



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Frieth Church of England Combined School

Frieth

Henley on Thames

Oxfordshire RG9 6PR

Previous SIAS grade: Good

Current inspection grade: Outstanding

Diocese: Oxford

Local authority: Buckinghamshire

Date of inspection: 19 April 2016

Date of last inspection: July 2011

School's unique reference number: 110461

Headteacher: Josephine Reid

Inspector's name and number: Gill Walley NS 644

School context

This is a small school with 131 pupils from the surrounding villages. Most pupils are white British. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs or who are disadvantaged is below the national average. The proportion of pupils speaking English as an additional language is increasing and mobility is slightly above average. All pupils are taught in mixed age classes. The headteacher has been in post for two years and there has been a lengthy interregnum although a new incumbent has now been appointed.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Frieth as a Church of England school are outstanding.

- Pupils develop their spirituality and understanding of Christianity through extremely well planned collective worship (CW) and many opportunities for reflection in school and in church, and through their Religious Education (RE) lessons.
- Pupils understand and can explain Christian values, Anglican traditions and Bible stories because these are shared with them regularly in ways which are interesting and memorable.
- Parents know that it is the school's strong Christian ethos which underpins the drive towards 'developing potential without limitations'. They feel that the school values all children and families equally, whether or not they are Christians.

- Governors monitor the school's Christian distinctiveness well so that they have an accurate understanding of its strengths and what they might develop further.

Areas to improve

- Ensure that pupils have a broader understanding of different faiths through a wider range of visitors and visits within the community.

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

The strong Christian vision of the current headteacher has strengthened the distinctly Christian ethos of the school and all groups now see it at the heart of the school's work. Consequently everyone in its community attributes the very good progress pupils make, their outstanding behaviour and their spiritual development to their understanding of the Christian values that underpin daily life and the impact of being part of a Christian community. Pupils are valued as individuals and constantly encouraged to achieve their personal best so that they all achieve their potential. Behaviour is exceptional and pupils explain with confidence how explicitly Christian values influence the way they behave towards one another and the way adults help them. The behaviour code and school values are based on Titus 3:2. Adults are constantly promoting pupils' welfare, safety and self-esteem. Pupils particularly appreciate the opportunities they have for spiritual development and reflection throughout the day, and the way that adults help them to make the right choices based on good moral values and a deep concern for one another. Pupils attend well because they enjoy coming to school and there are very good relationships between adults and children. When children enter the Reception class they attend a welcoming service in the parish church where they receive their own Bibles. Parents and children see this as a very significant event to make the school's distinctiveness visible to new children and their families. Staff acknowledge the importance of the Christian distinctiveness and talk about 'a very clear set of values', known by everyone, and 'a palpable feeling' throughout the school'. Everyone in the community is highly valued and respected and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength. Pupils appreciate the many opportunities provided in RE lessons to learn about traditions within the Christian church and about different faiths represented in the wider community. A greater range of visits and visitors which would develop this understanding further.

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

Pupils and adults explain how central worship is in the life of the school because it is where they develop their understanding about the Christian values. Everyone enjoys this daily time for coming together and Christian praise. Worship begins with a Christian greeting and response and ends with singing Christian songs. Pupils explain how they develop their understanding because worship is interesting and relevant. Worship is carefully planned so that it extends pupils' understanding of a range of Anglican traditions and the liturgical year. It also deepens their understanding of many Bible stories which they can remember and retell. Each day a Bible passage is read by some of the older pupils followed by a story or presentation which sets the message of the Bible reading into a modern context which pupils can relate to. Pupils are keen to demonstrate the depth of their understanding by answering questions and through drama. For example, when they were talking about the importance of perseverance they listened to a reading from John 20, followed by a story about waiting for good things to happen. They talked of times in their own lives when they need to persevere and showed their understanding of what happened at Pentecost and its significance in the church calendar. Older pupils can explain the Trinity because it has been explained to them in ways they can understand. They talk about 'having time to reflect' and enjoying 'a sense of peace' during worship which 'reminds us what God and Jesus mean to us'. They explain that looking at a lit candle helps them to concentrate

