



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



The **Methodist Church** 

National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

St Michael's CE Primary School

Champion Road, Sydenham,
London, SE26 4HH

Previous SIAS grade: Outstanding

Current SIAMS grade: Outstanding

Diocese: Southwark

Local authority: Lewisham

Date of inspection: 7 June 2016

Date of last inspection: June 2011

School's unique reference number: 100731

Headteacher: Riana Gouws

Inspector's name and number: Pamela Draycott 161

School context

St Michael's is an averaged sized Church of England voluntary aided primary school on a split site. The largest groups of pupils are from Black African and Black Caribbean backgrounds. The proportion who speak English as an additional language is well below the national average. The percentage with special educational needs or for whom the school receives extra funding due to social disadvantage are both higher than average. Over 80 percent of pupils come from families who attend church, of various denominations, outside of their involvement with school. The parish church is currently without a vicar.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Michael's, Lewisham school as a Church of England school are outstanding

- St Michael's is a caring and nurturing place that strongly celebrates its Christian foundation which effectively drives forward school improvement.
- The headteacher, ably supported by her deputy, staff and governors, set high standards based on a strong underpinning of Christian values. This impacts positively on the academic attainment and progress made by pupils and on their personal development.
- Religious education (RE) and the worship programme have a high profile and are intrinsic in the outworking of the school's vision and service.
- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. They are confident, open and friendly and there are strong relationships at all levels. This effectively reflects the school Christian and inclusive ethos.

Areas to improve

- Develop an overview of how the school's specific Christian values explicitly enhance its provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development opportunities.

The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is outstanding at meeting the needs of all learners

St Michael's Christian vision of, 'enabling every child to flourish in their potential as a child of God', is effectively lived out in the school's daily life. Its core Christian values of 'respect, trust, love, hope, joy and peace' are well known across the school. As one pupil said, 'Joy is being happy deep inside, even when things are bad'. These values form the bedrock for behaviour, attainment and progress. This means that its Christian distinctiveness makes a very strong contribution to raising aspirations and developing good behaviours and attitudes. Consequently attainment is above the national and local authority averages. Pupils of all abilities make very good progress from their various starting points. In keeping with the school's caring and Christian vision the gap in attainment and progress between the more vulnerable pupils and others has narrowed significantly. St Michael's is a welcoming and happy place with a clear sense of belonging. As a parent reflected, 'the school is a warm and nurturing place'. Pupils of different ages, ethnicities and abilities get on well together as evidenced for example by the 'buddy system' between Year 6 and Reception age pupils. The school expresses its Christian care in all aspects of school life. Consequently, attendance is above national and local authority averages. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary and the quality of relationships at all levels is very strong. Diversity is celebrated well within this caring and inclusive Christian community. Pupils' SMSC development is strong as exemplified by their ability to express personal opinions and beliefs very well whilst respecting others' ideas, beliefs and practices. The worship programme and RE successfully play major roles in leading this provision and in supporting the school's explicitly Christian ethos. RE suitably excites and challenges pupils. Whilst SMSC provision is of a high quality how the school's Christian values explicitly link with this provision is not sufficiently clearly expressed through documentation, planning and practice.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

The well planned worship programme plays a valued and positive part in school life. It contributes strongly to pupils' spiritual development. The quality and impact of worship on the school community is regularly evaluated by adults and increasingly by pupils, especially through the 'Faith Committee'. Comments and suggestions are acted upon. The relatively newly formed 'Pupil Faith Committee' is successfully beginning to find a role in the process, including in planning and leading worship which they do confidently. Worship times provide a very good range of opportunities to address the school's core Christian values. Through worship, appropriately linked to RE units of work, pupils have a detailed biblical knowledge and an age-appropriate understanding of key Christian beliefs such as that of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. As a pupil said, 'Jesus is our example. God somehow came as Jesus to save us and show us how to live'. Key Christian festivals are very well celebrated which enables pupils to understand something of their significance and the rhythm of the church's year. Some pupils are not clear about the order in which festivals happen across the year. The programme in school is enhanced through weekly worship in the parish church. Pupils and adults rightly see the importance of worship in supporting the school's Christian ethos and values. In support of understanding aspects of Anglican worship there is an effective and well known structure used. This includes lighting a candle, statements with responses at the beginning and end of worship and the use of different coloured cloths at different times of the church year. This is further extended by a school Eucharist which is held twice per year. Prayer and reflection, including saying the Lord's Prayer and a school prayer, are important aspects of the worship programme. This reflects the prominence given to prayer and is very well extended through prayer opportunities at other times in the school day. This results in pupils recognising the importance and relevance of prayer as 'communicating with God'. Pupils enter and leave worship whether in church or in school with a sense of reverence. They are well engaged and enjoy worship seeing it as 'a way we show respect for God and for each other'. Whilst being explicitly Christian and Anglican in nature, worship is fittingly inclusive of those of other faiths and of none. For example, during worship reflection time, on the issue being considered is open to all irrespective of their faith position. A quiet room is open at lunchtimes for pupils to reflect and pray.

