

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Michael's Church of England Primary School, Sandhurst	
Address	Lower Church Road, Sandhurst, GU47 8HN
How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?	
Overall grade	Good
The impact of collective worship	Good
The effectiveness of religious education (RE)	Good

School's vision
As a school community, we aspire to develop life-long learners who have the confidence to explore the world around them and grow as unique individuals. We provide a safe family environment, inspired by Christian values, in which the flourishing of each enables the flourishing of all. 'This little light of mine, I'm going to let it shine!' 'Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.' (Matthew 5:16)
Key findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school's Christian vision is understood and acted on by all members of the school community. However, the biblical underpinning of the school's vision is less well understood within the school. This affects the school's ability to develop further as a Church school. • Leaders are passionate in their desire to communicate the importance of 'letting your light shine' and the associated values of community, creativity, courage and compassion. As a result, pupils feel valued for themselves and have a clear understanding that their own flourishing and that of others are closely linked. • Collective worship is an important element in the life of the school. The programme is carefully planned and enables pupils to respond freely to the Christian narrative and apply it in age-appropriate ways. It contributes to the spiritual development of all who are involved. • Religious education (RE) follows a carefully planned curriculum and enables pupils to grow in religious literacy during their time at school. The quality of discussion is a strength, though pupils' written work does not fully reflect this. • Pupils enjoy the rich opportunities that the school provides through its wider curriculum. These offer all pupils the opportunity to develop as learners and in their spiritual lives.
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deepen further the biblical underpinning of the school's Christian vision, so that the school can continue to improve as a Church school. • Take steps to ensure that the quality of written work in RE matches the quality of discussion in class, so that pupils flourish further in their learning.



Inspection findings

The importance of 'letting your light shine' (Matthew 5:16) and the associated values of community, creativity, courage and compassion are communicated with passion by leaders. The school community's response is inclusive and fully reflects its Christian foundation. St Michael's has a broad, holistic understanding of Jesus' teaching on letting one's light shine. Pupils understand that acts of courage and compassion are examples of living out the school's Christian vision. They are also clear that the flourishing of others in the school community and their own flourishing are interwoven. However, the biblical underpinning of the school's vision is less well understood within the school community. This means that the vision is less well understood as explicitly developing the school as a Church school.

The school's partnership with the parish church is particularly strong. Both the priest and the church family worker are well known to the school community. The church family worker runs a much-appreciated weekly 'Bible bites' club for older pupils. The church is used by the school for important Christian celebrations and the parish priest leads collective worship on one day each week. The school's Christian character is greatly enhanced by this constructive partnership.

The school is a welcoming community in which all pupils are known by all adults. Relationships in the school are characterised by kindness and respect. In this environment vulnerable pupils and those with learning difficulties are supported and treated with dignity and respect. They too feel that they can let their light shine and are celebrated for who they are. Parents are rightly appreciative of this outworking of the school's vision. They confirm that it supports the flourishing of their own children.

School leaders are alert to the mental health needs of both staff and pupils. Adults value the initiatives that have reduced their workload and the availability of designated mental health and wellbeing leads. These trained staff are available to both staff and pupils. Pupils with specific or additional needs are identified and given empowering support, to enable their flourishing.

RE is well led. Curriculum planning is effective. Classrooms are safe spaces and lessons are characterised by lively discussions that are well managed by skilled and committed teachers. Work in class is supplemented by visits to places of worship of the different world faiths that are studied. Year 6 pupils are able to speak confidently about the similarities and differences in the worldviews held by Muslims, Jews and Christians. They also use these perspectives to shape their own emerging views. Each class has a 'RE big book' in which records of discussions about 'big questions', and pupils' responses to visits and visitors, are kept. These books indicate that pupils' religious literacy is being well developed overall. However, pupils' own RE books do not fully reflect the quality of the teaching and learning observed, or that evidenced in the class 'big books'.

The programme of collective worship clearly expresses the school's vision. It is carefully planned across the school year to follow half-termly themes which reinforce the school's values. On the day of the inspection, the theme of truthfulness was explored using the Bible story of Jacob and Esau. Pupils were fully engaged and participated enthusiastically. They were able to see the story's relevance and explain the harmful consequences of telling lies. The quality of pupils' singing, the use of quietness and the invitational nature of prayer are all strengths of the school's collective worship. Year 6 worship leaders support class teachers in activities that reinforce the week's worship theme in age-appropriate ways. In this way collective worship is integrated into the life of the school and contributes to the spiritual development of all.




The curriculum is rich and varied. This is exemplified by the annual 'wow trips' and by the woodland walks that are included in the curriculum of each year group. Teachers use these to support learning in various relevant and imaginative ways and also to support the spiritual development of pupils. One Year 6 pupil commented that the woodland walk made her reflect 'how lucky I am to be in a world like this and to have the friends I have and the moments I have'. Pupils rightly value other opportunities that the school provides to support their spiritual development. These include prayer boxes in each classroom and a prayer space that was set up and used invitationally during lesson time earlier this year. The curriculum and extra-curricular opportunities at St Michael's are carefully planned in order to meet pupils' learning and spiritual needs.

The system of rewards is built upon the school's vision and values. This ensures that they are fully embedded in the life of the school, and contributes to the very good pupil behaviour. Pupils understand that letting your light shine requires compassion, reconciliation and the building of community. They treat each other with respect and kindness, so that all flourish and feel safe. Instances of bullying and harassment are very rare. Pupils form friendships across year groups. This is supported by the buddy system that pairs each Year 5 pupil with a pupil in the Reception Year. This link is rightly valued by parents and by pupils and contributes to the flourishing of pupils.

In this caring environment, older pupils enjoy taking responsibility as leaders in various roles such as worship leaders, buddies, librarians and house captains. Older pupils are developing their capacity to become agents of change within and beyond the school. The school's eco club has brought about change within school by promoting composting and recycling to other pupils. Year 6 pupils realised the widespread extent of litter during a woodland walk. In response, they are currently writing persuasive letters to the local council to request the installation of litter and recycling bins.

Governors are committed to ensuring that the school's vision remains at the forefront of strategic decisions. Governors are closely involved in the life of the school and monitor the impact of the school's vision and values on each governor visit. The recent decision to join a multi academy trust was taken in order to further enhance the school's Christian character.

	The effectiveness of RE is		Good
	<p>The carefully crafted RE curriculum is rich and engaging. The school makes effective use of the diocesan scheme of work, which it enriches to reflect the school's context. The school's recent focus has been on enabling pupils to respond at greater depth to religious questions. Pupils respond keenly in class discussions. This, and the quality of work in the 'RE big books', demonstrate that the quality of teaching and learning is good and that pupils progress well.</p>		
Information			
School	St Michael's Church of England Primary School, Sandhurst	Inspection date	12 June 2023
URN	109973	VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary aided
Diocese/District	Oxford	Pupils on roll	196
Headteacher	Stuart Bevan		
Chair of Governors	Louise Norman		
Inspector	Andrew Wilcock	No.	2112