

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St. Michael's Church of England Primary School

North Hill, Highgate, London N6 4BG

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Diocese	London
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Haringey
Date of inspection	27 February 2018
Date of last inspection	December 2012
Type of school and unique reference number	Voluntary Aided 102135
Headteacher	Geraldine Gallagher
Inspector's name and number	Gill Walley 644

School context

St. Michael's is a two form entry primary school with 452 pupils on roll, drawn mostly from the local area. The school has close links with the parish church and two neighbouring parish churches. The incumbent was new to post in September 2017. The school was judged to be good by Ofsted in March 2015. Pupils come from a range of minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion who speak English as an additional language is increasing. A significant number of families worship at the parish church or in other local churches.

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

- The school has very close links with the parish church as well as two other local churches so that pupils learn about different traditions within the Church of England.
- RE teaching is outstanding and pupils make exceptional progress because the leadership of RE is exceptionally strong.
- Worship is very well planned and delivered so that pupils develop their understanding of the Christian faith and their personal spirituality.
- Governors and senior leaders monitor all aspects of the school's Christian distinctiveness rigorously so that worship and RE have very good impact on pupils' spiritual development and continue to improve.

Areas to improve

- Enable pupils to access the newly established Peace Garden for prayer and reflection more readily.

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

All pupils, irrespective of their background or ability, make good progress and most exceed the standards expected of them nationally. This is because the school's strong Christian ethos has a very high profile and supports each child to reach his or her full potential. The school's mission is 'To nurture and inspire children to develop a love of learning in a supportive Christian community to become the best they can be'. Staff and governors, along with parents and pupils, collaboratively developed the school's mission statement. The vision statement is 'We believe our children's future is created every day'. Leaders and staff provide every opportunity for them to succeed academically and to foster their well-being and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The mission statement determines the school's approach to any difficulties which a pupil may have, such as attendance or behaviour. Five Christian values, Endurance, Forgiveness, Koinonia, Friendship and Creation, are referred to

constantly through the school day. They are deeply embedded in the daily life of the school. Even the youngest pupils can explain the Bible stories which exemplify these values and how they can live out these values at home and at school. Opportunities for pupils' spiritual development are provided through very well planned worship and RE. Pupils are very confident to express their views and to discuss questions about faith. They particularly enjoy RE lessons and the opportunity to discuss what they believe with one another. Pupils of different faiths and of no faith say that everyone is treated in exactly the same way. Even if they do not share Christian beliefs, they say that they are good values to live by. Pupils behave extremely well and have excellent relationships with one another and with adults. They help one another and there are many opportunities for older pupils to work alongside younger ones. They feel safe, well supported and encouraged to have the highest aspirations. They say 'we all work together' and 'everyone wants to join in'. Older pupils understand that Christianity is a world faith and that Christians in different parts of the world worship in different ways. They enjoy learning about other faiths because this helps them to understand and respect other people in their community. Pupils are encouraged to care for others by supporting various charities and through the link with Kirima School in Uganda. This equips them for later life because they develop an understanding of different faiths and cultures. The school environment reflects the distinctiveness well with many displays of RE learning, including RE learning through art, symbols and values boards which remind the pupils of Christianity.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is outstanding

