



Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Finstock Church of England Primary School	
Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Oxford
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Date of a academy conversion	1 October 2015
Name of multi-academy trust / federation	MILL Multi-Academy Trust
Date of inspection	21 June 2017
Date of last inspection	8 May 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Academy converter VC Primary 142350
Headteacher	Sue Dawe
Inspector's name and number	Jenny Earp 288

School context

Finstock Church of England Primary is a small village school with 93 pupils on roll. Since the last inspection, the school has undergone extensive changes to both staffing and structure. A new headteacher, as well as a new senior teacher, were appointed in September 2014. A new Foundation Stage Unit for nursery and Reception children opened in September 2015. The school converted to an academy in October 2015, when it formed the MILL (Motivate, Inspire, Learn, Lead) Multi-Academy Trust with Queen Emma's Primary and the Henry Box Secondary School. The percentage of pupils identified with special needs requiring support, is well above the national average and has increased significantly in recent years. There are close links with the local church, Holy Trinity Church, Finstock.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of Finstock Primary as a Church of England school are good

- The school's core values of 'Challenge, Respect, Inspiration and Belief' are instrumental in creating the caring learning environment that allows pupils to grow, both academically and personally.
- The strong leadership of the headteacher ensures that the Christian ethos at the school is actively promoted and evaluated.
- Governors and senior leaders are determined to maintain and develop the Christian character of the school, despite undergoing a period of considerable change.
- The strong emphasis on inclusion and Christian values means that children and families of all backgrounds are welcomed and valued.

Areas to improve

- Provide opportunities for pupils to meet people with differing beliefs and traditions in order to promote an understanding of diverse communities and deepen their understanding of Christianity as a world faith.
- Develop the outdoor environment to create a reflection area with the purpose of enhancing the spiritual dimension for all members of the school community.
- Develop assessment procedures in religious education so that standards in the subject can be evaluated more effectively and inform future planning.

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

Finstock Church of England Primary is an inclusive, caring community, where the headteacher and staff lead by example to create an ethos of respect, courtesy and compassion. This is based on the school's core values, which have a positive impact on the academic standards, personal development and well-being of the pupils. This can be seen in particular by the improvement in results for the Early Years, in the Year 1 phonics and in grammar, punctuation and spelling attainment, which is now above national average. Maths at Key Stage 2 is an area the school is working hard to improve. The school has taken steps to ensure that key barriers to learning, such as readiness to learn and parental engagement have been identified, with strategies put in place to overcome them. For instance, there has been focussed spending on specific areas such as nurture groups, breakfast clubs and providing equipment for the needs of individual and vulnerable children. This also reflects the school's Christian ethos of valuing pupils and setting challenge and aspiration for all. An example of this is the annual Aspiration Day initiative, allowing Year 6 pupils to experience a range of diverse career opportunities and learn about different skills, encouraging ambition and drive. Children know the school's core values well and can explain how they impact on their everyday lives. They support each other both in and out of lessons. This can be seen in the way older children take on responsibilities to care, support and work with younger children as play leaders and during house activities. Pupils feel respected and are confident to express their thoughts and ideas, knowing that they will be listened to. They behave well and relationships at the school are good because staff model Christian values and pupils know that any problems will be solved in the spirit of love and forgiveness. The Christian character supports the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of the pupils well. This is achieved mainly through the rich, creative curriculum, including Forest School for every pupil, as well as events organised with the school's partner schools, such as within the Forest Edge Benefice. Independent learning is encouraged through the use of the 5 R's to support this by being, 'resilient, reciprocal, reflective, responsible and resourceful'. These are also particularly effective in developing pupils' spiritual and moral awareness. The school has recently won the Bronze Learning Outside the Classroom Award. Pupils take part in the Horseheard scheme, a charity working with horses to promote positive emotional health and resilience for children. This has already proved to be successful in promoting the spiritual development of pupils, as well as staff. There are many signs and symbols around the school proclaiming its Christian foundation and each room displays the core values prominently. Spaces for personal reflection and prayer in classrooms are used well, but as yet the school has to develop an area of quiet reflection in the outdoor area and plans are in place for this. The Christian character promotes an understanding of and respect for diverse communities. This is evidenced by the schools 'One World Week', where children learn about other countries and cultures. Religious Education (RE) contributes well to the Christian character of the school. A senior member of the teaching staff leads religious education effectively throughout the school. Good RE teaching was observed on the day of the inspection, when a variety of teaching styles and effective questioning engaged learners in a range of thought-provoking activities. All staff have been trained in order to implement the new Oxfordshire syllabus, but assessment systems are not yet fully embedded.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is at the heart of school life and the strong relationship with the local church is key to ensuring that all members of the school community understand and live out the Christian foundation of the school. Acts of worship in the hall and in classrooms include the use of symbols such as beautiful crosses, candles and other artefacts on the worship table, as well as liturgy drawn from the Anglican tradition. The school celebrates all major festivals at the church, so pupils are therefore comfortable when they attend Holy Trinity Church and have developed an understanding of the seasons of the church year. Local people also attend these services and this serves to strengthen the relationship between church, community and school. Worship enhances pupils' knowledge and understanding of the teachings of Jesus Christ, as well as their awareness of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The lighting of a three wick candle symbolises the Trinity and pupils are able to articulate how the Holy Spirit can empower them to be better in their daily lives. They say they enjoy worship, especially taking an active part, as this helps them to make connections with their own lives and learn how to treat one another. The headteacher coordinates collective worship well, planning and working with all staff to ensure that worship themes are permeated fully throughout the school. A range of schemes, including 'Roots and Fruits' and 'Worship Workshop' are utilised well in order to plan inspirational acts of worship. Themes in worship also encourage pupils to take action in the service of others through fundraising activities in the local and wider community. Examples of this include the way children raise money for a local asthma charity and regularly take part in national fundraising initiatives, such as Comic Relief and other charities chosen by the pupils. Worship often includes Biblical material and pupils are able to make links between these and their own lives and to the school's core values. All staff, the local vicar and visitors lead worship so

