

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Michael's Church of England Primary School

Vision

Inspired by our heritage and the teachings of Jesus, St Michael's is a community of love where everyone belongs, is nurtured and is empowered to flourish.

This is rooted in 1 Corinthians 13:13. 'Faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love'. It is also inspired by Jeremiah 29:21 'For I know the plans I have for you,' declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.'

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.

Notable Strengths

- Regular review and development ensure that the Christian vision and associated values are highly bespoke to the Anglican foundation and context of the school. The way the vision is promoted, practised and celebrated enables individuals to flourish and succeed.
- Highly effective Christian leadership and the way the vision is lived out lead to strong relationships within the school. This impacts positively on the emotional wellbeing of pupils and adults.
- The strong and established link with the local church community significantly enhances and enriches provision for collective worship. This supports and contributes to the spiritual development of pupils and adults.
- The range of partners with which the school proactively engages provides a myriad of opportunities to teach pupils about justice and responsibility. As a result, pupils grow to be community-spirited and keen to serve those in need.
- Strong subject leadership of religious education (RE) supports pupils to develop a sound understanding of Christianity. Curriculum provision is strengthened by training and development from the Manchester Diocese.

Development Points

- Review the sequencing of the RE curriculum content relating to religions other than Christianity. This is to ensure that pupils' knowledge and understanding build progressively over time.
- Ensure leaders develop a shared understanding and school-wide approach to spirituality. This is to provide greater opportunities to develop pupils' spiritual flourishing.



Inspection Findings

Vision and Leadership

St Michael's Church of England Primary School and its linked church sit in the heart of this historic and unique community. The recently reviewed Christian vision reflects the school's heritage while moving its work forward, with inclusion at the centre. It is highly relevant to the needs of pupils and their families, who are warmly welcomed and supported from the start. It is expressed through the MICHAEL values of mission, integrity, compassion, honesty, appreciation, encouragement and love. The biblical foundations of the vision are ingrained in the life and culture of the school. Dedicated Christian leadership and a strong sense of moral purpose drive the vision forward with love and aspiration. As a result, pupils and adults are nurtured, challenged and enabled to flourish with confidence. A strong partnership with the diocese further strengthens and supports the effectiveness of vision development. Governors monitor the impact of the vision through visits to school, reports from leaders and ongoing reflection. Consequently, it continues to be refined and evolves in response to the changing needs of the school.

Vision and Curriculum

The school's curriculum reflects the vision well by providing pupils with the skills to become independent learners, achieve their best and flourish. It is shaped to ensure that pupils acquire knowledge to support their personal and spiritual development. The school's heritage is strongly reflected through the curriculum. For example, pupils learn about the family who built their village for a mining community. As a result, they demonstrate social responsibility by contributing to a memorial commemorating a pit disaster. The curriculum is well designed to meet the needs of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). The school works closely with parents to gain an understanding of individual needs. Interventions, including speech and language therapy, improve social and communication skills. Pupils' spiritual flourishing is developed by a variety of enrichment experiences. Sporting events and music tuition provide creative ways in which pupils are encouraged to express themselves. The school residential to the Lake District builds character and resilience and stimulates wonder at the beauty of the natural world. However, staff are still developing a school-wide approach to spirituality and considering how best to embed this across the school. This limits opportunities for spiritual growth.

Worship and Spirituality

Collective worship is a focal point of the school day, directly reflecting the vision and the supporting values. It is recognised by staff as the foundation of the school and a time to reflect and 'build community'. Pupils value it as a 'quiet time to speak to God'. They consider and discuss worship themes with sensitivity, demonstrating the compassion and love they show towards others. Their spontaneous joy when singing uplifts the heart and nurtures their growing spirituality. Following guidance from clergy, pupils lead prayer and understand its invitational nature. They know prayer can be helpful in giving thanks and providing hope. This supports pupils' spiritual growth. The partnership with the local church has a significant impact on collective worship. Clergy support leaders with the planning of worship, enhancing the provision. Church members value the prayers of pupils and the participation of the school choir at their carol service. Visits to the church and family workshops enhance knowledge of Christian traditions and festivals, for example, Michaelmas and the Christingle. This enriches the spirituality of pupils and adults.

Vision and School Culture

The Christian vision has created an inclusive culture, characterised by friendship and respect. Pupils gain an understanding of diversity and celebrate their own uniqueness. This enables pupils and adults to live well together. Staff are proud to work here. They feel appreciated, work closely together and offer each other help when needed. New staff are warmly welcomed and effectively inducted into the team. Parents and carers praise the nurture and care given to their children and the way staff go 'above and beyond' for them. Adults receive sensitive support during times of difficulty. Robust systems and staff-led interventions help pupils to feel included. This supports their emotional health. The mutual trust between home and school impacts positively on the wellbeing of pupils and adults. As they practise the Christian vision and associated values, pupils learn to treat each other well. They relate thinking of the needs of others to the story of the Good



Samaritan. Pupils understand the importance of showing love saying, 'It will be returned to you.' As a result, they display exemplary behaviour, live harmoniously together and flourish.

Vision, Justice and Responsibility

The Christian vision inspires pupils and adults to recognise the worth of every individual. It promotes the belief that everyone should have the chance to be 'empowered to flourish' and contribute positively to the lives of others. The extent to which pupils explore the concept of inequality develops their confidence to challenge injustice and promote fairness for all. For example, after reflecting on issues of poverty, pupils are inspired to organise food collections for a local foodbank. Participation in a diocesan project highlights the importance of racial equality, individual freedom and rights. School council members visit the mayor's parlour to learn about democracy. Such activities enable pupils to develop a strong moral purpose which contributes to the wider community and to help to improve the lives of others. For example, pupils are moved to lead acts of remembrance and social events for war veterans. Pupils demonstrate love and compassion by showing random acts of kindness around the local area and beyond. These include baking cakes for care home residents and donating toys to those in vulnerable situations overseas.

Religious Education

In partnership with the diocese, skilled subject leaders are developing a broad and balanced RE curriculum that includes the study of a range of world faiths and non-religious worldviews. This is supported by professional development that extends teachers' subject knowledge. From the Early Years onwards, pupils are encouraged to explore core concepts through the use of 'big questions'. Provision in Key Stage 2, builds upon this, allowing opportunities for pupils to reflect on and compare different viewpoints through the analysis of religious texts.

Effective leadership in RE, alongside the quality of teaching, ensures that pupils make steady progress in the subject. Clear assessment and monitoring procedures provide a clear picture of pupils' learning and attainment. Consequently, pupils gain a sound understanding of the teachings of Jesus and how these relate to the school's Christian vision. They demonstrate an increasing ability to articulate their own beliefs. However, the teaching about non-religious worldviews is at an early stage of development. Pupils have some knowledge of the features of world religions and can compare places of worship and belief. However, the spacing and ordering of units of work is not given sufficient consideration. As a result, pupils do not consistently retain and build upon their knowledge of religions, other than Christianity, over time.

Information

Address	Leigh Road, Atherton, Manchester, M46 0PA		
Date	6 October 2026	URN	106478
Type of school	Voluntary aided	No. of pupils	208
Diocese	Manchester		
Headteacher	Sarah Dring		
Chair of Governors	Debra Wailes		
Inspector	Anne Barker		