

Freeland Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	123138
Local Authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	327856
Inspection dates	9–10 July 2009
Reporting inspector	Derek Watts

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	140
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Elizabeth Silk
Headteacher	Mrs Helen Atkinson
Date of previous school inspection	8 June 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Parklands Freeland Witney OX29 8HX
Telephone number	01993 881707

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	9–10 July 2009
Inspection number	327856

Fax number

01993 883159

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

Freeland CE is a smaller-than-average primary school. Most of the pupils are from a White British background. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, largely moderate learning difficulties, is below average but a higher-than-average proportion of pupils have a statement of special educational need. There is Early Years Foundation Stage provision for children in Reception. The headteacher was appointed in September 2006, soon after the last inspection. The school has had a more settled teaching force since the last inspection.

A private company in partnership with the school offers pre-school provision. This provision is inspected separately.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Freeland CE is a good school that has made considerable improvements since the last inspection. There are outstanding aspects to its work. Highly effective care, guidance and support and a very positive school atmosphere lead to outstanding personal development and well-being for pupils. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage get off to a good start because of good provision. Across the school pupils achieve well because of good teaching and an exciting curriculum. Standards are high by the end of Year 6.

Good leadership and management have contributed considerably to the school's improvements, the good quality provision and the favourable outcomes for pupils. The headteacher is well focused on improving teaching, the curriculum and the environment. She provides very good leadership and has rightly gained the confidence and respect of pupils, parents, staff and governors. Along with her staff she has created a very positive climate for pupils to learn in. Teamwork among the staff is strong and there is a clear commitment to improvement. A parent commented, 'Freeland has developed well under the headteacher's leadership.' Other key leaders provide effective support in the school's development. Performance is systematically monitored and reviewed. The findings of self-evaluation are used well to plan and bring about needed improvements. Work to improve assessment, teaching and the curriculum has had a positive impact on pupils' all-round development. Governance has also improved. Governors have a good understanding of the school's performance. They offer constructive challenge as well as providing strong support. The school's track record of improvement demonstrates a good capacity to improve further.

Community cohesion is promoted well. There are good partnerships with parents, the church and the local community. Global community cohesion is less well developed but the school has plans to develop partnerships with organisations overseas. Parents hold positive views about the school and give it their support. The vast majority are very pleased with the care and education provided for their children. Pupils' enjoyment, the positive ethos, pupils' progress, teaching and additional activities receive a good deal of well-merited praise. Typical comments from parents were, 'My children love going to school', 'Huge improvements to the ethos over the past two to three years', 'Very pleased with my child's progress', 'The school has a very friendly atmosphere', 'Commitment from teachers is fantastic' and 'Varied range of extracurricular activities.'

Pupils' personal development and well-being are real strengths. They thoroughly enjoy school and this is reflected by their keen participation in activities and their good attendance. Pupils are courteous, polite and relate extremely well to others. Their skills of working independently or as part of a team are particularly well developed. Behaviour is outstanding in lessons and around school. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles and safe practices. They make positive contributions to the school and wider community. Pupils are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education and for the future.

Standards by the end of Year 2 are above average overall but only average in writing, where fewer pupils than expected attain the higher levels. Standards by the end of Year 6 are high. National test results for Year 6 dipped in 2008, particularly in writing. The school has taken swift action to address this issue and provisional tests for 2009, and pupils' work, show that standards are high again. Pupils' performance in writing in Year 6 is much improved because of action taken by the school.

Good teaching and a creative curriculum contribute well to pupils' good progress. There are examples of outstanding teaching. Newly qualified teachers have settled very well. Teachers' explanations, instructions and questioning promote learning effectively. There are good opportunities for discussion and so pupils are articulate and confident speakers. Assessment is used well to match tasks to pupils' abilities and needs. Pupils are challenged well and they make good gains in their learning. They are set clear individual learning targets in literacy and numeracy so they know how to improve. Their skills in assessing their own and others' work are well developed. A very good range of additional activities enhances pupils' learning and enjoyment.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Most year groups enter the school with the knowledge, understanding and skills above those expected for their age. By the end of Reception, standards are above average in most areas of learning except in elements of literacy, particularly writing. The school is rightly exploring further strategies to improve children's progress in early writing skills. The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and managed and there have been good improvements to this area since the last inspection. Good partnerships with the pre-school enable the children to settle quickly into Reception. Children make outstanding gains in their personal and social development because of the outstanding attention to welfare and the first-rate relationships established between adults and children. Good teaching and an interesting range of learning activities enable children to make good progress in all other areas of learning. Children thoroughly enjoy their learning and the activities provided. Speaking and listening are successfully incorporated into all activities. The wide range of outdoor activities contributes well to children's creative and physical development. Children have plenty of opportunities to explore, be creative and work independently.

