



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Fressingfield Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

School Lane
Fressingfield, Suffolk
IP21 5RU

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Current Inspection grade : Good

Diocese: St Edmundsbury and Ipswich

Local authority: Suffolk

Dates of inspection: 05 May 2016

Date of last inspection: 31 March 2011

School's unique reference number: 124731

Headteacher: Mark Taylor

Inspector's name and number: Judith Ruff 528

School context

Fressingfield VC Primary is a small school with 116 pupils on roll. Approximately half of pupils come from the village itself, with a further third coming from surrounding villages. The remainder travel from outside of the catchment area. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Percentages of pupils in receipt of Pupil Premium monies and those receiving support for special education needs and disabilities are below the national average. Since the previous inspection a new headteacher and assistant headteacher have been appointed. The church of Saint Peter and Saint Paul is a short walking distance from the school.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Fressingfield Primary as a Church of England school are good

- The excellent way in which the school promotes pupils' self-esteem, good work attitudes and mutual support based on the Christian values of love, care and respect being demonstrated daily
- High quality relationships amongst all sections of the school community, where each individual is valued as unique and special in the sight of God
- Generous and selfless responses to charitable giving, arising from a genuine desire to make the world a fairer and more equitable place

Areas to improve

- Expand pupils' understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith, building on the good opportunities for global awareness already in place
- Increase pupil opportunities to plan and lead acts of collective worship, enabling them to develop their understanding of the importance of worship to Christians
- Deepen pupils' understanding of prayer and its part in Christian worship, including the

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

Stepping through the 'pilgrim frieze' at the reception doors, immediately visitors are aware of the concept of a journey through school life. However, on this journey no one is allowed to travel alone. The exceptionally high levels of personal development and well-being are highlighted by parents, who greatly value the school values of love, care and respect for all. As one said, 'From his first day, he came home with a smile on his face. I can't thank the school enough for ensuring that he settled so well.' Levels of pupil achievement are rising and the school has high aspirations for all, with governors being uncompromising in their view that every child should have the best opportunity to succeed. Attendance rates are high and there have been no exclusions. Pupils are able to link school values such as 'wisdom' to the choices that they make. Their sense of compassion shines through in the very high levels of charitable giving and their real concern for those less fortunate. Pupils willingly take on areas of responsibility within school, such as writing letters applying for the position of school librarian, setting up for worship and looking after the guinea-pigs in the school grounds. They are developing a keen sense of social justice through letters written to local politicians about issues such as improvements to play facilities in the village. They speak about having resilience and perseverance in their studies, linking these to Bible stories, such as the parables of the lost sheep and the talents. Importantly they are beginning to recognise that, through their study of other world religions, that these values are also cherished by other faiths. Knowledge and understanding of diversity within the Christian faith is well supported by the regular visits from both Baptist and Methodist clergy representatives. Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith is less developed, although the school is working hard to build pupils' awareness of global issues, supported by visits by a Ugandan choir and an African songs' concert. RE makes a good contribution to the Christian character of the school through its deepening of pupils' understanding of other world faiths, enabling them to begin to compare and contrast beliefs and ideas, relating these to their own experiences and observations of a Christian community in action.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Opportunities for collective worship are varied and engaging. Worship is well planned, with themes for worship securely linked to the school's chosen Christian values and focused around the church calendar and Bible stories. Pupils are able to worship both within their own classrooms and collectively in the school hall. They are introduced to phrases from the Anglican liturgy during worship and know that lighting the candle symbolises Christ as light to the world. The school's centrally placed 'prayer table' gives opportunities for pupils to write prayers for inclusion in worship, but also to offer their private prayers, which are taken up by the rector on a regular basis. Pupils sang the Lord's Prayer beautifully during the inspection and the grace is said in many different ways before lunch. However, there have been insufficient opportunities to listen to well-known Anglican prayers or to have Trinitarian prayers included in worship. Pupils have a limited understanding of the Trinity. There are good opportunities for visitors to lead worship, such as the local Baptist, Methodist and Anglican clergy involved in a regular weekly rota. An 'Open the Book' group has committed to a half termly visit, enabling the pupils to talk enthusiastically about the Bible stories that this group has told using drama and role play. The local church is used well for worship at key festival times. Notably the school enabled pupils to re-tell the Easter story in their own words and act this out for the church service. At Christmas, there was a 'Walking Nativity' procession around the village, stopping off at key places, for example to talk to the shepherds in the fields. A great number of people were involved in this and pupils spoke enthusiastically about their part in the process. Monitoring and evaluation of collective worship by foundation governors has had positive impact on increasing awareness of making reflection time of real quality during worship and exploring ways in which pupils can be more involved with the planning and leadership of

worship. These opportunities are intended to support pupils' clarity of understanding of the importance of worship in the Christian faith.

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

School leaders, including governors deeply value the school's Christian foundation. They are fiercely proud of their school and the values that are well embedded across the community. Parents also are overwhelmingly positive in their praise of the headteacher and his staff for their care, concern and compassion for every child in the school. Particularly, parents whose children have experienced issues at previous schools, spoke about the unconditional welcome that their children received and the high levels of support to help them settle quickly and happily. Both senior leaders and the governing body have worked unstintingly to raise levels of pupil achievement and their hard work in terms of producing evaluative documentation and development plans is set in their firm Christian beliefs and faith in wanting every child to feel truly valued, special and to experience success. Areas of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are high priority in the school, supported and developed through a thorough audit of present provision and strategic planning for future projects, such as the development of reflective spaces within the school grounds. Areas for development from the previous inspection have been addressed well. The school's 'Ethos Committee' is ensuring that areas around Christian distinctiveness are driven forward and that funding links, such as the local church Parochial Church Council annual grant are used effectively to enhance this dimension of the school's work. The rector is greatly valued for her sensitive pastoral support within the school. Good partnerships with local Christian denominations further strengthen the pupils' awareness of diversity within the Christian faith. RE is well led and supported and has the potential to become a real strength of the school. Aspirant leaders are encouraged to attend diocesan courses aimed at raising awareness around future church school leadership. Links with the diocese have been enhanced by visits and school contributions to events such as the 'Big Crib' exhibition in Bury Cathedral and by a recent visit of a group working with pupils on the theme of 'Pilgrimage'.

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