children experience a range of styles. Parents feel welcome to attend school assemblies and say their children often recount stories they have heard in acts of school worship with enthusiasm. Opportunities for reflection and prayer enhance pupils' spiritual awareness. A pupil, considering the importance of personal reflection said, 'We can talk to God every day during assembly'. Collective worship has a positive impact on all aspects of school life. This can be seen in the way pupils enjoy the responsibility of being values ambassadors. They are eloquent in their applications for the job, with one pupil saying they want to help make their school a 'happy and wonderful place for all children' and another, 'I like to keep the reflection area tidy and inviting'. Children enjoy singing hymns as they enter the hall as part of their call to worship and this helps to create a sense of calm and togetherness in readiness for worship. A prayer is said at the end of the day, grace is said before lunch and all know the Lord's Prayer. As a result, pupils have a good understanding of the purpose of prayer. Prayers are frequently linked to themes such as remembrance and Christian festivals, with an emphasis on thanking God for the world around us and saying sorry for some of the wrong things they have done. Pupils have good opportunities to plan and participate in collective worship. However, the pupils' understanding of different global faith communities and of Christianity as a multi-cultural faith is less well developed.

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

The headteacher's strong leadership and personal vision for the school promotes an understanding of how distinctively Christian values make a difference to the well-being and learning of all her pupils. The evaluation of the school is robust and involves all members of the school community. As a result, all stakeholders, including governors and senior leaders can articulate the impact of Christian values on the lives of pupils and the whole life of the school. Governors know the school well and are actively involved in the school's self-evaluation. They regularly visit the school to undertake learning walks in order to monitor and evaluate academic standards and its distinctiveness as a church school. They describe 'a sense of togetherness within the school' and that 'the Christian ethos of the school shines through'. Christian distinctiveness thus features as a priority in the school development plan and governors ensure that strengthening and developing the Christian ethos has a high profile. All areas for development in the previous inspection report have been appropriately addressed by the school. Religious education and collective worship are led well and both leaders are given good support by the governors in fulfilling their roles. The partnership with parents is strong and they believe the school provides good opportunities for their children to explore matters of faith in an inclusive and supportive environment. Parents appreciate the way they are able to approach the headteacher and other staff at any time and value the opportunities they have to join school celebrations and major festivals in church. The strong partnerships with both the local church and community benefit the whole school community. This can be seen in the many shared events such as Finstock Festival, the Christmas Fayre and the annual Open Day, where members of the local community are invited into school. The vicar is fully involved in the school on a daily basis and attends meetings as chaplain to the school, making a good contribution to the pastoral support at the school. There is an open door policy and this is particularly effective when engaging with disadvantaged families. In this regard, the school goes beyond the call of duty to ensure pupils are supported and nurtured. Taking into account its size, the school provides professional development for all staff and governors and understands the importance of this in developing strong leadership skills and the need to develop future leaders. For example, staff have undertaken middle leadership training and have been given opportunities for personal development. In addition, both the chair and vice chair of governors are engaged in the 'Right Programme', an initiative for senior leaders run by the diocese. The headteacher and governors have ensured that the period of significant change since the previous inspection has not adversely affected the Christian ethos and the school works collaboratively with partnership schools. Leadership are determined to continue improving the school and developing it as a church school. The school meets the statutory requirements for collective worship and religious education.

SIAMS report June 2017 Finstock CE Primary School, Finstock, Oxfordshire, OX7 3BN