School leaders have a strong sense of the nature of Christian servant leadership that results in all staff being completely committed to the pupils and their school. RE is well led and given appropriate priority in school life enabling it to enhance the school's inclusive and open nature where pupils can ponder and express religious ideas and the deep questions of life. RE and collective worship meet statutory requirements. The headteacher works collaboratively by skilfully involving all stakeholders in the life of the school and so enables them to contribute their gifts for the good of the children. This results in a lot of good will towards this church school and an openness of approach to continuous improvement. The headteacher is proactive in ensuring the well-being of all in the school community resulting in a positive atmosphere and a great sense of pride by all stakeholders. Parents express a sense of engagement with the school as they are appropriately informed and their views are actively sought. Parents speak highly of the school and are committed to it because of its Christian pastoral care that results in their children having a positive self-esteem, and an openness and respect towards others. Pupils and parents readily express this in their thankfulness for what the school enables. Links with St Olave's Parish Church are mutually beneficial and support the school's understanding of itself as an Anglican community at the forefront of the Diocese of Oxford's work and mission in rural communities.

SIAMS report May 2015 Fritwell Church of England Primary Fritwell Bicester OX27 7PX