What the school should do to improve further

- Implement effective strategies to improve performance in writing for children in Early Years Foundation Stage and pupils in Years 1 and 2, particularly for the more able.
- Extend the opportunities for promoting global community cohesion as identified in the school's improvement planning.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Pupils achieve well as they progress through the school. Standards by the end of Year 2 are above average in reading and mathematics but average in writing. Opportunities to extend pupils' writing skills are sometimes missed, particularly for the more able. Standards in the current Year 6 are high in English, mathematics and science. There have been good improvements in Years 3 to 6 in writing. Pupils write for different purposes and in various styles. Interesting initiatives such as writing workshops at Woodstock Museum have enhanced the school's drive to improve writing. Pupils who need additional help with their learning make good progress because of the well-targeted support from teaching assistants.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils proudly reported to the inspector, 'Everyone knows each other and we all get on really well.' Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. The school's golden rule of pupils acting with courtesy, consideration and respect at all times is demonstrated exceptionally well by pupils. A parent commented, 'I like the values that the school encourages and the politeness and respect towards adults.' High expectations by staff and excellent relationships lead to outstanding behaviour. Rare incidents of inappropriate behaviour are dealt with effectively and swiftly. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles and participate in a range of vigorous physical exercise. They show a first-rate knowledge and understanding of healthy diets. Pupils make a good contribution to the school and the wider community. Those on the school council represent their fellow pupils well and have contributed to improving outdoor play arrangements. The choir performs in the local community. Funds are raised for national and global charities. At Freeland pupils are extremely well prepared for the future because they are making good progress in literacy and numeracy. They apply information and communication technology skills well and their personal and social skills are extremely well developed.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Pupils say, 'Lessons are great fun.' Pupils make good progress because of the good teaching they receive. There are examples of outstanding practice. Teachers share the purpose of the lesson with the class so pupils know what they are expected to learn. Pupils are extremely keen and respond very positively to their teachers' clear and informative instructions and explanations. Questioning is used well to check pupils' knowledge and understanding of new work. Pupils make good gains in speaking and listening because of the wide opportunities for paired and group discussion. Teachers use assessment information well to tailor activities and tasks to pupils' needs. As a result, pupils are challenged, their interest is sustained and they make good progress. Occasionally, opportunities are missed to extend the more able, particularly in writing in Years 1 and 2. Teaching assistants are deployed well and make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning, particularly for those who need additional support with literacy and numeracy. The marking of pupils' work is constructive and helpful.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum promotes good progress for pupils and contributes exceptionally well to their personal development and well-being. Provision for reading, mathematics and science is effective and this has a positive impact on achievement and standards in these areas. The school recognises the need to improve provision for writing in Years 1 and 2 in order to raise pupils' achievement. Much has been done to develop a creative and exciting curriculum. There are good links between subjects which add meaning, relevance and enjoyment to pupils' learning. For example, the Rain Forest topic in Years 3 and 4 successfully incorporated writing, geography, science and art. Information and communication technology is used well to support pupils' learning in a range of subjects. A wide range of additional activities are provided including clubs and visits. These are much appreciated by pupils and their parents. Popular clubs include chess, choir, journalists, recorders and a range of sports events. Successful residential visits for

Years 5 and 6 provide exciting outdoor opportunities for pupils to learn new skills and to work together in teams. Health and safety education is promoted very effectively across the curriculum.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Excellent pastoral care and the school's very positive ethos underpin pupils' outstanding personal development and well-being. Procedures to ensure that pupils are protected and safe are highly effective. Pupils feel very well cared for and are confident that there is always an adult they can turn to if they are upset or have a problem. As a parent wrote, 'My children have always been very well looked after.' Pupils with moderate learning difficulties receive effective support and have full access to the curriculum and activities. Academic guidance for pupils is good and much improved since the last inspection. Teachers use assessment data effectively to plan and guide the next steps of pupils' learning. Pupils are set specific learning targets in literacy and numeracy. Through the 'Assessment for Learning' initiative, pupils' skills in assessing and reviewing their own and others' work are well developed.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher provides very good leadership and clear educational direction. She is sharply focused on improving provision and raising achievement. Leadership roles and responsibilities have been effectively distributed among the staff, and these roles are developing well. Self-evaluation is good. As a result, leaders and managers have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and take effective action to bring about improvements. Senior staff have brought about improvements to pupils' performance in writing in Years 3 to 6. Leaders are aware that more needs to be done to improve writing in Years 1 and 2.

Community cohesion is promoted well. The school has a good understanding of the community it serves. There are strong partnerships with parents and the church. Different cultures and religions are promoted effectively through the school's curriculum. The need to increase global community cohesion has, rightly, been identified by the school as a priority for improvement.

The role of governors has been extended since the last inspection and, as a result, governors have a good understanding of the school's performance. They provide strong support and hold the school to account. Governors are rightly pleased with the school's improvements.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well being?	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	1
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

¹Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

27 July 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of Freeland Church of England Primary School, Witney, OX29 8HX

Thank you so much for welcoming me into your school and showing me your work. I thoroughly enjoyed my visit and would like to tell you what I found. Yours is a good school. There are some outstanding features. There have been good improvements since the last inspection.

These are the main strengths of the school.

- You really enjoy school and your attendance is good.
- Children in Reception get off to a good start.
- Pupils in Years 1 to 6 are making good progress because of the good teaching.
- Your school is a friendly and very pleasant place to learn in.
- Behaviour is outstanding and you get on very well with others.
- A good range of learning activities is provided including clubs and visits.
- You have an excellent understanding of how to keep healthy and fit.
- Staff take excellent care of you and provide very good support.
- The school is very well led by your headteacher and she receives good support from other staff.
- The school has good partnerships with parents and the community.

There are two areas the school has been asked to look at and where it needs to make further improvements.

- Some of the children in Reception and pupils in Years 1 and 2 could make more progress in writing.
- Developing partnerships with overseas organisations would increase your knowledge and understanding of the international community. The school has clear plans for this to happen.

Finally, thank you once again for all your help. I wish you all the very best for the future.

Yours faithfully

Derek Watts

Lead Inspector