

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

### St Michael's Church of England Primary School Bamford

<b>Address</b>	Bury & Rochdale Old Road, Heywood, OL10 4BB		
<b>Date of inspection</b>	04/03/2019	<b>Status of school</b>	Voluntary Aided Primary
<b>Diocese</b>	Manchester	<b>URN</b>	105813

<b>Overall Judgement</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?		
<b>Additional Judgements</b>		
<b>The impact of collective worship</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Excellent</b>
<b>The effectiveness of religious education (RE)</b>	<b>Grade</b>	<b>Excellent</b>

#### School context

St Michael's is a smaller than average primary school with 231 pupils on roll. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. A small number of pupils are from faiths other than Christianity. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is below national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is below national averages. Since the previous inspection the school has appointed a new deputy headteacher.

#### The school's Christian vision

'Every child is enveloped in a warm, safe, Christian embrace. We trust in each other and enjoy our educational adventure. Through high expectations, endless encouragement and quality teaching, we believe in, and aspire to reaching our full potential. Children move on knowing that with effort, commitment, engagement and self-belief they are ready to spread their wings and fly.' This is based on Ephesians 2:10, 'We are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works.'

#### Key findings

- The inspirational and creative Christian leadership of the headteacher, ensures the school continues to thrive. This results in pupils' exceptional flourishing, transforming lives at St Michael's and beyond.
- Outstanding, mutually supportive relationships and highly innovative partnership work relentlessly drive the school's Christian vision forward.
- The school's Christian vision underpins and enriches all that is so special about St Michael's. The highly pertinent biblical roots and underlying theology beneath the vision are understood by all members of the school community. They make a tangible difference to how they live their daily lives.
- The exceptional contribution of highly inclusive and invitational collective worship promotes the Christian vision and underpins school life. It inspires children to be their absolute best, whilst living out the vision in the daily Christian workmanship of the whole school community.
- The quality of teaching and learning in RE is excellent. Children's religious literacy is highly developed. Rigorous assessment and planning of key concepts ensure all pupils make excellent progress.

#### Areas for development

- To implement plans, already in place, to deepen pupils' understanding of global partnerships and world views.
- To create an efficient, electronic recording system for RE assessment that quickly identifies progress and informs teachers' RE planning. This will confirm and embed RE as a core subject at St Michael's.

How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?

### Inspection findings

St Michael's is a very special school. All who enter are welcomed and wrapped in its Christian embrace. The Bishop of Middleton describes it as a 'worshipping, praying, serving, Christian community with Jesus Christ at its heart'. The Christian vision and its biblical roots permeate the life of the school and the relationships within it. The vision, and its underpinning theology, is owned and understood by all members of the school community. It shapes the strategic and operational direction of the school equipping pupils well for the future. Leaders' innovative thinking makes a difference to the way the school transforms the lives of its children. The passionate Christian leadership of the headteacher, drives the vision forward. She is supported by knowledgeable and committed governors. The vision ensures all are actively engaged in doing God's work. Pupils say 'It makes us succeed and fly.' Continued professional development impacts strongly on all staff and governors. This leads to innovative practice in school, and beyond. Staff have developed as future school leaders. Governors rigorously monitor and evaluate the school's vision and effectiveness as a church school. The robust systems governors adopt to conduct their business, ensure this excellent school continues to evolve and improve.

Parents value the strong link with St Michael's church. They say their children are inspired by the incumbent's visits. Partnerships with other churches, schools and the local community are exceptionally strong. Leaders initiate creative and innovative work through partnerships. These impact on how the vision influences and transforms the lives of others. The diocese identifies the school as a 'centre of excellence'. Participation in the church's Fifth Mark of Mission project led to a link with a school in an area of social deprivation. This enables pupils to share the wonder of God's creation with children considered to be disadvantaged. Pupils from an urban community join St Michael's pupils for outdoor, adventurous activities at a local country park. The church congregation describes the school as 'the centre of the community' and the pupils as the 'heart of the church'. They appreciate being invited into school for special events, for example, a remembrance service.