Worship is the most important part of the school day and pupils look forward to it because they can 'pray to God', 'learn about the Bible' and 'know about the life of Jesus'. It also 'makes us reflect on the school values and how we can show them to other people'. Adults find worship uplifting and they enjoy participating. They say the children 'feel they are part of a large family which extends beyond school into the wider community'. Worship is led by a range of visitors from the parish church and other local churches each week, and by different members of staff. Occasionally it is led by a visitor representing a charity the school is supporting nationally or globally. This exposes pupils to a range of styles of worship, although there are features in common. These include the greeting and the lighting of a candle for prayer, as well as the pupils sharing the prayers they have written themselves. Pupils also know the Lord's Prayer and enjoy singing Christian songs together. Worship is entirely Christian and develops pupils' understanding of the life of Christ and some Bible passages which demonstrate the five values. The time given to reflection develops their spirituality and sense of personal prayer as well as being united as a community. Each class also has a short time for daily meditation. Pupils know the seasons of the church year and see these reflected in the cloths used in the RE corners in each classroom. Older pupils understand the concept of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Pupils are greatly involved in planning and leading worship with each class taking a turn at presenting to the others and to their parents. The RE pupil team provides feedback on worship as well as RE lessons so that leaders know that it is relevant and engaging for everyone. Leaders and governors also carry out their own monitoring regularly and this enables them to identify steps they need to take to make worship even more meaningful and relevant for pupils. Worship is planned thoroughly with the incumbent and the staff who lead each day so that the theme is reinforced for the pupils through the week. Each week one of the values is in focus so that they are all discussed regularly. Teachers refer to these values throughout the day although parents do not know which value is in focus. This may prevent them talking to their children about them at home. Worship is held in the parish church at special times such as Michaelmas, Christmas and Easter so that pupils gain confidence in leading worship there. It also strengthens the close partnership between the school and the church. Parents enjoy attending these services and feel fully included in them.

The effectiveness of the religious education is outstanding

RE is at the heart of the curriculum. The RE leader has extensive experience and knowledge of the subject. He has supported all staff, including those who are less experienced, in their subject knowledge and their use of assessment so that teaching and learning is consistently outstanding. All teachers are now confident to teach RE to their classes. He leads staff development sessions frequently and has established very strong links with the diocese so that he can share current resources and guidance with teachers. Lessons are very engaging and interactive, with discussion and practical activities which inspire pupils. Pupils take pride in their RE books which reflect the outstanding progress they are making. Assessment is well used so that activities are pitched at the right level for all groups of pupils and there is a good level of challenge for the more able. As a result all pupils now make good and often outstanding progress in RE and reach standards considerably higher than expected. Teachers often teach or reinforce RE through other subject areas such as art and drama and this enthuses pupils greatly. They are proud to display their work in their classrooms, all of which have an area dedicated to RE and reflection. They are confident to challenge one another's views and to discuss questions of faith. RE gives pupils a thorough understanding of the Christian faith and also develops their knowledge of other world faiths. It reinforces the five Christian values extremely well and pupils are acknowledged for displaying them to one another in the 'Brilliant Book'. There is a particular emphasis on

drawing out the similarities between beliefs in different faiths which helps pupils to be tolerant and respectful. RE also reinforces pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and begins to prepare them for life in a multi-cultural society. The RE leader, senior leaders and governors monitor RE rigorously to ensure that it always meets the needs and interests of all pupils. This process identifies areas for further improvement which then form targets for the school's Learning Improvement Plan.

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

Leaders are excellent role models for pupils in living out the Christian vision and they promote the values throughout the life of the school extremely well. They have been determined to strengthen the school's Christian distinctiveness over time. For example, they have reviewed the vision and mission statement in collaboration with all groups of stakeholders, and together they have chosen the five values on which to concentrate. The recommendation of the last inspection report has been met. Leaders evaluate the distinctiveness accurately and identify areas they can develop further, reflecting carefully on the approach best suited to pupils' needs. They have empowered the pupils so that they are fully involved in this process. They have driven forward improvements so that all pupils make good or better progress from their starting points. Policies such as the attendance policy are driven by the determination to support every pupil and family. The curriculum has been developed so that it inspires learners and promotes excellent behaviour and attitudes. It also develops pupils' spirituality and confidence. The leadership of RE and worship are given high priority and this has ensured that these areas have consistently improved. Consequently, both RE and worship meet statutory requirements. Despite transition amongst the incumbents of the local churches, links with the churches have remained strong and are mutually beneficial. Pupils take part in church services and activities, while church events such as the summer community picnic are held in the school grounds. Governors have given thought to the future leadership of the school as a church school so that the Christian distinctiveness remains at its heart. The strength of the Christian distinctiveness is affirmed by parents who appreciate their children grow up understanding and demonstrating the Christian values. They see these values threaded through the school's work. All families are included and welcomed irrespective of their beliefs, and they regard it as a 'very special place'. New families are made especially welcome.

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