

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Michael's Church of England High School			
Address	Astley Road, Chorley, Lancashire, PR7 1RS		
Date of inspection	28-29 November 2018	Status of school	Academy converter inspected as Voluntary Aided
Diocese	Blackburn	URN	136893
Overall Judgement		Grade	Excellent
How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?			
Additional Judgements			
The impact of collective worship		Grade	Excellent
The effectiveness of religious education (RE)		Grade	Excellent
School context			
<p>Saint Michael's is a secondary school with 1129 pupils on roll. The school has very low levels of religious and cultural diversity and very few speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is below national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is below national averages. The school's various quality marks include one for religious education (RE). Since 2016, there has been a new headteacher, a restructured senior leadership team and a change in leadership for RE.</p>			
The school's Christian vision			
<p>To be a vibrant learning community choosing to serve God, pursue excellence and celebrate the uniqueness of each individual. This means growing in body, mind and spirit in order to flourish and experience the joy and hope of, 'life in all its fullness' (John 10.10). 'Therefore choose... (Deuteronomy 30.19).</p>			
Key findings			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school's cohesive and deeply embedded Christian vision is integral to all aspects of its life and work. It profoundly and positively influences decision making, policies, and practice at all levels. • There is successful support and challenge, and effective pastoral care, for pupils to be their best, academically and personally. This is expressly based on encouraging them to flourish and embrace experiences for growth in body, mind and spirit. • The school's innovative approach to curriculum planning and delivery, effectively linked to its vision, is successfully tailored to meet the learning needs of all pupils, including the most vulnerable. • Collective worship is inspirational and exemplary, and along with excellent RE, contributes richly to the strong spiritual and moral development in evidence. 			
Areas for development			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase the range of global partnerships to replace some previous ones that are no longer active, in order to support the school's outward looking nature. 			

How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?

Inspection findings

The school has a deeply embedded Christian vision, with a well-defined theological and biblical basis effectively underpinning it. This vision shapes its Christian and inclusive service to all pupils and staff, and to the wider community superbly. Its longstanding vision is always an element of the school's robust and effective improvement planning. Consequently, aspects of the vision are refined as part of its rigorous development cycle. Therefore, its vision remains consistent, relevant and responsive. The school is a beacon of exemplary practice in church school education. The headteacher, senior leadership team and governing body work insightfully and effectively to ensure that the school's vision is successfully woven into, and drives forward developments. For example, it shapes policy and practice. It enables innovative and effective choices about the curriculum to be made, in financial matters and for on-going staff training and professional development. The vision is deeply embedded within departments and for individual staff members, many of whom see teaching at the school as a vocation. The vision is tailored well to meet the learning and personal needs of all pupils. It is understood and supported by parents and carers. As an implication of growing in mind, body and spirit, the school's exemplary character development work is successfully planned and aptly delivered across the curriculum. Regular enrichment days provide excellent experiences to explore issues of spiritual and moral concern outside of the usual curriculum.

The school has successfully sustained its strengths since the previous denominational inspection and has successfully addressed the improvement point: to share its considerable expertise more widely. It does this to great benefit with firmly embedded productive partnerships with schools locally, and through its relationships with its 14 foundation parishes and diocese. Visitors, locally and from further afield, come to learn from its excellent practice as a church school. St Michael's is generous in sharing with others. Whilst there have been productive overseas links, some of these are no longer active. The school has rightly identified this as a priority for development. There are embryonic plans to move this element of its partnerships forward.

Its vision makes sure that academic rigour and focused support is provided for all. This leads to pupils working to, 'be the best we can be'. It supports the high attainment and excellent levels of progress made by pupils. Through close monitoring of progress, which closely mirrors the vision, data is used extremely effectively to support the learning needs of all.

