

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

<b>Frieth Church of England Combined School</b>	
Address	Frieth, Henley on Thames, RG9 6PR
How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?	
Overall grade	Good
The impact of collective worship	Excellent
The effectiveness of religious education (RE)	Good

School's vision
<p>'...your light must shine before people, so that they will see the good things you do...' Matthew 5: 16</p> <p>Our vision encourages our children and community to show the world how wonderful they are, in both their good character and unique qualities. We are all successful in different ways and the most important thing is that we know that everyone can 'Let their Light Shine.'</p>
Key findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school's distinctive Christian vision creates a welcoming and inclusive environment ensuring the whole community is respected and celebrated.</li> <li>• Collective worship is fundamental to school life. The work of local church communities links deeply with the school's vision and values. They are intimately involved in planning and leading collective worship. Consequently, collective worship creates extensive opportunities to reflect and grow spiritually.</li> <li>• Pastoral care and support for mental health and wellbeing is highly effective. It enables pupils and staff to flourish as unique children of God.</li> <li>• Through high quality provision pupils are inspired by religious education (RE). They actively explore different faiths and feel empowered to ask big questions in a safe environment.</li> <li>• The recently introduced statement of spirituality complements the vision and is having a positive impact on pupils' thinking and questioning.</li> </ul>
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Building on existing excellent practice, enhance worship even more by reaching beyond the school walls to allow Frieth's varied and creative approaches to worship to have wider impact.</li> <li>• Using opportunities to work alongside fellow RE professionals, share the school's strong practice in RE to the benefit of the wider community.</li> </ul>

## Inspection findings

Frieth Church of England Combined School is a community that welcomes all in the belief that everyone should enjoy 'life in all its fullness' (John 10: 10). Rooted in its vision and values it is a warm and welcoming school that wholeheartedly believes all can shine (Matthew 5: 16). Since the last inspection, despite several changes of leadership, the school remains true to its aims. This is because established governors, who know their school well, meet regularly to consider its effectiveness as a Church school. Therefore, the values and ethos of the school remain deeply embedded across its community. This, alongside their familiarity of the school, ensures it continues as a successful community where all flourish. Governors, clergy, and school leaders collaborate closely with representatives of Oxford Diocese Board of Education (ODBE). Consequently, they have a sound understanding of current thinking in Church school education. Governors appropriately challenge school leadership thus creating an ethos of continued improvement. Leaders at all levels take responsibility for modelling the vision in all aspects of school life.

Equipped with the wider biblical narrative on which their vision is founded, pupils have a growing appreciation of national and international needs. For example, in response to a collective worship service regarding environmental issues, pupils have initiated litter picking sessions in their village. Pupils have also initiated support for a local homeless charity. Other charitable actions chosen by the school encourage pupils to think globally. This is particularly apparent through the school's link with a school in Kenya. This link has allowed pupils to consider similarities and differences between themselves and children in other parts of the world. However, more recent opportunities for this to happen are hampered by the recent global pandemic. Nonetheless, spurred on by the school's vision, new links are now being forged and acted on. Therefore, pupils continue to be involved with global social action. As a result, they are learning to be agents of social change. They say that they can make a difference by 'letting their light shine anywhere and everywhere'. Frieth's highly regarded headteacher and adept staff team promote an exciting, well-planned curriculum. The curriculum is complemented by a wealth of enrichment opportunities including sports festivals, themed days, and forest school. As a result, pupils' self-confidence, wellbeing, and love of learning flourishes. The curriculum is underpinned by the school's growth mindset. The emphasis on perseverance and resilience allows pupils to thrive academically.

All staff are deeply committed to ensuring that pupils, including those considered to be vulnerable, have their individual needs met. At Frieth there is a demonstrable culture of aspiring to be the best you can be. Pupils have high aspirations. They quote the strapline of their vision 'let your light shine' as being the source of their confidence. The school is committed to establishing foundations that give pupils all they need to flourish now and in later life. To this end they have created exceptionally rich spiritual opportunities across the curriculum. This is particularly evident in Frieth's forest school. Pupils talk with enthusiasm about outdoor learning. They describe their school as a 'spiritual place' because they see 'God in nature.' Additionally, with support from ODBE, the school has introduced Space Makers. Pupils value the opportunities, created through Space Makers' contemplative practices, to experience stillness and explore their inner self. Through embedding spirituality within the curriculum staff are bolstering their pupils' spiritual experiences whilst equipping them with mental resilience. They have established spirituality as a pocket of excellence that allows pupils to grow, shine and flourish.

RE offers pupils stimulating opportunities to reflect on various religious viewpoints. Additionally, in the light of the content studied, RE affords opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own beliefs. Pupils engage well with the 'big questions' posed around all beliefs and




are keen to discuss these. Such opportunities enable them to develop their respect and tolerance of others. Following the pandemic pupils are able to visit local places of worship and religious leaders are invited back into school. A strong relationship with ODBE has been key to the ongoing development of RE. Additionally, during the introduction of the ODBE updated RE syllabus, wise decision making took staff workload into account thus supporting staff wellbeing. Teachers receive regular training and feedback about their teaching. Therefore, they feel supported and confident to teach RE.

Collective worship is fundamental to school life at Frieth. The school is blessed by a strong church team that, over a significant period, has continually improved Frieth's experience of worship. Worship continues to evolve. Services now take place in the school's forest church as well as the local church and main school building. Worship is typically varied, engaging and invitational to all. It is led by a variety of different people including pupils. This contributes effectively to their spiritual development. Through collective worship, pupils develop a thorough, age-appropriate understanding of Christian theology, liturgy, and Anglican traditions. The impact of collective worship extends well beyond the daily act of worship. It permeates the whole school and heightens children's spiritual awareness. Pupils are ambitious to act on what they have seen and heard in collective worship. They speak eagerly about how it inspires them to think about how to live life out of school. Parents confirmed that this leads to rich discussions at home. They attribute these discussions to the school's vision and cite collective worship as a major source for developing understanding of the vision.

School governors and associated clergy have a deep concern for the mental health and wellbeing of the school community. They believe with sincerity that their actions should reflect the school's vision. Consequently, they have engaged a chaplain to regularly visit the school for the benefit of staff and pupils. In addition, they ensure the church is always open to staff as a quiet place for prayer or reflection. Furthermore, the headteacher has initiated regular wellbeing days across the school. On these days staff are encouraged to take time away from school and related work. Staff and pupils are proud of their school and are united by their vision. Staff say good relationships, professional development, and the support of colleagues are reasons they stay at this school. Pupils describe their school as a happy place in a beautiful setting. Together leaders have created a harmonious community in which good mental health and emotional wellbeing are examples of excellence. Whole school adherence to the school's vision, founded on Matthew 5: 16 has created a community where all can shine, flourish and become the person God intended.



	The effectiveness of RE is		Good	
	<p>The highly effective RE leader ensures that assessment is used robustly to enhance the quality of RE teaching and learning. Vulnerable pupils progress well because of the personalised teaching support they receive. The RE curriculum is rich and engaging and carefully planned. This allows pupils to gain a good understanding of Christianity and a range of world religions and worldviews. As a result, regardless of starting points, all groups make good progress in RE.</p>			
Information				
School	Frieth CofE Combined	Inspection date	12 January 2023	
URN	110461	VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary aided	
Diocese/District	Oxford	Pupils on roll	120	
Headteacher	Martin Gosling			
Chair of Governors	Jill Dean			
Inspector	Delia Sheppard	No.	942	