

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Michael's Church of England Primary School

Vision

Our vision at St. Michael's is that every child receives an excellent education and feels valued for who they are.

We want to lay a foundation of curiosity, tapping into children's natural inquisitiveness about the world around them, and to foster their ambition by recognising and responding to their talents and individuality.

We seek to treat everyone in our community with love, honesty, forgiveness and respect, rooted in the principle of 'Do to others as you would have them do to you'. (Luke 6:31).

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 vision is deeply embedded. It drives the actions and decisions of leaders, bringing a clear focus and direction to the improvements that have been made.
- Pupil behaviour and attitudes are shaped by the vision and associated Christian values. They show care and respect for each other, making the vision a lived reality.
- Collective worship is a treasured part of the school day. Underpinned by the vision and values, it draws the school community together providing a sense of family and belonging.
- Wellbeing and mental health are a priority for leaders. Effective support given to pupils and adults ensures they feel loved, respected and cared for.
- Pupils enjoy religious education (RE), talking positively about their learning. They enjoy the opportunities given to discuss their own views and opinions in this subject.

Development Points

- Further develop shared language of spirituality throughout the school to enhance pupils' ability to articulate their own spiritual development.
- Extend pupils' understanding of justice in the world. This is to ensure they understand how they can make a positive difference beyond the school community.



Inspection Findings

St Michael's is a welcoming and happy school. The Christian vision is understood and embedded and consequently is lived in a tangible way. The values, related to the vision, are threaded through the life and work of the school. Each value is explored in depth over the year. Links are made to biblical teaching that illustrate these values. In turn this helps pupils to see how they can be applied to their own lives. In this way they have a visible impact on the way that pupils conduct themselves. For example, demonstrating mutual respect for one another. Pupils and adults know they are nurtured and encouraged to 'do to others as you would have them do to you'. This can be seen right from the start of the school day when there is a warm and personal welcome. Policies, procedures and school improvement actions are driven by the vision. As a result, leaders take considered decisions to successfully meet individual needs. Good examples of this are the reintroduction of forest school provision and training a beach school practitioner. This has led to the creation of a climate for learning outside the classroom. Subsequently, self-confidence has grown and pupils are able to concentrate for longer periods inside the classroom and beyond. The sustained improvements in curriculum provision, parental involvement and positive school culture are a direct result of school leadership. Governors support leaders through robust monitoring and evaluation. Members of the school community, including parents, speak highly of the effective support they receive.

Inspired by the Christian vision, leaders have introduced a new and robust curriculum. Across the Genesis Federation there is a determination that the curriculum is holistic and not limited to the academic. This ensures there are opportunities for pupils to discuss, reflect, listen and evaluate integrated into lessons. Leaders have worked to ensure the new curriculum reflects the vision and context of the school, ensuring that it is supportive and inclusive. Although only recently introduced, the curriculum caters to the diverse needs and abilities of the pupils. In this way it creates an environment of respect where individuals can feel valued. Implementation of the curriculum and its impact is rigorously monitored, with findings skillfully used by leaders to make refinements. Adults have equally high expectations for vulnerable pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). These pupils have equality of access and are supported so they are able to experience success. Spirituality is explored through reflection and prayer in collective worship. However, its wider development through the curriculum and beyond lacks clarity. This is because there is inconsistency in the shared understanding of spirituality. As a result, there is limited vocabulary to explore and articulate spirituality in depth. This restricts opportunities for spiritual flourishing of pupils and adults.

Collective worship is a highly valued part of daily life, bringing the school together. It is appreciated as a time to pause and reflect. These encounters are enhanced with pupils invited to share in prayer as a way to speak with God. There is a focus on the Anglican tradition, participation in Christian festivals and an exploration of Christianity beyond the traditions of the United Kingdom. Worship includes greetings, special prayers and liturgical traditions. It builds on and illustrates the vision and values through stories from the Bible. This highlights how to live a full and good life. Worship is well organised and provides opportunities to sing, reflect and question, which enriches personal growth. This also has a positive impact on the adults in the school community. Every classroom has a dedicated reflection area and these are actively used making prayer and reflection an integral part of the school day. This creates times for contemplation. The strong partnership with members of the local church deepens the development of worship.

Driven by the vision, leaders are committed to creating and maintaining a school environment that is inclusive and nurturing. The community is known well, allowing leaders to make informed decisions to enable pupils to grow and



learn together. Clear strategies are in place to provide emotional support for pupils and drive progress. For example, zones of regulation are consistently used across the school. These are embedded into daily routines and support nurture provision. Pupils can identify which zone they are in and have useful strategies to use to ensure they are ready to learn. In this way pupils are focused and able to access the opportunities available. High quality training enables staff to offer informed support. Parents rightly endorse the positive difference that this school makes. They value the strong open communication and collaboration with leaders and comment on how this has helped 'move things forward'. Leaders are mindful of staff workload and their wellbeing is given priority. Consequently, staff acknowledge the care and compassion shown to them and openly speak about how they feel welcomed and supported. This contributes to a positive environment where pupils and adults are treated well and thrive.

A variety of leadership opportunities ensure that pupils are able to develop their responsibilities. There are numerous roles that the pupils undertake including: house captain, librarian, sports captain, and school council. Pupils take pride in these responsibilities and make positive choices based on the school's vision and associated values. Local partnerships have been developed that support the work of developing an understanding of justice and responsibility. For example, the link with the food bank at harvest time. One pupil explained that this partnership was not formed to 'look good, we did it because it is the right thing to do'. A range of charities are supported in fundraising activities. This provides pupils with an awareness of the issues that each charity supports. However, opportunities for pupils to explore issues relating to justice within a broader context beyond the school are limited.

Pupils enjoy RE, which is given priority by leaders as a highly valued academic subject. They are learning effectively because the newly introduced curriculum provides clear progression, adding depth as pupils move through the school. RE is planned and delivered to match pupil needs and is mapped out to take account of the school context. A question-based approach to learning leads to enthusiastic engagement in RE teaching with ambitious expectations and outcomes. There is a focus on developing skills and knowledge of a range of religions and other worldviews including Christianity. However, this curriculum is still at an early stage of implementation. A committed leader has been appointed and is well supported through strong links with the diocese and colleagues across the federation. This secures the importance of RE. Training is given high priority alongside engagement with diocesan updates.

Information

Address	St Michael's CE Primary School, Houghton Green Lane, Playden, Rye, East Sussex, TN31 7PJ		
Date	11 December 2024	URN	114520
Type of school	Voluntary Controlled	No. of pupils	82
Diocese/District	Chichester		
MAT/Federation	Genesis Federation		
Headteacher	Fay Churchill - Head of School Lison Smart and Simon Thurston – Co-Executive Headteachers		
Chair of Governors	Rose Durban		
Inspector	Anthony Cosans		