The school has a focused and shared understanding of spirituality, which thoroughly expresses its vision. Teachers are supported exceptionally well in enabling pupils to flourish. Effective training and the focused work of the wellbeing team, including through the personalised learning centre, are central to this support. This means that pupils explore issues of spiritual and religious concern exceptionally well. Pupils value learning and participate fully in questioning, listening and responding creatively across a range of subjects.

Within the vision, 'Therefore choose', is applied exceptionally well. Staff and pupils relate this to the choices they make, including on moral and ethical issues. A wide range of experiences to encourage pupils to make positive choices are provided. Pupils respond constructively to these. They engage effectively in social action and charitable giving, reflecting on the impact of their decisions personally, within school and further afield. The school's vision effectively promotes strong relationships, a sense of belonging and exemplary behaviour. Pupils recognise that sometimes wrong choices are made. They are keenly aware that justice, forgiveness and reconciliation are practised in school. They know that this reflects a Christian vision and that, 'it is a good way to live'.

The vision and associated values successfully uphold the dignity and value of all as children of God. This means that it is an inclusive, caring school which celebrates the diversity of God's world. Pupils and staff are successfully encouraged to be comfortable with the person that God made them to be. The school, through its inclusion, behaviour and anti-bullying policies, effectively prevents and addresses incidents

of prejudicial behaviour by creating a very positive climate of respect.

Daily and inspirational collective worship is fundamental to school life, and meets statutory requirements. Pupils speak passionately of its importance to, 'team St Michael', a phrase regularly used when speaking of the school community. Staff and pupils illustrate the impact and support it provides for them as individuals. A wide variety of staff are engaged in leading worship. Pupil involvement in worship is extensive and exemplary. They have a role in planning, monitoring and evaluating worship, and take active leadership roles. Creative arts groups regularly participate in worship. In a stimulating and impressive act of worship observed, the choir sang, a dance was performed and prayers and reflections shared. When pupils were asked how typical the act of worship was, one replied, 'worship was as good as that last week and it will be as good as this next week'. Worship is further enhanced by a well-attended monthly voluntary Eucharist, led by clergy from various churches. End of term services involve and engage the whole school community. These illustrate the impact of this exemplary and varied worship programme. Prayer and reflection is central, including in tutorial worship. Material produced by the Christian youth worker effectively supports it. A wide range of opportunities, including a prayer tent which is often set up during the summer examination season, is used regularly and impacts deeply on many pupils. The worship area outside is currently under-utilised.

The RE department is strong and established as a flagship department across this highly effective church school. This is illustrated through its receipt of the RE Quality Mark Gold Award. The subject leader and her colleagues are actively involved in leading innovation in school and beyond. They share their high levels of expertise effectively. There is an excellent balance of content focusing on religions, including Christianity, and on spiritual and ethical issues. Consequently, the curriculum supports high standards effectively. Many pupils are inspired by RE, finding it stimulating. Pupils are confident in discussing religious beliefs, reflecting deeply on how the issues affect them personally, irrespective of their personal faith position. Marking and assessment is accurate in supporting the high levels of pupil progress. Provision meets statutory requirements and fully reflects the Church of England Statement for Entitlement.



The effectiveness of RE is Excellent

High attainment and progress result from the effective planning and delivery of a well-tailored RE curriculum. Pupils flourish in RE. At GCSE they consistently attain higher than national and local averages and higher than other comparable subjects within the school. Many pupils exceed the challenging target set by the school. Teaching is outstandingly consistent as there is a strong staff team who work effectively together. School monitoring takes place regularly and staff are exceptionally well-supported. There is an extensive range of effective teaching strategies planned across the department. This leads to exceptional levels of positive engagement from pupils. This remarkably wide range of age-appropriate and challenging opportunities are pursued within a highly respectful and inclusive learning environment. Consequently, pupils make at least good, and very often, accelerated progress from their various starting points. This is because teaching is targeted, challenging and supportive.

Headteacher	Jayne Jenks
Inspector's name and number	Pamela Draycott (161)