

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Michael's Church of England Primary School, Sydenham	
Address	Champion Road, London, SE26 4HH

School vision

'I have come in order that you might have life – life in all its fullness.' John 10:10
 A distinctive Christian character is deeply embedded in the daily life of the school. The governors and staff are driving our vision 'for every child to live an abundant life.' Children are valued as being made in God's image and are given a range of opportunities and encouragement, both in school and beyond the school gate, to flourish and live life in all its fullness and abundance.
 As a Church of England School, we are a caring and nurturing place that strongly celebrates its Christian foundation, which effectively supports children to be the best they can be and contributes to raising aspirations and developing good behaviours and attitudes.

School strengths

- The school vision is like a beating heart running through the school. Pupils and staff have a zest for life complimented by a deep sense of belonging within the school community.
- The school's vision underpins and builds strong relationships. Pupils, staff, and families care deeply about one another. There is a genuine sense of compassion evident.
- There is an understanding of justice within the school; pupils feel they can speak out when something is not fair, they feel listened to.
- Religious education (RE) offers well-sequenced opportunities for pupils to consider faith and its impact upon believers. Staff and pupils treasure diversity and difference between world religions and worldviews.
- Collective worship is inspirational, a time when the school comes together and celebrates. Inclusivity is at the heart and families feel welcome regardless of their background. These opportunities contribute significantly to the pupils' spiritual development.

Areas for development

- Use pupils' existing experience of local action to engage with broader issues of social injustice. This is to enable all to make a difference beyond the local community.

Inspection findings

The school's vision is like a beating heart running throughout. It directs and shapes the school's nurturing ethos. Staff, families, and pupils articulate how this shows they are part of the school community. The vision is demonstrated through high expectations of staff and pupils alike. Pupils benefit from an abundance of life transforming events, activities and learning experiences. As a result, their aspirations for their futures are widened. Parents and staff embrace the vision and support the school through fundraising and giving their own time freely. They feel heard and express their gratitude to the school for the support they receive. Pupils talk confidently about 'abundance' and what this means to them on a personal level. They appreciate the richness of their learning in

school and how this impacts on them as individuals. Leaders regularly reflect on the school's vision to ensure its continuing relevance. The vision drives harmonious relationships between pupils and staff so they live life well, together.

Pupils, from the very youngest are encouraged to be aspirational and believe in themselves. They aim high and have confidence in their actions. Teachers, in partnership with families, encourage the pupils to be the best they can be. Plentiful enrichment activities support pupils living a life full of joy and opportunity. They talk excitedly about surfing trips, beach adventures, theatre, museum, and gallery visits. Vulnerable and/or disadvantaged pupils and their families are able to access all activities and learning alongside their peers. Because of the strong relationship between school and home, pupils at St Michael's are resilient and confident. Leaders provide compassionate support and champion families in need. They are committed to ensuring voices are heard. They work closely with different groups within the community to build harmony in school and beyond. Having a desire to support pupils to be the best they can be, is a key driver for staff. Therefore, they are knowledgeable about each individual pupil and the provisions in place to best support them. The school understands its role within the community, sharing the facilities and resources widely. This ensures the vision remains relevant to the school's context and shapes continual development.

Worship is valued at St Michael's. Pupils and families appreciate the welcome they receive to join in. It is a time for the school community to come together and celebrate the awe and wonder of God's world. This empowers them to look into the world and deepen their personal spirituality. Pupils, staff, and families engage in worship joyfully, especially singing. Inclusivity is at its heart and families feel welcome regardless of their background. Worship is well organised with opportunities for stillness and quiet reflection. These spiritual moments help pupils, staff and families to contemplate how they can improve themselves. The school vision is pivotal in every collective worship. Pupils are reminded of their part within the world and how they can have influence. Regular opportunities for pupils to celebrate together support the school vision of living an abundant life. Pupils are proud. They celebrate achievements, and opportunities when they can live out the school's values in their daily service. Pupils are keen to lead acts of worship for the whole school. They share biblical stories, told in context to aid understanding. Through this, they gain an age-related understanding of the Christian faith and how this impacts on believers' lives. Relevant topic weeks are used as a base for pupil led collective worships. They think deeply and question with a maturity beyond their age. Pupils enjoy being active members of the Faith and Prayer committees, they confidently offer to lead prayers at the end of each worship. They talk about this having a positive impact on their life, thus opportunities for spiritual growth are enriched.

Responding compassionately to local and wider issues, staff and pupils collect items to donate within the local community and beyond. Pupils are immensely proud of their fundraising towards the new school library. They have an awareness of equity and equality and how this affects themselves and their community. Pupils understand and articulate some of the process of enacting change. However, this is limited and does not extend fully to an appreciation of wider national and international injustice. They feel empowered when challenging leaders about matters of importance to them. Adults listen to the pupils. Pupils feel they have a voice and are important in the decision-making processes. For example, unhappy with the regular school menu, pupils successfully challenged this with school leaders and catering contractors. Pupils use their knowledge of difference and a desire for equity to ensure they get along well in school. They discuss and disagree well; diversity and difference are treasured. Tolerance and kindness are evident in pupils' conversations and actions. Because of this, pupils get on well and show a deep, caring attitude towards their peers and adults alike.

Pupils at St Michael's undertake a wide range of roles and responsibilities. Consequently, they develop strong leadership skills that enable them to make a difference. This allows them to develop

their talents and interests, as well as to become role models. Older pupils are reflective and relish their responsibilities within the school. Following the school's Christian vision, staff empower pupils to believe in themselves. Pupils are aspirational for their futures. They know the school provides them with opportunities to be effective in abundance. Governors and staff drive the school vision for pupils to flourish and live life in all its fullness. Pupils demonstrate kindness towards one another, aware that they are made in God's image and that this brings responsibility for action. As a consequence of this, they share well and understand their differences make them unique. This strong focus on each pupil being treated as a unique individual is seen in all aspects of school life. Pupils speak powerfully about 'zones of regulation' helping them to express how they are feeling. This enables them to be ready to learn. Strong bonds are made between pupils, staff, and families. Families and pupils trust school leaders to look after them. Pupils' concerns are acted upon quickly with referrals made to relevant agencies when appropriate. Trust between adults and pupils within the community supports the raising of aspirations and the desire to live life to the full.

RE is taught well across the school. Therefore, pupils including those with additional needs, make good progress. Assessment is rigorous and pupils know how to improve in their learning. As a core subject, RE offers well sequenced opportunities for pupils to consider faith and its impact upon believers. Through a range of trips and visitors, it amplifies the school vision of living life in abundance. Sensitivity is shown to the local context ensuring pupils experience Christianity as a world faith. Teachers take advantage of comprehensive resources and relevant training, meaning lessons are purposeful and engaging. They plan well, adapting the teaching to meet the needs of all pupils. Pupils are challenged with deeper questions that they answer coherently with a maturity beyond their years. Pupils benefit from a wide range of topics and learning approaches in lessons. Those of different faiths are proud to share aspects of their religion with others and are attentively listened to.

These inspection findings indicate that St Michael's Church of England Primary School is living up to its foundation as a Church school.

Information			
Inspection date	5 July 2024	URN	100731
VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary aided	Pupils on roll	213
Diocese	Southwark		
MAT/Federation			
Headteacher	Jacqui Gillespie		
Chair	Beryl Fielder		
Inspector	Geraldine Shackleton	No.	2244