

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

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

Ratcliffe Drive,  
Stoke Gifford,  
Bristol,  
BS34 8SG

<b>Current SIAMS inspection grade</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>
<b>Diocese</b>	<b>Bristol</b>
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	South Gloucestershire
Date of inspection	21 June 2017
Date of last inspection	9 May 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	109228
Headteacher	Mark Freeman
Inspector's name and number	Daphne Spitzer NS No 37

#### School context

St Michael's is a very large primary school situated in Stoke Gifford, on the northern outskirts of the city of Bristol. It has 653 children on roll, the numbers having increased since the last inspection. The majority of children are from White British heritage families, with about 17% from a minority ethnic background. The proportion of children with special education needs and /or physical disabilities (SEND) is close to the national average. The proportion eligible to receive the pupil premium grant is in line with the national average.

#### The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Michael's as a Church of England school are outstanding

- The school's Christian vision and values have a strong impact on the whole life of the school.
- The partnership between the school and church communities is exceptionally close and contributes significantly to the school's distinctive Christian character.
- The high quality of children's spiritual awareness, promoted by the school's curriculum and Christian character, has a profound impact on their academic achievement, personal development and well-being.
- The vision of the headteacher and leadership team drives the continuous improvement of the school's distinctive Christian character thereby raising its impact.

#### Areas to improve

- Develop children's understanding of Christian traditions in worship in order to increase their understanding of Anglican practice.

### **The school, through its distinctive Christian character, is outstanding at meeting the needs of all learners**

St Michael's is a very warm and highly welcoming Christian community. The school's explicit set of four values are deeply rooted in Christian teaching and have a profound impact on all aspects of the life of the school. A secure inclusive environment is created in which all children are cherished, nurtured and highly valued in line with the core Christian belief that each is unique and special. The school's Christian value of love, rooted in God's love and promoted by the school prayer, is recognised by children as a key part of the school's Christian character. The knowledge that they are loved by God, the whole school community, including the church community has a significant impact on their confidence and self-esteem. Staff have an excellent understanding of spirituality. This is evident in its role as one of three core themes which alongside the school's four values, are integral to the school curriculum. Regular high quality experiences and opportunities to promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are planned in the whole school curriculum and are highly effective. For example, themed weeks focussing on literacy and the arts enrich children's enjoyment of school and their learning. Weeks celebrating cultural diversity have had a profound impact on children's understanding and respect for other faiths and diverse communities. Children speak about their developing sense of knowing themselves which enhances self-belief and optimises learning. This has a good impact on their academic achievement. Children's high level of spiritual awareness is also demonstrated in the way they show compassion, often for people who are vulnerable. Reflective corners in classrooms and reflective journals encourage children to think deeply about a range of aspects of the curriculum and school life. Relationships throughout the school, and particularly amongst children, are outstanding. Children say that their values of love and forgiveness contribute significantly to the way they care and show respect for one another. Various opportunities are provided for children to interact and learn together in mixed age groups such as for special curriculum events. In this way, good working relationships are encouraged across the school. Very effective teaching in religious education (RE) enhances children's interest in and understanding of the global role of Christianity and other faiths. 'Reserved RE', a school club led by the church children's minister demonstrates the high priority placed on the subject.

### **The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding**

Collective worship at St Michael's is outstanding because it proclaims and promotes the school's distinctive Christian character in a highly effective way. It is distinctly Christian, inspiring and transformational. Worship holds a place of central importance in the daily life of the school community. It is a highly spiritual experience. Children enter the hall in a quiet and reverent manner to the calming sound of reflective music which contrasts with lively interactive activities intended to provoke and stimulate deep thought and response. Worship is very closely in line with that of the local parish church. For example, the waving of flags, streamer dances and interactive singing led by children emphasise the joy of worship. A large number of church members, including the vicar and children's minister, lead worship on a weekly basis, including regular contributions from the 'Open the Book' team. A candle placed on a table with a coloured cloth is seen as a central focus for worship. The coloured cloth does not represent the season of the church year which reduces children's understanding of Anglican tradition and practice. All children are actively involved and have opportunities to plan and lead worship in a variety of ways, all of which contribute to their sense of ownership and understanding of the meaning of worship. Themes promote distinctive Christian values very well and these have an outstanding impact on the children's behaviour. They also strongly promote the school's Christian vision, setting it in the context of biblical teaching. For instance, children know that 'letting your talent shine' as Jesus did in his life is the same as serving others in their own lives. Children are developing a good understanding of the Trinity, with some demonstrating impressive views of its mystery. Worship is very effective in promoting spiritual development. A candle, understood as the symbol of Christ's light, is lit to aid reflection and prayer, often said or read by children. The school prayer based around the love promoted within the school end set in the context of God's love, has a profound impact on the whole community, symbolised by its role as one of their four core values. A restful and attractive central courtyard is well used as a quiet place for spiritual reflection. The Friday Quiet Room with its prayer tree and the prayer box whose prayers are taken to church are very effective in supporting a growing sense of personal spirituality. Children understand that they can pray anywhere at any time. Prayer is an important part of life at St Michael's, evident for example, from the weekly prayer walks around school taken by the collective worship leader and church members. The leadership of collective worship is outstanding. Worship is monitored and evaluated by the collective worship leader in a wide variety of ways. Feedback is shared with governors and issues raised addressed, actioned, resulting in improvements.

### **The effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school as a church school is outstanding**

The school's distinctive Christian character is of the highest quality, is deeply embedded and has a significant impact on the whole school community and beyond. The school's strong Christian vision and values are very well known and understood and are at the heart of the school's ongoing drive to improve and continually provide the best

education for every child. The headteacher's distributive style of leadership with its strong emphasis on teamwork contributes substantially to the school's success. The school's monitoring and self- evaluation systems are rigorous. All stakeholders, staff, parents, governors and children are involved and all viewpoints are valued. School leaders, including governors have an excellent understanding of the impact of the school's Christian character on children's behaviour as well as the whole life of the school. The area for development from the previous inspection has been addressed in a way that has led to significant improvement. The curriculum is vibrant and dynamic with spirituality embedded as a strong theme throughout. The foundation and pastoral committee, which includes a number of key staff and church members, meet regularly and offer support and challenge to the church school leadership. They monitor all aspects of the school's Christian character including the impact of children's reflective journals. They are currently addressing their aim to further deepen their vision in line with that of the diocese and Church of England. The school's partnership with the church is of exceptional quality. The unity of the two communities is shown in the comment that 'the church comes to the school'. The church community lives out its mission to make a difference and is highly supportive of the school community making a profound practical impact on families and children. The school's links with the diocese have led to substantial progress through training and consequent clear benefits for children. Religious education is given a prominent place within the school curriculum and both subject leaders benefit from up to date professional development which impacts very positively on the quality of learning for all children. The school meets the statutory requirements for RE and collective worship.

SIAMS report June 2017, St Michael's CE Primary School, Stoke Gifford, Bristol, BS34 8SG