

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Freeland Church of England Primary School

Vision

'Know your roots, Branch out, Fly High'

A school living out the values of Honesty, Forgiveness, Compassion and Love. From small beginnings, come great things. We are a community where every member, from the tiniest seed to the fullest tree, is nurtured and cared for. Everyone can flourish and be ready to fly the nest and soar high. We come together to grow, learn, love and be loved.

PARABLE OF THE MUSTARD SEED (Matthew 13: 31)

“The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field. Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches.”

Strengths

- Throughout the work of the school, pupils and adults are supported to reach for their fullest selves. This expression of the Christian vision means being part of Freeland and the wider trust is deeply valued and often transformational. Pupils and adults flourish as a result.
- Curriculum design decisions by leaders are rooted in the vision. Most notable is the frequency and purpose of pupil reflection throughout the curriculum. This greatly deepens their spiritual development.
- Worship is strongly anchored to the vision by the widespread understanding of the parable of the mustard seed. As a result, pupils are able to relate their everyday lives to biblical teaching. A culture of prayer and reflection reaches out into every aspect of school life. As a result, personal spirituality is deep rooted and readily expressed.
- Expressing the nurturing approach of the vision, love flows through the school with everyone welcomed, accepted and celebrated. Extensive partnerships positively nurture both pupils and adults.
- Effective leadership in religious education (RE) has established a balanced and relevant curriculum. This positively impacts on pupils' understanding of a diverse range of religions and world views, including Christianity.

Development Points

- Refine the pattern of collective worship by using the evaluation of pupils and adults so that all participants are inspired to act on the themes considered.
- Define key curricular themes in RE so that pupils are challenged to make deeper connections between faiths and worldviews.



Inspection Findings

'Know your roots, branch out and fly high' is deeply expressed throughout the work of the school. Pupils explain how the biblical parable of the mustard seed reflects their journey at Freeland. This is amplified by the embedded school values. As a result, pupils understand how together, everyone can thrive. This is powerfully captured in a pupil drawing which anchors the school's expression of its vision. Strategies such as leadership roles for pupils and restorative approaches to behaviour mean pupils are committed to an environment that is for all. Leaders are driven by the vision and united with staff, parents and pupils. Staff understand the vision and work to provide support for every pupil and each other. This is the result of a culture that deeply values the contribution made by all. Leaders, including local governors and the trust, take great care to check the impact of the vision. Extensive monitoring and systematic evaluation checks the impact of the school's work. The shared belief in coming together means the school's vision resonates with the trust's drive for collaboration. As a result, the impact of the Christian vision is amplified, enabling all to flourish.

The school curriculum design is shaped by the vision and ensures high aspiration for all. Reflection by pupils plays a central role across the Freeland curriculum. Pupils think deeply about their learning both orally and in written work. The impact of this is deepened by the shared understanding of spirituality which helps pupils see beyond their current experience. As a result, spiritual development is an intrinsic part of the curriculum. Staff make explicit content choices to ensure what is studied broadens and lifts horizons. Effective examples are the text choices in English and the range of offsite trips pupils experience. The taught curriculum is enhanced by a wide ranging extra-curricular offer. The richness of this programme is epitomised by the multiple residential opportunities pupils enjoy. Leaders understand the impact of the curriculum because there is an effective programme of monitoring. This also includes wide ranging evaluation of the impact of the Christian vision. The trust shares expertise which deepens the impact of the curriculum. Leaders of special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND) collaborate very effectively across the trust. Expressing the nurture of the vision, inclusion has a high priority in the school. There is an intentional decision by adults to 'walk towards' pupils and families currently experiencing disadvantage.

Collective worship at Freeland deeply expresses the vision. Its themes are shaped by the parable of the mustard seed which pupils know well. This helps them be active participants and relate teaching to their everyday lives. There is a consistent structure for worship which gives space for both collective and individual growth. This familiarity creates a calmness which deepens spiritual development. However, leaders do not yet fully utilise the evaluation of worship to shape its future design. As a result, there are occasions when some pupils are not inspired to act on the themes discussed. Quality resources mean that participants are typically inspired. Worship is enriched by a range of Christian traditions thanks to the partnership with local churches. Pupils are inspired to make courageous life choices and actively express the vision such as through pupil playground leaders and the community volunteer readers. A shared understanding of spirituality provides space for all to grow and flourish. This is supported by the explicit action plan that ensures the school is taking concrete steps to help everyone seek their full potential. A striking contribution of the trust is the appointment of a chaplain to safeguard spiritual wellbeing in its Church schools. As a result, worship supports the spiritual development of all in the school family.

Relationships at Freeland are deeply meaningful. Expressing the vision to come together, love flows through the school ensuring a place for all. The oversight of younger pupils by the oldest in the school during social times is particularly striking. The compassion of staff to pupils and each other models how every individual is precious and unique. A clear framework for recognising feelings and the use of restorative approaches creates a culture that nurtures all with no judgement. The place of prayer in the school day underpins this. The 'prayer shack' provides dedicated space for stillness during social times. Expressing the school value of forgiveness, mistakes are graciously accepted by everyone. Underpinned by an effective wellbeing policy, the mental health of adults



and pupils is central. The recent 'BeSpace' event at the local church show this clearly. The Christian vision is expressed at times of difficulty. Pupils and adults speak of how the school family has helped at the most challenging of personal moments. Close partnership with parents, including those of pupils with SEND, is a strong expression of the vision. Adults describe the positive impact of the trust. There is a clear sense of being part of something which is serving a wider purpose. Pupils and adults are treated well at Freeland.

Expressing the vision, everyone belongs at Freeland. Pupils take responsibility through a wide range of groups such as the school council and wellbeing champions. The school works closely with partners in the trust to create opportunities for all pupils. Pupils regularly engage in social action to act for justice. Visits to the nearby care home help pupils make a positive impact on the lives of others. A collection point in school for the local food bank is typically overflowing. Collaboration with local church leaders enriches the quality of relationships. An excellent example is the sponsorship of the daily prayer resource by the parochial church council. Effective partnerships also extend beyond the local community. The positive collaboration with the diocese means leaders in school and the wider trust understand the requirements of the school's foundation. The school helps pupils extend their perspective beyond the local area. Visits from a Christian church leader from Pakistan and a family court circuit Judge express this. Professional development for staff is a striking feature of Freeland. Leaders and the trust effectively enable staff and governors to grow. Examples include teaching assistants using specialisms and the executive leadership of the headteacher within the trust family of schools.

Leaders ensure that the RE curriculum is well balanced with a diverse range of faiths, including Christianity. High quality resources inform the design of the RE curriculum. Clear systems, such as detailed planning, are in place to help teachers know what needs to be learnt by pupils. As a result, pupils are enthusiastic about RE and explain its impact on their lives. However, the sequencing of the curriculum does not always challenge pupils to think more deeply about broader themes in their studies. Effective collaboration with trust colleagues has enhanced provision. Training means leaders are well placed to extend the effectiveness of RE. Leaders ensure the subject has a high profile in the school by effectively sharing their expertise with teachers. They use monitoring to promote high expectations in RE.

Information

Address	Parklands, Freeland, Nr Witney, Oxon, OX29 8HX, United Kingdom		
Date	17 September 2024	URN	123138
Type of school	Academy	No. of pupils	132
Diocese	Oxford		
MAT	Eynsham Partnership Academy Trust		
Headteacher	Penny McCarthy		
Chair of Governors	Sophie Dawes		
Inspector	Andy Higgs		