

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Michael's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School			
Address	The Causeway, Larkhill, Salisbury, Wiltshire, SP4 8FB		
Date of inspection	5 February 2020	Status of school	VC primary academy
Diocese	Salisbury	URN	143006

Overall Judgement	How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?	Grade	Good
Additional Judgement	The impact of collective worship	Grade	Good

School context

St Michael's is a primary school with 231 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is below national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with national averages. 84 percent of pupils are from Service families. The school moved to a new site in 2018 and has experienced a rapid increase in the number of pupils on roll.

The school's Christian vision

"You must shine among them like stars lighting up the sky" Philippians 2v15

We spark interest, ignite passion for learning and fire up ambition to inspire children to exceed expectations. The Christian faith underpins this ambition through worship, prayer and familiarity with scripture. Children are challenged to think about questions that face us, within a nurturing environment which is accepting of other faiths and cultures.

Key findings

- Under the inspirational leadership of the headteacher, the Christian vision and values permeate all aspects of the school. They are clearly rooted in the Biblical narrative and are understood and articulated by the whole school community.
- A resolve to provide effective provision for pupils, along with a determination to honour its village school heritage despite recent relocation, contributes to pupils' positive mental health and sense of belonging.
- Relationships and behaviour are a strength of the school. Pupils are able to explain how the teachings of Jesus and Christian values guide their actions in and out of school.
- Close links with the local clergy team enrich the worship life of the school community. Worship challenges pupils to think deeply about the teachings of the Bible.
- Teaching in religious education (RE) provides a safe space for pupils to articulate their thoughts.

Areas for development

- Increase opportunities for pupils to plan, lead and evaluate collective worship in line with the vision to challenge pupils, allowing them to shine.
- Develop the teaching of world faiths, beliefs and issues to deepen pupils' understanding of themselves as global citizens with opportunities to shine brightly in the world.
- Refine pupil and adult understanding of spirituality so that planned and unplanned spiritual encounters across the curriculum are captured and valued.
- Ensure all staff have a sound understanding of progress and assessment in RE so all pupils are sufficiently challenged and inspired to exceed expectations in line with the vision.

How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?

Inspection findings

A warmth can be felt in the relationships that exist in the St Michael's school community. The vision reflects leaders' determination to provide a holistic education for pupils and to support families and neighbours in the housing developments growing around the new school building. The school motto to 'Shine brightly. Stand out.' reflects the vision. Pupils flourish because of the safe relationships that they build with staff and the wider community. They have an appreciation of the teachings of Jesus and demonstrate their understanding of Christian values in relation to Bible stories. This begins in the nursery where staff model the values of fairness and mutual respect in line with the vision. This contributes to pupils having a firm foundation of understanding before they enter the Reception class. Older pupils are able to describe how, as the light of the world, Jesus set an example to others and illustrates this in his parables and stories, 'not so everyone would be exactly like him but because he wants people to follow his morals.' Pupils clearly demonstrate their understanding of being made in God's image and understand that the Bible and the school encourage them to shine out in their lives. They associate this with their charity fundraising and by showing kindness towards each other, reflecting the school's restorative approach to behaviour management. This contributes to pupils' understanding the benefits of positive social action and living well together. The school's decision to add the Christian value of service to those already adopted from the Salisbury Plain Academy Trust contributes to pupils' understanding of empathy and being a good neighbour. This is illustrated by the school's 'acts of kindness' advent calendar that challenges pupils to think about their duty to others. This has led to pupils having an increasing appreciation of the rewards of serving others as, 'when we did this, you could feel the love spreading through the school.'

Raising aspirations amongst pupils and families is a key focus of the school. Pupils are encouraged to speak out and are challenged to justify their opinions. They feel able to explore 'big questions' about life in a safe, respectful environment because, as one pupil said, 'no one is going to judge you here.' This is helping pupils to flourish socially and emotionally, as well as academically. Outcomes in attainment and progress are in line with national averages. Academy Advisory Board members regularly monitor and evaluate the school's Christian ethos through learning walks, pupil conferencing and data analysis. Members have worked with staff to ensure that the Christian distinctiveness of the school is explained and celebrated on the school website. Staff receive training from the diocese and work in collaboration with other church schools to continue developing good practice. This approach ensures that the Christian faith underpins the ambition and development of the school.

Pupils are encouraged to do their best and are praised for effort and attitude which builds self-confidence and contributes to positive mental health. Parents appreciate the caring nature of the school and say any issues are dealt with quickly and kindly. They value the school's enrichment opportunities which include a club that helps pupils write letters to parents serving overseas. The school runs a regular prayer group for parents and a Jesus And Me club in which pupils explore the teachings of the Bible through creative activities. This reflects the vision for the school to foster a nurturing and inclusive environment in which the whole school community can learn. This is further illustrated by the school's continued involvement with the village community from which it relocated in 2018. Former neighbours are invited to the new building to join in events and retain their relationship with staff and pupils. This enhances pupils' understanding of community and sense of belonging. Pupils enjoy a range of opportunities to develop their leadership skills, including joining the school worship group. Pupils enjoy voting on the charities that the school supports. They can say how supporting charity reflects the compassion of Jesus shown in Bible stories. The school has made some curriculum decisions that support pupils to think globally and address world issues such as climate change. This has led pupils to engage in social action, for example by asking for the school to become more aware of recycling.

Pupils engage in daily worship which gives them opportunities for quiet reflection. Worship themes reinforce Christian values and are presented in a number of creative ways, through acting, song and video. This allows pupils to learn about Anglican practice and different forms of worship. Pupils listen respectfully and appreciate that worship is a special time in the day. The worship group has created simple prayer areas which are beginning to contribute to pupils' understanding of the value of prayer and support their spiritual development. Pupils are encouraged to place prayers in boxes which are later read out in worship. Pupils understand that prayers are not always answered in the way they expect and that praying builds their relationship with God. They enjoy worship led by members of the local clergy team and refer to the rector as 'our friend Philip'. Due to the

relocation of the school, pupils are unable to visit the local church. The school is seeking a possible alternative venue to give pupils the experience of worshipping in church.

RE allows pupils to investigate a range of concepts within Christianity and world faiths. It is taught through drama, art and discussion. This gives all pupils, including those with limited writing skills, a chance to access the learning and demonstrate their knowledge and depth of understanding. RE books are well presented and pupils feel challenged by the questions that they are asked to reflect upon. Lessons are used as a platform for pupils to formulate their views on faith, as well as broader questions of life in different cultures. This contributes to pupils' understanding of diversity and difference, but does not always lead to an understanding of themselves as global citizens.

Headteacher

Nicky Phillips

Inspector's name and number

Susan Bowen 916