



Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Michael’s Church of England (VA) Junior School	
Address	Barnard Road, Chelmsford, Essex, CM2 8RR.

School vision
<p>‘By God’s Love we all flourish together’</p> <p>God is love. Whoever lives in love, lives in God, and God in them (1 John 4:16)</p> <p>At St Michael’s, by God’s love and through our Christian values of Love, Faith, Respect and Courage, we celebrate uniqueness and nurture curiosity, enabling each child to flourish on their own rich learning journey; whilst contributing to the wider community.</p>
School strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Christian vision, which underpins all aspects of school life, enables pupils to ‘celebrate their uniqueness, nurture their curiosity’ and enables them to flourish • The curriculum is designed in line with the school’s context and Christian vision for pupils to flourish on their ‘own rich learning journey.’ As a result, they enjoy their learning and pupils with additional needs are well supported to succeed. • Pupils are provided with opportunities to explore social justice and become agents of positive change through engagement in local and global issues. • Collective Worship is valued by all. It is inclusive, invitational and inspiring, and is used by leaders to promote the vision and values of the school. This further develops the strong sense of community. • Religious Education (RE) is well led and managed. Leaders have ensured that the curriculum is carefully planned with opportunities for pupils to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding of a range of world religions and worldviews, including Christianity.
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embed the shared language and understanding of spirituality across the curriculum so that adults and pupils can clearly articulate how it impacts their lives. • Ensure that the already explicit links between the vision and all aspects of the life of the school are emphasised, particularly through monitoring. • Embed assessment practice in RE so that this is secure and informs teaching and learning.

Inspection findings

St Michael's is a welcoming and inclusive school. Leaders have established a clear and purposeful Christian vision that permeates through all aspects of school life. As a result, all pupils and adults flourish. The vision motivates pupils and leaders to serve their community. This is evident through the school's innovative work as a Dementia Friendly Hub, the first of its kind nationwide. The school works closely within a number of local partnerships and has fostered a strong relationship with the Diocese of Chelmsford, as well as with the local parish church. This supports the development of staff and pupils on their rich learning journeys through the school. Although leaders plan strategic actions and activities in line with the vision, this link is not always understood by all.

The school has created an ambitious curriculum which enables pupils to flourish. Parents and staff speak passionately about how it enables pupils to nurture their curiosity through a range of extra-curricular opportunities. Leaders have developed partnerships with the local infant and secondary schools. This has enabled clear and deliberate transition planning. The curriculum builds on prior knowledge and prepares pupils for the next stage of their education. The most vulnerable pupils are well cared for at St Michael's. Pastoral staff support families through outreach work to enable pupils to overcome barriers to learning. The curriculum and wider provision are adapted for pupils with SEND so that they make good progress. Staff know all pupils well and, as a result of this, the curriculum is personalised to ensure that all pupils flourish regardless of interests or ability.

Collective worship at St Michael's is valued by pupils and staff. It is inclusive, invitational and inspiring. Pupils have key roles as worship leaders and play an active part in the planning, delivery and evaluation of worship. All pupils are able to lead worship during their time at St Michael's. This supports their spiritual and character development. Collective worship is well-planned and provides a safe-space for the school community to come together. Pupils use Bibles to support their understanding of Bible stories in collective worship. Pupils are encouraged to ask 'Big Questions' to develop their own beliefs such as 'Why did God put us here?' Collective worship provides opportunities for pupils to experience stillness and reflection. However, a shared language and understanding of spirituality is not embedded. Therefore not all adults and pupils articulate how this impacts them upon them in their school life.

St Michael's celebrates every pupil's 'uniqueness.' Pupils talk confidently about difference and the importance of everyone not being the same. They understand that sometimes their peers might need more support to help them access their learning but that this is 'fair' as 'we all learn differently'. Governors prioritise well-being and have made this a key focus. As a result, staff talk positively about the support they receive to fulfil their roles. There is a calm and caring atmosphere throughout the school. Strong relationships, driven by the school's vision and values, are central to this. People are accepted for who they are, which enables an environment where all are treated well.

Pupils are provided with opportunities to explore justice. Leaders have made curriculum decisions which enable this to be fully developed so that pupils become agents of change. This is exemplified by the school's successful involvement in the 'save our library project.' This saw pupils delivering speeches at the local town hall and join hands around the library whilst singing in an effort to save this much-loved community resource. Pupil voice is strong. St Michael's has a well-established, democratically elected Pupil Parliament. The Christian vision promotes a shared responsibility, making a difference so everyone in the community can flourish.



RE is well led and managed. Leaders engage with ongoing professional development in order to support all staff to deliver engaging lessons. Pupils share their enjoyment of RE where they are encouraged to share ideas and opinions ‘even if they don’t believe the same things’ in a respectful and tolerant way. RE is has a high profile within the school. The RE leader has made conscious decisions to create a bespoke curriculum that is relevant to the context of the school and that fulfils its statutory details. The locally agreed syllabus is supplemented by the use of Understanding Christianity resources. Pupils demonstrate a sound understanding of a range of religions and world views. Assessment practices are not yet fully embedded to further inform teaching and learning.

These inspection findings indicate that St Michael’s Church of England (VA) Junior School is living up to its foundation as a Church school.

Information			
School	St Michael’s Church of England (VA) Junior School	Inspection date	26/09/23
URN	115197	VC/VA/Academy	VA
Diocese/District	Chelmsford	Pupils on roll	232
MAT/Federation	N/A		
Headteacher	Mrs Rowen Prigg		
Chair of Governors	Jane Cregan-Bird		
Inspector	Karen Jones	No.	c.21/22