

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

### St Michael's Voluntary Aided CE Primary School

Brigadier Hill, Enfield, EN2 0NB	
<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>London</b>
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Enfield
Date of inspection	27 June 2017
Date of last inspection	15 June 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Aided 102034
Headteacher	Jan Matthews
Inspector's name and number	Gladys Vendy NS 299

#### School context

Since 2010 St Michael's has undergone a major building programme, gradually doubling in size to become a two-form entry primary school with an attached part-time nursery. The number of pupils who speak English as an additional language is above the national average. A wide range of ethnic minority groups are represented, the largest being of Turkish or Black African heritage. Pupils for whom extra funding is received due to social disadvantage and those with special educational needs or disabilities are below the national average. The leadership team and most of the teaching staff have changed since the last inspection. The school was recently judged by Ofsted to be good.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Michael's as a Church of England school is outstanding

- The schools' core Christian values are deeply embedded in the life of the school so that each child recognises that they are loved as a unique and special child of God.
- The carefully planned collective worship, which is rooted in biblical teaching, has a strong impact upon each person's understanding of prayer and enriches their spiritual journey.
- Close and supportive partnerships between the vicar, the governors and the senior leadership team (SLT) have a positive impact upon the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils.
- Seamless links between the school and the church means that relationships give a strong sense of a family working together to serve each other.

#### Areas to improve

- Bring the language used in assessment of religious education (RE) in line with the age-related expectations that are used in English and Mathematics, so that pupils can readily understand their comparative level of attainment.

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

The Christian character of the school is embodied in the school's over-arching motto 'seek joy in service'. Servanthood is underpinned by the core Christian values of love, respect and integrity which are deeply embedded and understood by everyone in the school community. For example, pupils are able to explain how the British value of the rule of law stems from integrity. These values which are lived out in practical ways, form the backbone of

school life and support the Christian character of the school. As a result pupils are confident and feel safe and secure. A strong inclusion team works effectively to nurture the children, as 'Jesus would', so that pupils make very good progress from average starting points. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils are achieving significantly above the national average. Attendance is above the national average because, by the outworking of the Christian ethos, the school makes sure that all pupils are included and any barriers to learning are removed. The strong buddy system whereby older children care for younger ones also means that every child is treated as an individual. Pupils know that because 'your name is written in the palm of His hand' they are a unique and special child of God. People make time for each other and children know that adults will listen to them. They also understand that forgiveness is important because that was what Jesus did. Staff morale is very high and visible to the pupils. As a result behaviour is very good. As one child said 'God doesn't allow any bullying'. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is embedded in every aspect of school life with a well-defined emphasis on spirituality. Time to reflect about joy in music and art, an appreciation of beauty and a sense of common purpose in being together as a community contribute to high quality spiritual experiences. As a result, relationships are positive and school and parish come together as one. Stained glass windows which the pupils helped to design, crosses fixed at the children's level and beautifully scribed biblical quotations, affirm the Christian character of the school in the learning environment. RE is inspiring and makes a significant contribution both to pupils' knowledge and to their tolerance for diverse and differing communities. Through charitable giving and support they also develop their understanding of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding**

Collective worship permeates every aspect of school life. The three year programme which is well-planned and progressive is based on sound Christian doctrine which has biblical truth at its core. This means that pupils develop a very good understanding of the life of Jesus Christ which they readily relate to their own lives. All teachers confidently lead worship which enables pupils to have a rich experience of a wide range of Christian traditions. Worship is always inclusive, reflective, exciting and often physical, such as the time, when everyone in the hall was used to show how quickly the Gospel word was spread. Occasionally worship takes place outside, as shown by the Pentecost service, when pupils felt the power of the rushing wind. Pupils enjoy worship and one child said that it helps him to 'kick start' the day. Music contributes strongly to worship. Pupils sing in harmony and with a passion. A member of the office staff said she is uplifted by the distant sound of pupils worshipping through praise. Pupils have a well-developed understanding of Anglicanism through the sacraments, liturgical responses and the celebration of the major Christian festivals. Children have an age-appropriate understanding of key Christian beliefs and ideas such as that of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. For example, a child likened this to a fidget spinner pointing out that the three parts appear as one when it is spun very fast. Pupils in Year 6 are able to attend confirmation classes which are held outside of teaching time. A significant number of children and families attend St Michael's church on a Sunday. Prayer is a natural part of school life and is woven through the day. The morning staff briefing always concludes with a moment of contemplation based on a biblical quotation. As one person observed, 'in times of difficulty one is wrapped in prayerful love'. The biennial staff retreat and the Year 3 retreat also strengthens and enriches the spiritual journey of individuals. Pupils understand the purpose and nature of prayer and talk comfortably about its power. For example, a child said 'God responds by actions in any language'. The Praying Parents Prayer group sometimes walk the boundaries of the school and ask for all within to be protected. Governors and pupils regularly feedback about worship and as a result changes are made to improve the experience of worship. Collective worship, with its roots in biblical stories, raises pupils' awareness of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith.

