

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Michael's Church of England Primary School, Great Lever	
Address	Green Lane, Bolton, BL3 2PL
How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?	
Overall grade	Good
The impact of collective worship	Good
The effectiveness of religious education (RE)	Excellent

School's vision
<p>The Christian values of Love, Peace, Joy, Faithfulness, Goodness, Self-Control, Forgiveness, Gentleness, Kindness and Respect are central to all we do. We share, care and learn together, building a loving, inclusive community. We support all, celebrating achievements and providing our children with a foundation of faith, hope and aspiration.</p> <p>Our Bible verse for 2022</p> <p>'Let all that you do be done in love.' 1 Corinthians 16 v 14</p>
Key findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passionate, deeply Christian leadership enables pupils and adults to flourish in this aspirational and inclusive Church school. The relatively new Christian vision and its theological roots are not yet fully embedded. • School leaders tirelessly champion equality of opportunity. The vision of love and inclusion empowers pupils and adults to thrive and achieve. • Driven by the vision of hope and equity, leaders have developed an holistic and creative curriculum, enabling all pupils to flourish. Planned opportunities for spiritual development are less developed. • Collective worship is highly inclusive and invitational. It inspires an active prayer life in school and spurs deep reflection. Pupils contribute well to planning, but they do not lead collective worship. • A balanced and progressive religious education (RE) curriculum enables pupils to make excellent progress. Highly skilled teaching enables pupils to develop an excellent understanding of Christianity and a range of world faiths and worldviews.
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further embed the school's Christian vision and its theological roots into school policies and development planning so the school community understands how they underpin school priorities. • Develop a shared understanding of spirituality and use this to plan opportunities for spiritual development beyond collective worship, particularly within the curriculum. • Develop opportunities for pupils to lead collective worship to deepen their active engagement and spirituality.



Inspection findings

St Michael's is a good Church school with a long tradition of championing Christian hope, aspiration and equality. The school serves a vibrant, diverse community where opportunities are limited for pupils to experience life beyond their local area. The school's aspirational and inclusive Christian vision underpins a wealth of initiatives aimed at broadening pupils' horizons. The school environment proudly celebrates the school's vision, mission and values, notably in the newly installed stained-glass windows. A multitude of colourful displays demonstrate the many achievements of the school and its pupils. Long standing Christian values are deeply embedded, refreshed annually by a relevant Bible verse linking them to school life. Leaders committedly uphold the Christian vision as the foundation of all their work. It has relatively recently superseded the mission statement in driving the work of the school and is not yet fully embedded in documentation. As a result, the school community does not completely understand the biblical basis for the school's vision, as distinct from its mission. Dedicated governors actively contribute to school life and strategic decision making. They have a secure understanding of their monitoring role.

The Christian vision for inclusion is a strength of the school. It inspires leaders to create a broad and rich curriculum, raising pupils' aspirations and offering a window on the world. Leaders nurture strong personal relationships. They support staff with deep compassion, including through challenging times. As a result, staff are dedicated and loyal, instilling a culture of hope and resilience in the community. They movingly link their work to the school's Bible verse 'Let all that you do be done in love.' Adults foster high aspirations in learning for all pupils, particularly more vulnerable groups. Leaders make boldly ethical funding decisions, targeted at raising aspirations. Resources, such as the school minibus and newly opened art studio, significantly expand pupils' opportunities within the curriculum and beyond. Dedicated adult support and targeted resources enable all pupils to flourish in their learning. Pupils are open and curious learners who approach school life with joyful optimism and determination to succeed.

Spaces, including the outdoor nature area and art studio, enrich pupils' learning and spirituality. Pupils feel nourished by the sense of calm and wonder instilled through drawing and gardening. Although the curriculum offers some occasions for spiritual development, planned opportunities are underdeveloped.

Staff generously run a large variety of extra-curricular activities aimed at further widening pupils' experiences. Pupils, no matter what their ability, actively participate in many inter school sporting events, such as boys' and girls' cricket, boccia and dodge ball. Their enthusiastic participation instils a tangible atmosphere of confidence, enabling pupils to flourish and aspire. The school holds the Inclusion Quality Mark Flagship School status in recognition of its highly inclusive practice. Leaders support other local schools in developing strategies to promote inclusion.

