

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Michael's Church of England Primary School

Vision

St Michael's Church of England Primary School is committed to creating an environment in which every member of the school community can thrive. Our school Christian values of love, determination, responsibility, respect, kindness, friendship and honesty are the foundation on which we build our community, they guide our relationships with each other and express those things that enable us to flourish alongside each other. The most important of our values, and the one that binds them all together, is love.

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 Christian vision is clear and its seven values are embraced by the school community. It guides long-term strategic development and everyday decisions. The daily experiences of adults and pupils are enhanced by the centrality of the vision.
- Driven by love, respect and kindness, pupil and staff wellbeing is at the heart of the school. As a result, St Michael's has an inclusive, dignifying, and equitable culture. Pupils who are vulnerable and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are included successfully.
- Collective worship is varied and enriching, enabling pupils to grow spiritually through discussion, reflection, music and prayer. The relationship with the parish church contributes well to spiritual flourishing.
- The rich religious education (RE) curriculum, that embraces a wide range of religions and other worldviews, is enjoyed by pupils. Interesting lessons challenge them to reflect and consider deep questions. They make strong progress due to high quality teaching and assessment.

Development Points

- Further develop the school's focus on spirituality, so that opportunities for pupils' spiritual development become a more intrinsic part of the curriculum.
- Extend opportunities for pupils to think deeply about justice and responsibility, developing more independent views as they mature. This is so they may notice and reflect on issues of concern, considering how they can contribute to solutions.



Inspection Findings

St Michael's is a highly effective Church school where leaders act with integrity. The whole school community was involved in identifying its seven Christian values. Recognition of these as universal human values cements this diverse community in its core purpose, to act with love. Rooted in biblical teaching, the values inspire the deeply embedded Christian vision that informs policies, decisions and actions. Leaders show determination, honesty and responsibility in making difficult choices in the interests of their community. Taking on the management of the nursery is an active expression of love and kindness towards local families, for example. Reflective leaders strive determinedly to ensure that adults and pupils thrive, including those who have SEND and the most vulnerable.

The vision enhances pupils' educational experience through its dedication to creating a school where individuals 'flourish alongside each other'. Resources featuring positive images and role models that authentically reflect the diverse community are selected, so promoting inclusion. The broad and balanced curriculum is relevant and interesting. Some topics naturally offer opportunity for learners to reflect on profound questions. However, opportunities for spiritual reflection are not deeply embedded across the curriculum. Pupils' grow spiritually through music, both singing and learning several instruments. Performances and competitions boost their self-esteem and confidence. The youngest explore God's world through learning outside in the 'forest school'. Learning is further enriched through visits to the cultural and artistic landmarks of Oxford. An extensive extra-curricular offer enables individuals to pursue their own interests. Leaders are relentless in ensuring that vulnerable pupils and those who have SEND benefit from these rich experiences. Strong relationships with their parents and carers, offering discreet support, enables them to participate and flourish.

Collective worship successfully reflects and explores both the Christian calendar and the school's vision and values. Leaders often connect worship themes to issues affecting school life, the locality or broader society. This maintains relevance to pupils' and adults' lives, irrespective of their personal worldviews. Pupils of all ages are familiar with key Bible stories and Christian prayers, gaining understanding of their meaning and purpose. They enjoy the range of traditional hymns and contemporary songs they learn. Joyful singing palpably lifts the community spiritually. The interactive nature of worship inspires pupils, as does the invitation to reflect and express their own responses. Some mention occasions when it has prompted them to think and act differently. Others say how they feel calm and happy after collective worship. The relationship with the parish church provides further spiritual nourishment. Clergy lead worship weekly, strengthening the community's understanding of biblical stories and Christian practices. Learning about the patronal saints of nearby churches enriches their appreciation of the locality's spiritual history. Church services led by pupils brings people together spiritually. Feedback from pupils and families indicate that these occasions are greatly appreciated.

The school's vision and values have a significant impact on the way in which the school flourishes, because it is steeped in Christian love. Pupils enjoy school and thrive through their high attendance. Because learning is planned carefully, with tailored support in class for those who have SEND, everybody learns together. Pupils play happily in mixed age groups. A Year 3 pupil stated confidently, 'everyone knows my name, we are all friends.' Health and wellbeing ambassadors look out for anyone without a playmate, or resolve the occasional minor disagreement at break time. Strong relationships across the school support staff and pupil mental health and well-being. Staff readily describe the exceptional bond they feel, as a result of the school ethos. Leaders embrace feedback from staff. This leads to smoother processes, for example, for those returning to work following maternity leave.



Similarly, leaders encourage classes to help new pupils settle in, through the example of Jesus welcoming strangers. This emphasis on Christian values supports pupils in their knowledge that everyone is unique and to be cherished.

Issues of justice and responsibility are woven through the curriculum, reflecting the Christian vision. Ethical questions relating to ecology challenge pupils to reflect on their own impact and potential for change. Learning about the rainforest galvanises Year 3 pupils to write letters to logging companies and politicians. Learning about how poor agricultural practices contributed to the American dustbowls prompts Year 5 to reflect on climate change. Such projects cultivate a passion for stewardship of God's earth and opportunities to make a difference. Pupils engage meaningfully with issues of responsibility and justice appropriately for their age. Eco-councillors achieve success in halving waste through recycling and reducing food waste. Leadership roles also nurture care for others, for example as health and wellbeing ambassadors or sports leaders. Engagement in charitable activities, such as foodbank donations, further boosts pupils' understanding of their ability to show love and help others. Leaders recognise that pupils feel empowered by making positive changes, and are keen to encourage their independent initiatives.

Dedicated leaders shape the RE curriculum in response to pupil feedback in this diverse community. As a result, it is ambitious and includes a wide range of worldviews. Planning for these is well-researched, and leaders pay great attention to accuracy. The study of Christianity includes consideration of various forms of Christian faith, practice, and experience found in different regions of the world. The RE curriculum is carefully sequenced and well-balanced, so that pupils build knowledge successfully over time. Teachers design interesting lessons, supported by leaders' detailed planning and excellent resources. These include authentic artefacts where appropriate, enhancing personal appreciation of others' faith experience. Expert teaching encourages pupils to reflect on their learning spiritually, alongside building their knowledge. Pupils studying Judaism in Year 1 reflect on what it means to be grateful or thankful when learning about Shabbat. Year 2 enjoy a hide and seek game based on their learning about Jonah being swallowed by a whale. It enabled deeper reflection on whether a person can hide from God. Year 6 learn about the difference between atheistic and agnostic views. This leads to a stimulating discussion on how the tenets of these secular worldviews develop, compared with those of world religions. As a result of the effective curriculum and teaching, pupils learn well and are knowledgeable. Pupil surveys demonstrate the success of the RE curriculum, which they find interesting and relevant to their lives.

Information

Address	Marston Road, Oxford, OX3 0EJ		
Date	29 April 2025	URN	123143
Type of school	Voluntary Aided	No. of pupils	199
Diocese/District	Oxford		
Headteacher	Rosalind Owen		
Chair of Governors	Carinne Piekema		
Inspector	Rachel A Jones		