

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Michael's Church of England Junior School, Aldershot	
Address	Church Lane East, Aldershot, GU11 3SS
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>Inspired by him, we serve the community of St Michael's by creating an inclusive learning culture where all differences are respected, where courage is shown to face and overcome adversity, and resilience is embedded in our journey to success so we can be the very best we can be.</p> <p>'Love the LORD our God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind' and, 'Love your neighbour as yourself.' Luke 10:27</p>
Key findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The vision which is rooted in the Gospel of St Luke, enriches and drives the strategic journey of the school. Through their dedicated service to the community, leaders, staff and governors inspire all, enabling pupils and adults to flourish. • Deeply embedded values are woven through a progressive and creative curriculum. The school celebrates its rich diverse community, where pupils are nurtured as unique individuals. • Pupils are provided with creative opportunities to experience awe and wonder. The vision inspired exploration of 'big questions' establishes moments for spiritual reflection. The impact of such opportunities is still unclear. • Vision inspired inclusive worship provides pupils and adults with moments to pray or reflect. The shared commitment to innovative worship is mirrored by the church of St Michael's. • Religious education (RE) is planned and taught creatively. The shared vision and values thread through RE providing pupils with the ability to develop personal views whilst respecting others. Pupils share they would value further opportunities to deepen their understanding of diversity and religious beliefs.
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enrich collective worship, sharing pupil contributions and achievements with the wider community. • Establish a shared understanding of spirituality within the curriculum so that pupils can articulate the impact of such rich experiences on their lives. • Enrich pupils' understanding of religious beliefs and world views through wider engagement with faith communities.



Inspection findings

St Michael's Church of England school is a large junior school which sits at the heart of its community. The Christian vision, an interpretation of St Luke's Gospel, promotes the embedded values of respect, courage, and resilience. The dedication of leaders inspires the wider community of adults. They establish a loving family atmosphere, where all are cherished for their uniqueness. Governors support leaders, working tirelessly to monitor the impact of the vision-led journey of improvement. Through a planned strategy day, governors evaluate their own flourishing and effectiveness. Parents particularly value the individual support for pupils, enabling them to grow in confidence and make progress. The commitment to recognising the wellbeing of adults and pupils is a priority for leaders. This is lived out through the provision of quality time for staff and creative outdoor learning for pupils. Members of the community comment that the school is in 'a better place' due to the compassionate vision of leaders.

A well-planned curriculum, rooted in the vision and values, considers the needs of the multiculturally rich community. The vision drives continuous efforts to provide opportunities for the pupils to be 'the best they can be'. Pupils speak positively about their learning and how they are encouraged to be courageous which develops their confidence. The 'passport of skills', identifies skills for each year group enabling pupils to develop holistically, teaching them how to cross the road or administer first aid. Activities within the curriculum referred to as 'metaphorical windows, doors and mirrors' inspire pupils to experience the awe and wonder of creation. For example, pupils speak enthusiastically about the newly hatched ducklings and their growing sunflowers. Leaders recognise that an ability to define such experiences would provide all with a language of spirituality when evaluating impact.

The vision inspired focus on behaviour and relationships is enabling pupils to live well. Adults demonstrate positive relationships which inspires pupils to treat each other and those who care for them with respect. Restorative conversations enable pupils to play within a harmonious atmosphere. The dedication of the pastoral team is valued by parents. They share that pupils have flourished because of the tailored care provided.

The school encourages pupils to love their neighbours actively in their donations to charities. The provision of language support for new families is a strength of the school. Young interpreters sit alongside their peers which enables them to learn and grow in confidence. Pupils have opportunities to lead others through the worship team or as school ambassadors. They share that these roles help them make a difference and feel listened to. The development of the school allotment also provides rich opportunities for pupils to increase their confidence whilst growing food to share with others. Pupils recognise they have a responsibility to their community. They proudly sharing their cereal box domino collection for the 'Grub Hub' or donation of hair to the Princess Trust. Pupils also live out their values, responding to disasters across the world, holding bake sales or non-uniform days.

Adults and pupils speak positively about the inclusive nature of collective worship. Thoughtful planning links themes with passages from the Bible. Leaders benefit from the expertise offered by the Diocese of Guildford. Singing is cherished, with pupils sharing their favourite songs. Sensitive leadership of worship means that pupils and staff feel comfortable to attend without joining prayers if this is not their tradition. The 'Growing Faith Hub' strengthens the service of the church and school to local families but ensures that this is inclusive and sensitive to the multicultural community. Pupils share their enjoyment of acting out stories from the Bible because this helps them remember the teaching of Jesus and his message for all. Within class worship, there are opportunities to follow up on and respond to 'big questions'. Often responses within the class reflection books demonstrate the respect

pupils have for one another. One entry states that 'walking in others' shoes helps us change our first opinion'. Whilst there are reflection areas within classes, these predominantly include Christian prayers. It is not clear how areas are used by pupils with different religious beliefs or world views. Leaders are thinking creatively about how to encourage moments for prayer or reflection in different parts of the school. The developing worship garden provides nurture and times for deeper reflections.

Leadership of RE has vision and is prioritised within the curriculum. The school follows the locally agreed Hampshire syllabus with the support of Guildford Diocese. The vision through the expression of values is threaded through learning. This enables pupils to learn about Christianity alongside world faiths such as Hinduism or Islam. Concepts such as belonging and community are highlighted so that pupils can develop a sense of the impact of faith on a person's life. Pupils share their beliefs, developing their own confidence whilst deepening respect for others. Posters about Ramadan enable a greater understanding of fasting for non-Muslim pupils. The school hosts the RE network meetings so that teachers benefit from dialogue with other professionals. RE is enriched by 'pause days' each term where pupils are provided with opportunities to exercise deeper thinking on the 'Understanding Christianity' themes of creation or salvation. Learning activities are deliberately creative and enjoyable for pupils so that they remember concepts. Pupils speak warmly of their visit to St Michael's to learn about Christianity. However, they share a desire to enrich their understanding of Hinduism or Islam.

Information			
School	St Michael's Church of England Junior School, Aldershot	Inspection date	16 June 2023
URN	116333	VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary controlled
Diocese/District	Guildford	Pupils on roll	370
Headteacher	Jenny Jones		
Chair of Governors	Alan Jenner		
Inspector	Helen Crolla	No.	918