

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Michael's Church of England Primary School

Vision Let Your Light Shine

You are the light of the world -let your light shine before others that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven. Matthew 5:14-16

At St Michael's we provide a safe happy and inspirational environment based around our core values of hope, love, forgiveness and joy. We celebrate the uniqueness of every child and encourage them to shine in all they do, preparing them for life's journey

St Michael's Church of England Primary School is living up to its foundation as a Church school and is enabling pupils and adults to flourish. It has the following notable strengths.

Strengths

- The school's exceptionally close partnership with the church empowers the vision to be a living reality. As a result, pupils and adults are enabled 'to shine' and this has a powerful impact on the pupils' behaviour, wellbeing and achievement.
- The school's innovative and creative curriculum explicitly reflects the Christian vision and four Christian values. It is highly motivating enabling pupils grow in confidence and thrive.
- Collective worship is central to the school day at St Michael's. It provides meaningful moments in which pupils and adults flourish spiritually.
- The school creates a culture of exceptional care and encouragement where the wellbeing of all is prioritised. The vision inspires members of the community to support each other's lights to shine'. This reflects Christian care for its community, helping to create a safe and happy environment.
- Effective leadership in religious education (RE) enables pupils to thrive through a challenging and relevant curriculum. This values the diverse range of faiths and worldviews represented within the community.

Development Points

- Strengthen governors' monitoring of the way the vision drives the work of the school. This is so that areas for development can be formally identified and addressed.
- Deepen and embed the school's understanding of spirituality and identify experiences across the curriculum for its development. This is to enable opportunities that can have a positive impact on pupils' spiritual flourishing.



Inspection Findings

A deeply Christian vision is embedded at St Michael's. The words of St Matthew create a unifying force at the heart of this diverse school community. They explicitly promote aspiration and confidence and have a very positive effect on pupils' learning and behaviour. This is because pupils and adults understand that all have a 'light to shine' for themselves and each other. The church team and its very caring community, together with the school provide exceptional support for families. In this way, the church's significant presence promotes the vision and has a powerful impact. Parents are very appreciative and say the impact of the vision 'couldn't be better'. School leaders work very closely with the diocese, resulting in an exceptionally strong partnership. The headteacher, in particular, has initiated the setting up of a church school group with mutual benefits for both. School leaders, including governors, know the school very well indeed. However, the process of self-evaluation looking at the impact of the vision on the church school is very under developed. As a result, areas for development to raise the impact of the school's Christian vision have not formally been identified.

The school's vibrant and innovative curriculum provides a great breadth of rich and creative experiences. An explicit focus on providing stimulating, relevant and engaging activities encourage pupils to 'shine'. Highly exciting experiences such as annual camps and the weekly award of hot chocolate, enable the vision to be a living reality. Consequently, pupils talk with animation about how they enjoy their learning and their time at school. Staff strive very hard to encourage and develop the interests of each individual child, celebrating their 'uniqueness'. The curriculum is inclusive, inspiring and motivating designed specifically to meet the needs of pupils. As a result of the school's very caring and effective staff team's actions, the potential of pupils identified as disadvantaged is being transformed. Staff and pupils are at the early stages of developing a shared understanding of spirituality. Planned opportunities for its development are not agreed and embedded in the curriculum. Nevertheless, spirituality is informally promoted, as noted from the way pupils talk about their reflections on hope following adversity.

Collective worship is central to the school day and has a significant impact on enabling all to flourish spiritually. Words used at the start of worship 'May the Light of Jesus shine in all our hearts' reflect and affirm St Michael's Christian vision. They explicitly link to the three candles lit at the start of worship and promote a spiritual sense of belonging. A variety of settings such as the hall, classrooms and the large church centre, invite differing responses from pupils. The strong church team is part of the school community and lead worship each week. This demonstrates the constant Christian presence of the school's Anglican foundation and promote its vision. Joyous heartfelt singing including songs from Christian worldwide faith communities, as well as dance and movement, enrich worship. Pupils and adults value highly worship times of quiet and calm which contrasts with the busy school day. Pupils often lead worship very effectively in class groups. In this way, pupils are able to participate more deeply and individually. Their views are sought regularly and addressed. Consequently, there are more times for reflection within worship as well as those promoted by themed spaces within the school.



St Michael's is an exceptionally warm and nurturing community where pupils and adults are treated in an exemplary manner. The vision has a profound effect on the way members care for and nurture one another. Year 6 family lunches, a young carers' group as well as support beyond transition to secondary school promote the vision. In this way, the community enfolds each and every member in the school's core value of love. Parents speak very highly of the immense pastoral care shown to them by school and church leaders and staff. This is particularly evident during difficult times of bereavement, loss and need. The way that older pupils encourage and care for younger ones is demonstrated by a child's comment that he feels 'love in the playground'. Strong, supportive and collaborative relationships are central to school life. A high priority is placed on the mental health and wellbeing of all. Staff are a cohesive and friendly team, passionate about working at St Michael's. They are highly supportive, enabling each other to thrive. As a result, their morale is high.

The school's vision creates a respectful culture of justice and responsibility. As a result, interactions are based on love and forgiveness. This strengthens the sense of a harmonious, cohesive community. Pupils understand the need to show responsibility within school and beyond. They enjoy taking a range of effective leadership roles for younger pupils including in the playground. These include playground and friendship buddies as well as members of the school council and the green team who work to encourage sustainable practices. The church partnership is integral to the life of the school, often engaging pupils in activities for local residents. These include support for the food bank and visiting local care homes. The curriculum introduces learning about issues of justice such as during Black History Month and beyond. A strong sense of injustice empowered pupils to make posters and protest against unsafe parking on behalf of the local general practice.

RE is prominent at the heart of this Church school's curriculum. It is an engaging and enjoyable subject which has a positive impact on life at school. In particular, this is because pupils show curiosity and respect for a diverse range of faiths and worldviews. School leaders ensure that their training in RE is up to date and in turn share their learning with staff who are well supported. The RE curriculum is well planned and effectively balanced. It is fully focused on meeting the needs of pupils as they progress through the school. The clergy provide valued support for learning about Christianity. Pupils and family members from a range of faiths are valued members of the school community explaining their beliefs to good effect. Annual Inter Faith days are enjoyable events, valued by pupils. In this way, they are encouraged to reflect and think deeply about their own beliefs and those of their peers. Consequently, discussions provoke insightful responses and contribute substantially to spiritual development.

Information

Address	Ratcliffe Drive, Stoke Gifford, Bristol, BS34 8SG		
Date	12 November 2024	URN	109228
Type of school	Voluntary Controlled	No. of pupils	639
Diocese	Bristol		
Headteacher	Peter Barnard		
Chair of Governors	Malcolm Fiddler		
Inspector	Daphne Spitzer		