### **The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding**

RE has a very high profile in the school. It is considered a core subject and is enthusiastically led by the headteacher. The school's bespoke scheme of work enables pupils to gain a sound understanding of Christianity and a broad range of other faiths. Strong links with the school's Christian values means that RE plays an important role in children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The creative and multi-sensory approach engages pupils and enhances their understanding, such as a pilgrimage journey around the school to visit 'religious' sites. Song-writing, dance or poetry building is encouraged as well as the more traditional written or illustrative work. This allows provision for the needs of all pupils to be fully met. A special class book records visits and other aspects of non-written RE work. Pupils happily show the work in their own individual books, speaking about it as being 'our gift to God'. As a result, the quality of teaching and learning is always good, with most practice being outstanding. This was confirmed during the learning walk. Godly Play, observed in one class, encouraged pupils to ask searching questions, make insightful comments and to display their very good biblical knowledge. Questioning, which helps children to think more deeply, is a key part of teaching in RE. For example, a teacher asked 'does it matter what Jesus looked like?' and pupils came up with a variety of answers, some which were biblically based.

Pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations with a significant number attaining above national expectations. This matches attainment in core subjects. Observations, verbal responses and questioning as well as written work, inform teachers' assessments. However, children are not always sure about their comparative achievement because the language used in RE assessment is not the same as that used in core subjects. Knowledge of other faiths is encompassed in RE teaching. Parents, including those from families with inter-faith relationships, say they are well-supported and enjoy coming into school to speak about their faith. Pupils also talk proudly about their own faith in class lessons or in the playground. This helps them to develop a very good understanding of what it means to live in a multi-faith world. Monitoring RE is part of the annual cycle of evaluation and improvement by the senior leadership team (SLT). Improvement in teaching is supported through positive feedback to teachers. The governors' curriculum committee regularly evaluates the effectiveness of RE and recommends adaptations when necessary.

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

The clearly articulated mission statement which drives the strategic leadership of the school, places Christ's love for children at its centre. The close and supportive partnerships between the vicar, governors and SLT ensure that the Christian values nurture and underpin the aims of the school. These, together with the joy of learning, now run through the school like 'the writing through a stick of rock', which was an area for improvement at the last inspection. This has a positive impact upon the well-being and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils.

Every governor has a different role. Tight systems and procedures mean that they come together with a very good understanding of the school's priorities and make a strong governing body. They attend collective worship, visit RE lessons and monitor, support and challenge the distinctiveness of the school as a church school. As a result, self-evaluation is accurate and leads to improvement. Governors attend parents' evenings so that they can hear the views of parents and respond as appropriate. Partnership with parents is strong. The pop-up 'Meet the Governors' offices for the children have proved very popular and encouraged pupils to ask questions about their work. Governors also meet with the school council and listen to their concerns. For example, governors have improved the conditions for the fish in the school aquarium. Pupils understand the meaning of the motto 'seek joy in service'. They learn to become leaders of tomorrow by buddying younger pupils, leading clubs and attending community events. The RE action plan is drawn up after discussions with groups of children. Collective worship and RE effectively meet statutory requirements. The changes to staffing since the last inspection, have been well-managed by careful induction procedures and professional development. This has resulted in the maintenance and improvement of the school as a distinctive and effective church school. The school works effectively with a wide range of partners such as other schools and the diocese so that good practice is shared. The seamless links between the school and the church means that relationships give a strong sense of a family working together to serve each other.