

## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Michael's Church of England VA Primary School, Marlborough	
Address	Back Lane, Aldbourne, Marlborough, SN8 2BP

School vision
A school where a love for learning and an appreciation of God's world will last our children a lifetime.
School strengths
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The powerful, well-articulated vision nurtures and guides all aspects of the work of this Church school. This ensures pupils and adults flourish.</li> <li>• The bespoke, research-informed curriculum wholly reflects the Christian vision. Pupils thrive as a result of rich learning experiences.</li> <li>• Collective worship is deeply valued by pupils and adults. Exceptionally well-developed relationships with the local church enrich the worship life of the school.</li> <li>• Relationships across the school are strong and supportive. This leads to a culture of high aspiration where pupils and adults are treated well.</li> <li>• Highly effective subject leadership in religious education (RE) drives an innovative and continually evolving curriculum. As a result, pupils learn very well.</li> </ul>
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extend opportunities to explore injustice and deepen pupils' understanding of global issues. This will build on their aspiration to be more effective agents of change.</li> </ul>
Inspection findings
<p>The Christian vision, and the values of respect, honesty and love, are central to life at St Michael's. Leaders, governors and staff talk with enthusiasm about how these are lived out. Governors know and support the school well. They effectively monitor and evaluate the impact of the vision and values ensuring these remain central to the school's work. The vision is enhanced by a close relationship with the local church. This is rightly seen as 'the school and church working to anchor the community in love'. Leaders and governors use the vision as their guide when making important decisions. For example, choices about staffing allow leaders and teachers to support local and national partners by sharing their professional expertise. Furthermore, the school's highly effective coaching model was recently recognised in a national publication following a visit by its renowned author. This results in the vision having a transformative impact beyond the school.</p> <p>Leaders are rightly proud of their bespoke curriculum. It clearly reflects the vision of a 'lifetime love for learning'. Leaders' curriculum decisions are wisely informed by extensive educational research. This means that pupils thrive because lessons are exciting and challenging. Classrooms are inviting spaces that inspire pupils and showcase their achievements. The school's approach to continuous provision in Reception and Key Stage 1 is particularly impressive. This enables pupils to learn well through play and exploration. At breaktimes, vision-driven Outdoor Play and Learning (OPAL)</p>

provides varied opportunities for pupils to flourish in the widest sense. For example, they love taking part in gardening, stage shows, numerous sports and den building. This develops their skills in cooperation and teamwork. The curriculum is rich with opportunities to grow spiritually. This enables pupils to reflect and ponder deep questions. They value opportunities to 'stop, think and breathe' throughout the day. Leaders work relentlessly to improve the learning experiences of pupils considered to be vulnerable and disadvantaged. Driven by the Christian vision, this provision has a transformative impact on pupils and their families.

The vision is at the heart of collective worship, which is a cherished part of each day. Staff and pupils find comfort in its familiar shape. This begins with a beautifully sung candle song and concludes with an invitational 'St Michael's prayer'. Pupils love coming together with their peers. Staff value the spiritual space and thinking time. Celebration worship is appreciated across the school community as an 'injection of joy'. Strong links with the local church and benefice significantly enhance the school's worship life. Creative and wise planning for special events such as 'Education Friday' allows more parents to share in the enjoyment of worship. Clergy visit regularly to provide much valued pastoral care, in addition to supporting pupils' and adults' understanding of spirituality. Pupils particularly enjoy the variety brought by weekly visits from the committed Open the Book team. They delight in helping with the drama and experiencing a different worship style. As a result, pupils can remember a range of Bible stories and teachings. Because pupils take an active part in leading and evaluating worship, they are able to shape its ongoing development. This means it has a deep impact on pupils and their spiritual development. Dedicated areas in each classroom provide a special space for prayer and reflection. Pupils use these meaningfully. A painting expressing the school's vision threads throughout the building. These paintings watch over the community, providing comfort and reassurance.

The Christian vision enables leaders to create a community built on love and respect. Relationships across the school are exceptionally strong. Pupils behave well, are polite and support each other lovingly. They have a range of strategies to help them disagree peacefully and resolve disputes if needed. Pupil leadership roles ensure everyone works together successfully. They delight in these opportunities to contribute to school life. Pupils are proud to be house captains and carry out their duties with impressive maturity. They recognise the importance of this position and understand how those chosen must model the school's values. Year 6 buddies actively support Reception pupils to feel safe and part of the school. This enables them to show and develop responsibility and empathy. Warmth and compassion characterise these relationships and they are key to building community. Parents value and recognise the positive impact of these leadership roles beyond the school. The Christian vision empowers leaders to prioritise mental health and wellbeing. Staff are overwhelmingly appreciative of how leaders actively support workload reduction. They value their professional trust and a culture where ideas and risk taking are encouraged. Furthermore, pupils are well supported by Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) and Forest ELSA provision. Play therapy supports the most vulnerable. These approaches have a remarkable impact on both pupils and adults.

Guided by the Christian vision, pupils engage in a range of fundraising, charity partnerships and social action projects. This is beginning to develop their understanding of their role as agents of change. They challenge leaders on environmental issues. For example, they have written to the headteacher declaring a climate emergency and insisting the school reduce its energy use. They are passionate about their engagement with local conservation initiatives such as the churchyard 'Count on Nature' project. Supported by a local zoologist, this encourages pupils to consider how their choices impact the local area. Pupils at St Michael's make a difference. Fundraising for a charity supporting deaf and disabled children in Zimbabwe gives a global dimension to their work. Pupils have a keen sense of justice and responsibility. They are ambitious and determined to have a greater impact. As one pupil noted, 'I think we could be doing more to challenge injustice'.



RE has a high profile within the school and is a priority for leaders, teachers and governors. Pupils have impressive knowledge of biblical teaching. They demonstrate a well-developed understanding of a range of religions and worldviews. Pupils give powerful examples of how RE lessons help them to enhance their understanding of the world. They see this as crucial for everyday life as it enables them to be respectful and tolerant. Pupils are proud of their work and enjoy their lessons. They are curious in their learning. Challenging questions are explored through a range of thought-provoking activities. Pupils value the opportunity to extend and develop their thinking. The well-sequenced and well-balanced curriculum is complemented using additional resources. These are used successfully to further deepen pupils' knowledge of Christianity. RE teaching is highly effective. Coaching triplets ensure teachers continually refine their practice. Pupils' work is of a very high standard. They make rapid progress in RE because of the rich, well-structured curriculum. A detailed approach to assessment checks how well pupils achieve over time. This information is used incisively to continually enhance teaching and learning. Leaders work relentlessly to continually develop the effectiveness of the curriculum, ably supported by diocesan training and guidance. Clergy provide expert support to develop teachers' subject knowledge. Monitoring activities by leaders and governors ensure lessons are challenging, relevant and diverse.

The 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	2 May 2024	URN	126392
VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary aided	Pupils on roll	197
Diocese	Salisbury		
MAT/Federation			
Headteacher	Judith Arkwright		
Chair	Nigel Payne		
Inspector	Christian McGuinness	No.	2113