The school is highly effective at meeting the needs of all its pupils. All aspire to reach their full potential. Pupils consistently perform above the national average in statutory assessments. The strong Christian ethos ensures exceptional support for children with their learning and well-being. Pastoral support for the whole school community is second to none. Staff morale is high. They speak with gratitude of the 'open door' policy of the headteacher, and of how leaders and colleagues sustain them in times of need. Pupils have no hesitation in seeking support from adults in school. They feel safe, listened to and cared for. One pupil spoke of the unwavering love and support of the school during a time of bereavement. Parents are overwhelmingly complimentary about the school. One spoke of the impact of the Christian vision on a looked after child in her care. The compassion shown to the pupil from staff and parents/carers had a tangible impact on the child's emotional wellbeing and flourishing.

Teaching of RE relentlessly explores and unpicks the biblical roots of the vision. Pupils say 'we are God's people, we are his work. He makes us to do the right thing.' Children seamlessly relate their learning to Christian values and their own lives. Pupils are God's workmanship in practice. They have a sound understanding of the Christian belief in the Holy Trinity, describing Jesus as 'the form of God on earth'. The dedicated staff team constantly enrich pupils' religious literacy. They challenge, extend thinking and nurture independent, questioning individuals. Faith leaders praise the articulate and informed way pupils explore the beliefs of others. Pupils ask searching questions and enter into respectful dialogue with interest. The rich and vibrant learning environment exemplifies the high quality and depth of pupils' responses to the mission of the school.

Pupil voice and leadership are key outcomes of the vision. The Children's Rights Group represent the school's commitment to tackling injustice. The group planned assemblies to promote action against hate crime. They also featured in the 'We are one' short film with other local schools. The headteacher led a working party of RE leaders to develop lesson plans around the film. This is typical of the school's innovative work through its partnerships. Pupils lead a range of social action projects including helping a local food bank. The established work of the school choir, supporting a local hospice, reflects Christian service and the biblical roots of the vision. One pupil said, 'It's how we live our Christian values.' Global partnerships, for example with a school through Water Aid, give pupils a sense of inequality that exists in the world. Although they speak of how charities transform the lives those 'not as lucky as us', they lack a broader understanding of these issues beyond specific

examples. The pupils' ethos and worship committee ensures pupil voice shapes worship. A group of pupils asked to lead worship to introduce the charity work they had identified as a social action project.

Pupils access a plethora of spiritual development opportunities across the curriculum. A camping trip enabled pupils to build resilience and immerse themselves in the natural world. Pupils engage in articulate and considered dialogue around the Christian vision, a range of beliefs and social issues. They demonstrate maturity in their ability to disagree well and resolve conflict. 'Heartsmart' impacts tangibly on pupils' character development and emotional health. Relationships and sex education (RSE) impacts well on pupils' attitudes to diversity. Pupils speak knowledgeably about different kinds of families and how all are special in their own right.

Collective worship is a special time of day. It is invitational and inclusive. The small number of pupils from faiths other than Christian are fully included. Muslim pupils share their own prayers to Allah. Pupils sing words of praise with beauty and joy. They articulate a highly developed sense of the purpose of worship and use of prayer. They value reflection, saying they think, pray and ask for God's help. Pupils share personal prayers, written at home. Parents say their children use prayer to help them at home. Pupils learn about the diversity of Christian practice. Links with a United Reform Church and a Roman Catholic primary school enhance this. Pupils engage with the Eucharist in formal and exploratory ways and are invited to plan and lead worship. They do this with purpose and confidence. Pupils' evaluations of worship indicate the depth of spiritual development and understanding of core concepts. Music is frequently used to enhance spiritual development. All recommendations from the previous SIAMS inspection have been addressed.



**The effectiveness of RE is Excellent**

The quality of teaching and learning in RE is excellent. Subject leadership is strong. RE is taught using a range of pedagogical approaches. Strong links across the curriculum deepen understanding. Children studied Da Vinci's 'Last Supper' painting, deepening their thoughts around Holy week. RE teaching provides an abundance of opportunities for children to ask and ponder 'big questions' about life and death. The rigorous assessment system and careful planning around core concepts, religious literacy and major world faiths and world views ensure all pupils make good or better progress. As part of its innovative approach to making improvements, leaders are looking to improve the efficiency of recording assessment electronically in line with RE's place as a core subject. Children have a deep knowledge, and understanding of, a wide range of stories from the Bible. They talk confidently about how Christians strive to live out the values the life of Jesus teaches them about. They can relate these Christian values articulately to their own lives.

Headteacher	Melanie Barratt
Inspector's name	Anne Barker
Quality Assurance	Lyn Field (inspector number 151)