

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

### Frittenden Church of England Primary School

Frittenden, Cranbrook, Kent TN17 2DD	
<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Good</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Canterbury</b>
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	Kent
Date of inspection	8 March 2018
Date of last inspection	5 March 2013
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Controlled 118701
Headteacher	Nichola Costello
Inspector's name and number	Anne Southgate 820

#### School context

Frittenden is smaller than the average sized primary school. Pupils are taught in a single Reception class and then in three mixed age classes. Most pupils are of White British heritage. Other ethnic groups are represented in small numbers. Fewer pupils than the national average have special needs or disabilities. Far fewer pupils than average are from disadvantaged backgrounds. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is much lower than the national average. The headteacher has been in post for two years.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Frittenden as a Church of England school are good

- Clear and explicitly Christian values have a clear and positive impact on behaviour, attitudes and on well-being.
- The headteacher and governors take the development of the school's Christian character very seriously and they are honest and accurate in their self-evaluation. This means that there is a continuous drive for improvement.
- Diversity is valued so that everyone is made to feel that they matter equally as a child of God.

#### Areas to improve

- Create a single Christian vision statement to clarify that all that leaders do is based on Christian principles.
- Establish a regular pattern for self-evaluation as a church school so that development in this area is considered more often.
- Ensure that the website and newsletter proclaim the school's Christian character, so that everyone understands this.

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

Clearly identified values, which are explicitly Christian, have a very positive impact on pupils' attitudes and behaviour. These values of trust, compassion, hope, wisdom, forgiveness and thankfulness are clearly based on biblical stories. Pupils can draw comparisons between their own behaviour and the teaching of Jesus. As a result, pupils are polite, courteous and caring. The values are used in all aspects of school life and they help to ensure the well-being of everyone in the school community. The good behaviour and respectful attitudes create an effective climate for learning. This means that pupils generally achieve standards at or above national averages. Pupils routinely make good progress at the school. Attendance is lower than the national average, but it is increasing rapidly because of the actions taken by leaders. This is based on the school's values and on the care for each individual. There is currently a mission statement, 'learning for life in the light of God' as well as a separate vision statement, which is not based on explicitly Christian principles. These statements do not accurately represent the Christian thinking which underpins the focus on each individual child. There is a real respect for and interest in differing opinions and beliefs. Pupils are encouraged to express their views in the knowledge that these will be listened to sensitively. This ensures that everyone feels valued. The many clubs cater for the interests of all pupils. As a pupil commented, 'the clubs show that everyone's talents are important'. Pupils have a good understanding of diversity and this is supported by the many visits, including to places of worship. These visits and the teaching in the school help pupils to understand the variety of contexts in which other people live. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their learning and on their opinions. There are ample opportunities, including in the forest school, for pupils to experience awe and wonder. This means that pupils develop well spiritually, morally, socially and culturally.

Creative approaches to religious education (RE) engage pupils and help them to think deeply. Pupils enjoy responding in a variety of ways, including art, craft and drama. Teaching of RE across the school is consistently good and standards are in line with national averages. The new syllabus, 'Understanding Christianity' is having a positive impact on learning by deepening pupils' thinking.

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

Collective worship focuses on one of the school's Christian values and the associated parables each term. This ensures that pupils' knowledge of biblical stories is strong. It also means that pupils fully understand that their school values are rooted in Christian stories. Pupils' grasp of key Christian beliefs, such as the Trinity, is impressive for their age. A group from the local church, including the rector, lead 'Open the Book' worship every week. Pupils are enthusiastic about this and they particularly enjoy helping to dramatise the Bible stories told. Pupils are frequently involved in leading worship. Each week a different group of pupils plans and leads an act of worship. A 'worship gang' lead the administrative aspects of worship as well as, for example, saying the greeting and sending sentences. This results in high engagement and enjoyment of worship. Pupils' attitudes during worship are respectful. Pupils are invited to join with prayer, rather than being expected to do so. This means that those of other faiths or of no faith feel comfortable and included. There are very clear plans for collective worship. These are based on the Church's year. The plans include celebration of major Christian festivals, such as Christmas, Lent, Holy Week and Easter, and Pentecost. Pupils are able to write and hang prayers on the school prayer tree. These are often read out during worship. Some pupils felt that they wanted their prayers to be private. Leaders responded by providing trays of pebbles representing prayers to say sorry, please and thank you. Pupils' views about worship are collected and acted upon, but this has not been a regular occurrence. Visitors, for example from the Church Army and from China, sometimes lead worship. Pupils respond with real interest. This experience helps to raise their awareness of the broad nature and global presence of Christianity.

As a result of worship themes, pupils are generally very caring and concerned to help others. They raise money for a wide range of charities, including the NSPCC and the Alzheimer's Society. Pupils' awareness of global issues and needs is raised by worship which sometimes focuses on world events. A recent example is the earthquake in Mexico for which adults and pupils in the school raised money. Worship messages often focus on trying to help others. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on these messages by adding their thoughts to a display asking 'I show God's love by.....' This contributes well to helping pupils to develop as reflective and caring people.

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

Leaders are very clear that the daily life of the school is driven by Christian values. The headteacher and governors have established a secure and shared Christian basis for their work. Leaders have a vision for continuing to develop

a school where every child is enabled to flourish and is valued for being a unique child of God. This is not reflected in the school's published vision nor in the mission statement. The strength of the Christian character is not clear on the school website, nor in newsletters. The Christian basis to the work at the school is not therefore clear to others. Since the appointment of the current headteacher, there has been improvement. Self-evaluation is shared, honest and accurate. There are plans for a more regular and frequent cycle of self-evaluation as a church school, but these have yet to be implemented. The headteacher displays a genuine commitment to developing the Christian character of the school and this is taken very seriously. Leaders share an understanding that Christian values are the key to driving school improvement.

There are well-established relationships with the local church. Premises and resources at the school and at the church are often shared. Leaders and teachers have accessed helpful diocesan training, including bespoke training for governors. The RE leader provides good support for teachers, particularly with the introduction of the new syllabus. In a small school such as this, all teachers quickly gain an understanding of leadership issues and actions. This, together with the way in which the headteacher promotes the school's Christian character, ensures that teachers develop well as future leaders. Parents are very positive about their child's experience at Frittenden. They particularly appreciate the caring and inclusive ethos of the school. Leaders have created a school where everyone feels included and valued. There is no complacency among leaders. The headteacher constantly seeks ways to improve, for example, by working with other local church schools. The development points from the previous denominational inspection have been addressed. Statutory requirements for collective worship and for RE are fully met.

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