



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

Freckleton Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

School Lane, Freckleton, Preston, PR4 1PJ

Diocese: Blackburn

Previous SIAMS grade: Good

Current inspection grade: Outstanding

Local authority: Lancashire

Date of inspection: 23 April 2015

Date of last inspection: June 2010

School's unique reference number: 119548

Headteacher: Rachael Ainsworth

Inspector's name and number: Mike Graham 286

School context

The school is of below average size and is situated in the large semi-rural village of Freckleton, close to the city of Preston. Most of the children live in the village. The vast majority are White British. The number of children with special educational needs is below the national average, as is the proportion known to be eligible for the pupil premium. Staffing has been stable in recent years, but there is no vicar in post at present. The non-stipendiary curate is leading the church community and supporting the school.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Freckleton Primary as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The headteacher gives outstanding Christian leadership and is supported wholeheartedly by all the staff. As a result, spiritual development and academic achievement have improved significantly during recent years.
- Christian values are lived out in the excellent relationships in the school family. This results in exemplary behaviour.
- Worship is central to the spiritual life of the school. It is sincere, vibrant and empowering, making a significant impact on spiritual development.
- Religious education (RE) includes excellent teaching from the Bible and the children have a deep understanding of Christianity and Christian values.

Areas to improve

- Expand and develop the awareness of Christianity as a worldwide faith with a wide range of worship styles to deepen the children's understanding and assist them in adding greater variety to school worship.

- Encourage and develop spontaneous prayer from staff and children to deepen their spiritual lives.

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

The school's loving and caring Christian ethos creates a secure and joyful context within which all the children are enabled to give of their best. Christian values are exemplified and taught by the staff. The values on which they focus, chosen by the whole school family, are friendship, truthfulness, perseverance, trust, forgiveness, responsibility, hope, thankfulness and reverence and respect. These values are lived out at Freckleton school and are far more than just ideas. There is therefore no fear of failure, and the enthusiasm with which the children tackle their work and life in school leads to outstanding academic and personal development. The rate of progress for children of all abilities is excellent. Attainment in most areas is above the national average. This is because the Christian character of the school supports the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all the children to excellent effect. Their spiritual maturity is significant. A Year 6 girl explained that she decided to be baptised and confirmed because 'It (Christianity) seems so real to me.' Understanding of, and respect for, other cultures and faiths is diligently fostered, with visits to non-Christian places of worship and excellent teaching in RE. The 'Jullundur' project involves Year 6 in services of commemoration linked to World War I and the involvement of Sikh regiments, extending this understanding and widening their experience of Christianity worldwide. All are warmly welcomed, and a Christ-like openness and love are present. The Methodist minister spoke of '...a positive, wholesome atmosphere with a lot of joy and a warm welcome'. Children and adults are polite and respectful, yet full of life and joy in learning. The children's behaviour is impeccable, with one child saying 'We treat other people as we like to be treated'. Relationships amongst all members of the school community demonstrate Christian values superbly. Parents readily attribute this to the Christian values at the heart of the school's life, one saying, 'The Christian side of school is vitally important'.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Worship takes pride of place in the life of the school. The variety of content and leadership styles supports a vibrant and appealing mix of worship experiences. Christian values, Bible stories and readings, reflection, prayer, drama, humour and wonderful singing all contribute to these occasions, enriching the lives of all the participants. The worship is distinctively Christian, with Jesus at the centre. His life and teachings are the basis for the values chosen as themes for worship and for the whole of school life. Personal spiritual development is enhanced through a strong focus on prayer. Prayer trees and class worship encourage children to write their own prayers, although spontaneous prayer has not yet been developed. The children's understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit is impressive in its maturity. They have a sense of the awe and wonder of God the Creator and Father, Jesus the Saviour and Son, and the Holy Spirit. One Year 6 said that the Holy Spirit 'brought power at Pentecost. The disciples were brave instead of scared!' Worship brings the whole community together at key points in the church calendar. The impact in terms of the building of mutually supportive relationships between the village, school and church communities is significant. In the absence of a vicar, the non-stipendiary curate plays a key role in the leadership of the church family, and his love and humour help unite the school and parish communities. The curate and the Methodist minister play key roles in school, leading worship regularly in turn. They bring theological yet accessible teaching and elements of the Anglican tradition and faith to the children, staff and parents. Monthly Eucharists with full involvement of the children, and impressive numbers of Year 6 children preparing for confirmation testify to the depth of this faith. Members of staff and, significantly, children in the developing worship group plan, lead and evaluate worship, giving vitality and a constant desire for further improvement and development.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

The progress made by the children in RE is outstanding overall. There is a welcome emphasis on the impact of faith on a believer, leading to deep spiritual understanding. The reflective approach that is used demonstrates the excellent progress made by the school following the last inspection. Teaching is inventive, well planned and resourced, and all teachers play their part with enthusiasm and love of the subject. The co-ordinator is an experienced and inspiring leader and is passionate about her work. The impact of RE on the children is clear and highly significant. The learning is good or better throughout the school as a result of good to outstanding teaching. RE sessions are lively and progressive, with teamwork, impressive use of technology, drama and role-play to reinforce the teaching. There is sensitive use of open questions and gentle support when needed. Deep understanding of key issues is the result. A Year 3 child said of the women who visited the empty tomb on the first Easter Day that they would have been 'part scared, part relieved that Jesus' body wasn't there'. In a Year 2 lesson reviewing the events of Holy Week, a child responded to the release of Barabbas rather than Jesus by saying, 'They made the wrong decision!' Monitoring and assessment are thorough and developmental, leading to continuous improvements and developments in the curriculum. Children's understanding of Christianity is excellent. They do not however have a full appreciation of the range of worldwide expressions of Christian worship. Teaching about non-Christian faiths is thorough and effective. Visits to places of worship are built into the programme of teaching. Consequently a Year 6 girl said that their learning in these areas means that 'we can understand and respect them, not judge them'.

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

The headteacher, leadership team, staff and governors are united in striving to live out the Christian vision for the school. The headteacher's Christian faith shines out in every aspect of her leadership, and the academic and personal achievements of the children have improved dramatically over recent years. She commented that 'all the children who come here know they are loved, safe and special'. Success has been achieved through exemplary teamwork, with the whole staff group united with the headteacher and governors to bring Christian values into every aspect of school life. The chair of governors said that the leadership set superb examples in 'behaviour, contentment and respect for each other'. Governors and clergy are fully involved in all aspects of the school's work and activities. Christian values have been promoted vigorously, yet with sensitivity. Systematic and thorough reviews of the school's work and Christian distinctiveness, with full involvement from the governors, demonstrate the passionate striving for constant improvement. All the areas for improvement from the last report have been covered thoroughly. Leaders prepare for future leadership in this and other church schools through excellent in-service training, teamwork, delegation and coaching. The present RE co-ordinator is working alongside her successor in the role, in preparation for retirement this July. RE and worship fully comply with statutory requirements. Partnerships, or deep friendships, with the local churches, diocese and the wider community are strong and mutually beneficial. These relationships have proved to be invaluable at difficult times in the life of the village. The school council lead the way in raising money for local and international charities, demonstrating Christian compassion in action. The parents are very appreciative of the Christian care demonstrated in ensuring that the wellbeing of every child and every family is paramount. Parents are immensely proud of their school, giving excellent support and input. They feel fully involved, and comments about the school include, 'The team that welcomed and supported us when we came were great' and simply, 'I can't fault it!'

SIAMS report April 2015, Freckleton CofE Primary, Preston, PR4 1PJ