Inspired by the school's Christian vision of love and care, wellbeing is a high priority. Pupils value school awards linked to biblical values such as kindness. 'I show kindness and love to others,' said one pupil, 'because, even if we are different, we never judge each other.' As a result, pupils love coming to school and learn harmoniously together. In a school where most pupils speak English as an additional language, leaders also prioritise the wellbeing of families. Popular school Initiatives, such as adult English language courses, enable parents and carers to feel empowered within the community. The school's flourishing partnership with the local church enhances this sense of belonging. Parents and carers value regular coffee mornings and other activities in church. 'The school is warm and welcoming to us,' said one parent, 'my child is able to express themselves and feel comfortable in who they



are.’


The school’s Christian vision of faith and love instils a school culture full of compassion. A fruitful partnership with the diocese has inspired a popular pupil faith group which is the seedbed of much charitable activity. Through the group, pupils increasingly act as courageous advocates for change, particularly in their local community. They proactively support refugees and asylum seekers, including writing welcome cards for a local refugee organisation. A recent Harvest appeal spurred pupils to continue collecting food for the charity, recognising that hunger persists all year round.

Underpinned by the school’s vision of faith and love, collective worship is central to school life. In this diverse school community, where most pupils are from faiths other than Christianity, collective worship is highly inclusive and invitational. Pupils engage with deep respect. Relevant and engaging themes creatively explore school values, often linking Christianity to other faiths. For example, pupils understand how the symbolism of light is important to Christians during Advent and Hindus when celebrating Diwali. Collective worship is led confidently by staff, who have regular training, as well as local clergy and governors. It provides rich and varied opportunities for prayer, reflection, stillness and singing. Pupils reflect thoughtfully on themes and value opportunities for spontaneous prayer, deepening spiritual development. Teachers discuss the impact of worship with pupils and use their ideas in planning. As a result, collective worship is always relevant and engaging, enabling pupils to relate the teachings of Jesus to their everyday lives. Pupils actively contribute to adult led worship. However, they do not lead collective worship themselves.

RE is excellent, upholding the school’s vision of aspiration and inclusion. The highly proactive RE lead, supported by an enthusiastic staff team, spearheads a rich and relevant curriculum. Challenging themes prompt pupils to respond with deepening theological knowledge in a structured and sequential way. For example, older pupils reflect thoughtfully on how the birth of Jesus was a fulfilment of God’s promise to the world. Whilst maintaining the central role of Christianity, the RE curriculum effectively explores major world faiths and worldviews. Staff, pupils and family members from a variety of world religions regularly contribute to lessons. Consequently, pupils develop a rich and meaningful understanding of a range of world faiths and worldviews.

RE and collective worship play a significant role in developing pupils’ commitment to upholding diversity. Pupils value the many religious festivals the school celebrates. They enjoy making Eid cards, celebrating Diwali through dance as well as regular Anglican church services that mark the liturgical year. As a result, pupils actively accept each other and express their views and beliefs with confidence and respect.

St Michael’s passionately upholds its Christian vision of hope, inclusion and equality. The strong bond between the school and the community it serves nourishes achievement and self-worth. This enables all pupils and adults to aspire and thrive in a loving culture of mutual support and faith.

	The effectiveness of RE is		Excellent	
	<p>Teaching and learning in RE are excellent. Highly effective subject leadership and a richly resourced, questioning curriculum result in confident teachers with excellent subject knowledge. Throughout the school, teachers plan lessons skilfully, deepening pupils' understanding in a range of creative ways. Vulnerable pupils, including those with learning difficulties, are very well supported. Skilled teacher assessment effectively extends pupils' learning and deepens understanding. As a result, all pupils make excellent progress and flourish in their learning.</p>			
Information				
School	St Michael's Church of England Primary School, Great Lever	Inspection date	8 December 2022	
URN	105214	VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary aided	
Diocese/District	Manchester	Pupils on roll	480	
Headteacher	Matthew Worden			
Chair of Governors	Margaret Brockie			
Inspector	Sue Mawdsley	No.	930	