

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Michael's Church of England First School, Minehead	
Address	Minehead, TA24 5NY
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

School's vision
<p>"I have come to bring life in all its fullness." John 10:10</p> <p>Through these words, at St Michael's our vision is for all in our caring, school community to support one another to inspire, nurture and challenge, enabling everyone to do their best and to achieve more than they ever thought possible, thus reaching their true potential. Children and adults in our school live their lives to the fullest and aspire to flourish at everything they do.</p>
Key findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaders raise the importance of the vision to drive improvements, so all see the difference it makes. At present, approaches to monitoring are not systematically undertaken or cover all aspects of being a Church school. • Staff develop supportive relationships with pupils and families which promote a high degree of trust. There is a tangible sense of being part of a caring community where all are valued. • The dedication and enthusiasm of leaders of religious education (RE) raises its importance, with a cohesive and well planned curriculum. However, assessment procedures lack rigour and do not always enable pupils' progress to be tracked. • An influential culture of aspiration enhances learners' belief in their own ability. Collective worship makes a positive contribution to this, however, systematic planning lacks depth and detail and is not shared. • The support for pupils who have specific educational needs or / disabilities (SEND) and vulnerable pupils is well developed. The Beacon Education Multi-Academy Trust (BE) makes significant contributions, enhancing this provision.
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish a systematic approach for leaders at all levels to evaluate the impact of the vision. This will lead to ongoing foci for improvements on all aspects of this Church school. • Create more rigorous strategies to assess pupils' progress in RE. This will enable vulnerable pupils to be supported, so they flourish. • Ensure planning for collective worship is more detailed and progressively extends pupils' understanding of key themes. This will deepen pupils' understanding of the vision for their daily lives.

Inspection findings

Leaders bring stability and clarity following challenging times. They give greater importance to the vision and use it to drive improvements as a Church school. Aware that it lacks a clear Christian distinctiveness, leaders use the Bible verse to underpin all they do. This vision addresses the needs of the community by raising aspirations. It extends pupils' understanding of difference and diversity and the wider world. Pupils have a growing comprehension of the importance of the vision. They articulate where it encourages them to tackle new work and persist when learning is challenging. Pupils refer to class photos of the vision being lived out and share how these shape their community. This approach is rapidly growing the effectiveness of this Church school. Leaders explain the biblical principles underpinning the vision. Fundamental to this is God's love for all, seen through Jesus and how he treats others. This love wants all to be the best person each can be and flourish. The vision is clearly driving improvements. This is evident in widening experiences of the locality. It is evident in enabling pupils with particular needs to make greater progress. There is a focus on recognising and celebrating individual talents. The staff team are committed to this vision and live it out daily, so all see the difference it makes. There is a tangible sense of growing together. Leaders' monitoring is astute, they are fully aware of where the school is and prioritise action. Whilst evaluations are more robust, they do not consider all aspects of being a Church school. Neither do they identify ongoing foci for improvement.

Being the best person you can be reflects the vision. This shapes an emerging culture of high aspirations and expectations. Central to this are the quality of relationships between all. Pupils trust staff, feeling safe to try new challenges, knowing they will be supported. They talk of mistakes being important as they learn from these. Celebrations of their talents effectively raise their self-belief. There are a wide range of extra learning activities. Bowls is a commendable example, enabling greater links with the wider community. Visitors, who talk about careers, widen their horizons, extending thinking of life-long learning. The language of values is woven across daily life. For example, pupils talk of perseverance and its importance. The provision for learners with SEND is influential. It draws on effective practices with Beacon Education. Individualised plans effectively nurture vulnerable learners. Social and emotional needs are well met. Pupils recognise their emotions, enabling individualised strategies to be put in place which support them. Mental health of all is recognised as important, with approaches that are valued.

Redesigning learning experiences enables pupils to extend their understanding of the vision by exploring the wider world. Visits stimulate interest, readily engaging learners. The profile of spirituality is high, with a range of opportunities for reflection, which are valued. Some rich opportunities enable pupils to explore the wonder of the world in greater depth. A clear understanding of spirituality guides the school's approach. Pupils record their thinking in class reflection folders which show a growing depth of ideas. However, intentional experiences for spiritual flourishing are not recorded in planning. Pupils talk thoughtfully of their appreciation of difference and diversity. Literature books featuring various cultures raise challenging questions. Pupils who have an awareness of diversity lead presentations on their customs and beliefs, enhancing respect for all. Leadership opportunities enable pupils to take action on issues they feel are important. Eco-warriors challenge greater recycling, resulting in a beach clean. More individuals are confident to become advocates for change. Pupils revelled in a governors' challenge to design a project that ended in support for the lifeboat station.

Partnerships enrich the school's provision, enabling each to fulfil their potential. The current Trust provides a network of collaboration and sharing of expertise. Focused monitoring

strengthens initiatives with next steps. The school shares its expertise in some areas, whilst leaders enhance Christian distinctiveness in other Church schools. The diocese provides focused training for developing middle leaders, raising their effectiveness. Parish leaders influentially extend links with the school in conjunction with Exmoor project leaders. They lead workshops on Christian festivals bring these to life, extending pupils' appreciation of their significance.

The vision shapes this caring community. Pupils of all ages play well together making fulfilling relationships. They show respect and dignity to everyone. Pupils recognise how Christian values shape their actions. This is deepened by weekly awards for individuals living out the vision. This enables everyone to perceive the various instances where they make a difference. Forgiveness is an essential part of this where each learn how actions can hurt others.

RE enables pupils to gain a deeper understand the significance of the vision. The leaders are dedicated, identifying high quality practice which is trialled. Planning is cohesive, so themes are progressively explored, with clear objectives for learning. The introduction of 'Understanding Christianity', an RE resource, raises staff and pupils' knowledge of the subject. Steadily this is extending pupils' thinking of core religious concepts. As a result, they have a better knowledge of specific religious vocabulary. Pupils are confident to share ideas in response to key questions of meaning and purpose. They listen to one another and value others' opinion. Knowledge of worldviews is good, recognising similarities which extend pupils' thinking. Whilst assessment strategies are in place, they lack rigour, so progress is not fully monitored.

Collective worship is fundamental to enriching understanding of the vision and what it looks like. It shapes pupils' thinking, their attitudes and actions. It involves everyone and is invitational. Exploring Jesus' teaching extends the importance of Christian values for living. Worship prefects lead parts of worship. Increasingly they plan and lead, significantly when celebrating Christian festivals. They are confident to act out dramas of Bible stories. Some pupils spontaneously say prayers at the close of worship linked to the theme. Their appreciation of prayer is good, they value these times using different sentence stems to help them. The 'prayer shed' is a safe place to be calm. However, planning lacks detail and is not shared with staff, so they are unable to develop themes further. Monitoring has resulted in worship prefects being introduced and more contemporary songs.

Information			
School	St Michael's Church of England First School, Minehead	Inspection date	17 March 2023
URN	142819	VC/VA/Academy	Academy
Diocese/District	Bath & Wells	Pupils on roll	146
MAT/Federation	Beacon Education Trust		
Headteacher	Richard Smith		
Chair of Governors	Jane Bellamy		
Inspector	David Hatrey	No.	844