when they pray. Being able to look at things from different perspectives and viewpoints has been a particular focus recently. Pupils explain that this has helped them to look more deeply at moral issues. They are confident to plan and lead acts of worship regularly, many of which are well attended by parents. Despite the interregnum the children have continued to worship regularly in the parish church because there are very strong links between the church and the school. The curate leads worships in school and pupils look forward to her visits because they value being part of the parish community. They like the fact that their school is close to the church so that they are always aware of it, and also that stained glass at the entrance to their school makes them feel they are entering a special place. Different staff also lead worship so that pupils enjoy a variety of approaches. Governors and senior leaders now monitor worship and seek feedback from pupils and parents so that they can be sure it meets the needs of all pupils and supports their spiritual development extremely well.

The effectiveness of religious education is good.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy RE lessons because they involve interesting activities and resources and help them to 'learn about the Bible', to 'understand right from wrong' and to find out about 'the beliefs and traditions of people of different faiths'. Pupils are constantly encouraged to relate what they understand about Christianity to their own experiences in life and they can explain how parables and other Bible stories are relevant to them. RE is now at the heart of the curriculum and other subjects such as writing are often taught through it, helping pupils to make good links between different areas of their learning. RE is consistently well taught so that pupils make very good progress and reach standards above the national average. Pupils make as much progress in RE as in other subjects, and the proportions of pupils who make better progress is increasing. They develop a wide range of skills including the ability to relate what they are learning about religion to their own lives and experiences. Lessons give pupils many opportunities to reflect and to discuss their views with one another. For example, they have talked about why Good Friday is so called because it was not a good day for Jesus. They value the opportunities they have to learn about a range of faiths and to discuss the similarities between them. Pupils are able to express their responses in a variety of ways including through art, music and drama. Their work is often displayed on classroom walls and this enhances the Christian environment well. They talk confidently and with maturity about their learning and show high levels of motivation. The RE leader has responded to the recommendation of the last report by implementing a system for assessing pupils' progress which teachers use to plan lessons at the right level for them. This ensures that all pupils are working at the right level and identifies any pupils who need further support or who could be challenged further. This system is becoming embedded and teachers feel that it will help all pupils reach their potential. The RE leader and governors also monitor learning in RE regularly to ensure that it is consistently good or better. Staff feel very well supported by the RE leader with resources and guidance to support them in planning and delivering lessons. Many pupils attend clubs such as Bible explorers or Good Friday club because they want to learn even more about the Bible. RE is not yet outstanding because opportunities for pupils to learn about other faith traditions needs further development.

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

Leaders confidently express how firmly the school's vision is rooted in distinctively Christian values. They monitor and evaluate the impact of Christian distinctiveness thoroughly and identify what might be developed further because they are ambitious and determined to give every pupil and family the best opportunities and experiences. Points for further development are incorporated in the school's development plan and reviewed regularly because leaders are determined to continue to improve. Monitoring is now more robust and all groups within the school community contribute. The headteacher is an excellent role model and she supports staff well so that they understand how to develop the children's spirituality, attainment and wellbeing. A willingness to do this is key to all staff appointments and to future leadership. RE is

now at the heart of the curriculum so that pupils develop a thorough understanding of the Christian faith and other faiths appropriate to their age. The headteacher has strengthened the links with the parish church despite the interregnum and parishioners feel involved with the school. Parents value the closer links with the church and how much support is available from the church for them as well as for their children. This has encouraged some to attend church services with their children. Pupils have developed their understanding of the wider Christian church through special events with other local schools, and also through their close links with Sir Charles Kauko Primary School in Kenya. The school has responded well to the recommendations of the last inspection.

SIAMS report April 2016 Frieth C of E Combined School, Henley on Thames, Oxon RG9 6PR