

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Framfield Church of England Primary School

The Street Framfield Uckfield TN22 5NR	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Chichester
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Local authority	East Sussex
Name of federation	Thomas á Becket Church of England Federation
Date of inspection	4 July 2017
Date of last inspection	November 2011
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Aided 114550
Executive Headteacher	Jonquil King
Inspector's name and number	Hilary Ferries 276

School context

Framfield CE Primary School is a small rural, village school, one half of the Thomas á Becket Church of England Federation, formed in 2015. The roles of executive headteacher and head of school were introduced at that time. The vast majority of pupils are of White British heritage and the number of pupils with English as an additional language is below the national average. The number of pupils in receipt of the pupil premium is below the national average. There is a relatively high number of pupils with special educational needs and there are several pupils with Educational Health Care Plans. The school was judged to be good by Ofsted in 2015.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Framfield Church of England Primary School as a Church of England school are good.

- The leadership of the federation uses the Christian vision for decision making and policy development which has strengthened the Christian distinctiveness of Framfield.
- The strong ethos of Christian care for every child has developed an inclusive school with very positive relationships.
- The Christian values that underpin the vision are known and articulated by all and pupils apply them to their lives.
- Collective worship is engaging and relevant, although pupils would like to play a more active role.
- Teaching and learning in religious education (RE) is good, the school is developing a more enquiry based approach to deepen pupils' understanding.

Areas to improve

- Involve pupils in the planning and delivery of collective worship to engage them further.
- Introduce the new RE syllabus to deepen pupils' understanding in RE.
- Review strategies for assessment, feedback and marking for RE in light of the revised curriculum, so pupils are clear about how to improve their work.

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

The vision for Framfield is 'be the best you can be: Living 'life in all its fullness', (John 10:10)' and this underpins all areas of school life. Pupils talk confidently about the vision and the six core values of perseverance, thankfulness, fellowship, respect, courage and wisdom. These Christian values were chosen by the whole school community at the time of the federation in 2015 and are displayed around the school with biblical links. Pupils can articulate and explain them in relation to school life. One pupil said, 'We all use the values. We link the values to our behaviour – if we hurt someone in the playground that is breaking respect, which is one of the values'. Another said, 'we show perseverance when we go for our goals'. The values are also known by the whole school community and in a recent parent survey 100% of respondents agreed that the school had a clear set of explicitly Christian values. Pupils say that they help them know how to behave at school and to try and do their best in everything. This can be seen in the very positive relationships in school, including Year 6 buddies for Reception children, playground friends and the excellent behaviour. The school staff make sure that everyone feels valued and included and all pupils make good progress in school. Attainment has been steadily rising since the last inspection and 2017 national test results are well above the national average.

The exciting and wide-ranging curriculum provides many opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils enjoy the range of active learning experiences and this contributes to their good progress across the curriculum. Forest School gives them the opportunity to consider stewardship as well as have fun and they grow vegetables which they cook and eat. There are excellent opportunities for social development. The school council organises significant fundraising for a range of charities, most recently for the Mombasa Mission which aims to relieve poverty and promote the gospel in East Africa. Pupils interviewed talked about the multi-cultural nature of Christianity across the world and the importance of respect for those of all faiths. Pupils are positive about their learning in RE which is seen as a core subject and makes a significant contribution to the Christian character.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is important to the school community. There is a regular pattern of well-planned themes, which follow the school's Christian values and add to their importance to and relevance in school life. The parish priest, who also follows the themes in the acts of worship he leads, talked about the importance of planning worship to make a difference to lives and the moments of 'reflection and application'. Pupils talk positively about those links between the worship themes and their lives. One recent theme was the Trinity and pupils talked confidently about three in one, showing impressive understanding. Pupils enjoy the variety of worship styles from staff and local clergy. In recent evaluations of worship, they have said that they would like further opportunities to take part in and lead worship and the leadership team are addressing this. They have encouraged and supported the school council to plan and lead assemblies to promote the charities the school will be supporting and pupils say they value these opportunities. In collective worship, they say they are sometimes asked to do the readings and lead prayers and they always enjoy being asked to act out stories or volunteer, but they do not as yet have ownership of collective worship. Each collective worship begins with a 'call and collect' which pupils recognise and join, symbolising the beginning of worship. One parent talked about how their child had remembered the image of a bouncing ball that was used in by the parish priest to help them cope when things became difficult. The visits to the church as part of the RE curriculum, the visit to the Cathedral in Year 6 and the regular use of prayers such as the Lord's Prayer add to the understanding of Anglicanism. Pupils sing with enthusiasm and enjoyment. One pupil said, 'when I sing the songs I feel like I'm in the hands of God'.