The effectiveness of RE is outstanding

The school has worked effectively to improve the planning and delivery of RE so that it is now outstanding. RE is a 'core' subject and its importance in supporting the school's Christian ethos and values is well celebrated. Teachers are very well supported in developing their knowledge and understanding of the range of religions studied. They have developed a wide range of suitable teaching strategies to engage pupils in learning. Consequently, pupils make at least good, and often very good progress from their various starting points. Their progress is accurately tracked using a new whole school assessment system. The percentage of pupils working at age related expectations in RE is well above the national average. The RE scheme of work draws effectively on diocesan guidelines and a scheme called 'Discovery RE'. Teaching about Christianity and other world faiths is well balanced. There are some missed opportunities around teaching about Christian festivals to present the world-wide, multicultural nature of Christianity in general and Anglicanism in particular. Teachers provide a range of open-ended questions to probe thinking. This helps pupils to thoughtfully reflect on what they have learned and relate it to their own lives and to the wider world. Pupils' written activities include, for example, poetry, sequencing stories and creative writing. It is of a comparable standard and quality with written work engaged in during literacy lessons. Paired and whole class discussion is of a high quality. Assessment is detailed and very well used to record learning and prompt further discussion. Pupils are consistently given opportunities to respond to teacher marking. Self- and peer-assessment is somewhat underdeveloped. The leadership of RE is shared by the headteacher, deputy headteacher and the school business manager. This reflects the successful collaborative ways of working promoted across the school. The arrangement works well as each has particular areas of responsibility. It places RE within the context of whole school ethos and values very well. The monitoring of RE teaching and learning is successfully led by the headteacher who provides very useful feedback to teachers in order to improve practice further.

The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is outstanding

The headteacher works productively and collaboratively with her deputy, other staff and governors. Leaders confidently promote the school's vision rooted in St Michael's strong Christian ethos of service to its community. This vision impacts strongly on whole curriculum decisions which impact very positively on pupils' attainment and personal progress. Senior leaders, including governors, have detailed insight into school performance which means that self-evaluation is useful in planning for further improvement. The school regularly seeks and acts upon view of parents, pupils and staff about the school's Christian distinctiveness. Through the Faith Committee these feed well into the self-evaluation process. Areas for development from the previous denominational

inspection have been very well addressed. RE and worship meet statutory requirements. The school works in fruitful partnership with other church and local authority schools. This supports learning through for example opportunities for moderating pupils' work and joint meetings for RE co-ordinators. Support from the Southwark Diocesan Board of Education staff team has impacted positively on school life. Staff are encouraged to develop professionally whilst working within a church school. There is a good induction programme and ample opportunities for attending diocesan courses. Governors also make good use of training. Links with the parish church are very strong. Prayers are said regularly in church for the school. Its Sunday school has adopted the school's themes to provide 'joined up' opportunities between church and school. During the time when the parish is without a vicar strong links are being sustained. This is through a deacon, who is employed in an administrative role in the school. Also the church wardens and various members of the parochial church council are governors and closely involved. Parents see the outworking of the school's Christian and inclusive ethos as being linked to the approachability and professionalism of staff, based on 'being the best we can'. As one parent said, 'children are treated as individuals – they are encouraged and supported to achieve their potential.'