Reflection areas in each classroom include opportunities for pupils to pray and to write prayers for others and themselves, which are used during the day. One pupil said, 'the reflection corner makes us happier and calm and it helps us'. The Key Stage 1 meditation time is an opportunity to remember others and is a peaceful and calm start to the afternoon. One pupil said, 'I feel closer to God'.

There are good links with the parish church and worship is held there several times a year. These are generally at the festivals of Christmas, Easter, harvest and the end of the school year. Pupils say they enjoy these occasions and they are well attended by parents. The development of Messy Church and the monthly Family Service, where pupils from the school read lessons and lead prayers, has strengthened these links and encouraged some families to become part of the church community.

The effectiveness of the religious education is good

RE is seen as a core subject at Framfield and forms part of the termly discussion of pupil progress with parents and carers. Consistently good teaching and an engaging RE curriculum that includes art, drama, debate and use of ICT mean that pupils enjoy RE and all groups of pupils make good progress in the subject. They show a good understanding of the major world faiths. Pupils were keen to talk about Shabbat and the story of Rama and Sita. In the Reception / Year 1 class, the role play area of Daniel in the lion's den was very popular as pupils learned about the promises of God.

The head of school is the RE subject leader and this role across the two schools in the federation started in September 2016. She has carried out a thorough review of the subject and as a result the school is moving to a more enquiry based approach. There has been training and support for this from the Diocese of Chichester education team. Class teachers are beginning to trial the new ways of working as they plan for the introduction of the new East Sussex Syllabus for RE. One element of this is 'Understanding Christianity, which is focused on developing a deeper religious, theological and cultural literacy. Early indications are that it is improving teachers' confidence in Christianity, new approaches to teaching RE and the pupils' understanding of Christianity.

The subject leader regularly monitors RE planning, books and teaching and learning and her feedback has led to improvements. This includes the marking of RE, encouraging teachers to be focussed on the RE content rather than on literacy skills. Assessment has been identified as an area for further development.

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

The informal collaboration and then federation of two schools to form the Thomas á Becket Church of England Federation in 2015 has led to the development of a stronger Christian ethos for its members. The leadership of the federation is determined to develop and sustain the Christian distinctiveness of its two schools. The development of a shared Christian vision has been one element of strength. It drives the decision making and policy development for governors and school leaders, for example looking at the school's Christian character when deciding whether to introduce Forest School and when debating the inclusion policy. Governors have addressed the issues from the last inspection and they know their school well. They monitor and evaluate the practice and policy regularly and provide a high level of challenge and support to the school leadership team. The SIAMS group, made up of governors, the executive head, heads of school and the parish priest, evaluates the school as a church school. Each governor takes a lead on an area and there is a termly discussion and review of the church school evaluation. Areas for development are built into the school's annual development plan and the action plan for the subject leader. This keeps the Christian distinctiveness of the school at the forefront of development activity. An in-service training (INSET) day at the end of each year, to which governors are invited, celebrates the success of the year and agrees the priorities for the coming year. Collective worship and RE are always included in this discussion, and the Christian values are central.

The executive headteacher has brought the two church schools in the federation closer together and developed the Christian vision and values across both. This has supported staff and enabled them to work in partnership with each other, enabling the best practice from both schools to be shared and new practice to develop. The 'Corr' curriculum, 100 things that pupils will experience during their time in the federation schools, gives a strong entitlement for pupils and celebrates the 'whole child'. Another success has been the decision for the head of school at Framfield to take the lead for collective worship and RE across the federation. This has enabled staff to moderate pupil work in RE and to plan together for the new RE curriculum.

The school makes good use of diocesan courses and support, such as courses on collective worship and 'Understanding Christianity' which has helped them in their improvement. They belong to the recently formed Church of England Foundation for Educational Leadership and are involved in developing programmes as part of the south-east pilot. There is very strong succession planning in the school with the two heads of school taking on roles across the federation. There is also a strong relationship with the local church. Messy Church and the family service are bringing the two together, with some pupils joining the confirmation class.

Parents and carers are very positive about their school as a church school. One parent said 'it seems to me that faith is at the heart of this school and this radiates out to touch the children and parents alike'. 100% of respondents in the recent survey also said that there are good relationships with the local community. The school try to make sure they are good neighbours; 'kiss and drop,' where parents who drive their children to school can pull in, be met by a member of staff and say goodbye, reduces traffic congestion in the village. School events in the community are well attended.