

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Michael's Church of England High School			
Address	Curral Road, Rowley Regis, West Midlands, B65 9AN		
Date of inspection	3 rd /4 th December 2019	Status of school	Voluntary aided secondary
Diocese	Birmingham	URN	I04019

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

School context

St Michael's is a secondary school with 1230 students on roll. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. Very few students speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who are considered to be disadvantaged is above national averages. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above national averages. The school has a focus provision for up to 20 pupils who have physical disabilities and/or medical needs. Since the last inspection the school has become voluntary aided and there has been a change in head teacher.

The school's Christian vision

Committed to Christian values: to show love, care and kindness to all in our community. To value what we have and to share with others. To enable everyone to achieve their full potential.

Key findings

St Michael's is a school where Christian values are known and lived out by every adult and pupil. These values express the vision and impact on every aspect of the life and work of the school.

- Distinctive Christian leadership is seen at every level, including amongst pupils, each one expressing the vision and taking the example of Jesus as a model for leadership.
- Since her appointment, the headteacher and senior leaders have ensured the vision is embedded, so that all adults and pupils are enabled to flourish and achieve their full potential.
- Collective worship is highly effective because it impacts on the lives of adults and pupils, empowering them to understand and live out the values of the school.
- Religious education (RE) is a significant strength of the school. Pupils excel in academic outcomes. Teaching and learning contribute substantially to their understanding of diversity.

Areas for development

- Working with the new school chaplain, further develop the links between St Giles church and other partner churches so that the already significant work being done can be developed to include the wider community.

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 an excellent school because of the transformational impact it has on pupils, families, staff and an extended community. Since her appointment 3 years ago, the headteacher has been inspirational in her energetic pursuit of excellence. Any barrier to the flourishing of pupils and staff is challenged and addressed. She and her leadership team, along with governors, have used the vision to underpin positive changes since the last inspection. Governors know the school well and are actively involved in its deepening Christian ethos. The vision impacts the decisions they make. Despite budgetary pressures, they have ensured that allowing pupils to achieve their full potential has been central. Adult to pupil staffing ratios are high. Leaders are supported by an enthusiastic staff team. They share their passion to provide the highest standard of education possible within a Christian setting. Each is prepared to go 'beyond the extra mile', and there are many examples of their care and nurture for pupils and their families. They model what it means to put others before self, and to show care and kindness. Pupils mirror the example staff live out. Staff love working at the school and are proud of what the school offers. They say that their wellbeing is high priority for leaders. Reducing their workload and being given opportunity to work flexibly for family reasons, are cited as two significant reasons. An appreciation day for staff was well received. Through messages written by pupils, staff understand how and why they are valued. They acknowledge that 'the ethos here is driven by everyone, including pupils, so we can all talk of flourishing'.

This school is outward facing. Engaging with the diocese and other schools is part of the outworking of the vision. The headteacher has been invited to work with the diocese on the establishing of a new church school. The school contributes to the work of education across diocesan schools by paying into the schools' partnership agreement. This is despite diocesan training being mainly for primary schools. Parents are delighted with the ways in which their children are helped to achieve their full potential academically, socially and morally. 'The school has a heart like no other school', typifies the comments made.

Driven by the vision, all staff deliver equality of opportunity for all pupils, in all aspects of school life. This enables each one to flourish. The broad curriculum is planned and delivered with the 'Michael's values' of mercy, integrity, care and compassion, humility, achievement, equality, leadership and service as central. Pupils therefore make connections between the values and their learning. A drama lesson gives pupils opportunity to explore how Christian values might be presented to younger children. Pupils' worth and confidence is built up allowing them to reach their potential. Pupils make at least good and, in some cases, strong progress across subjects. Disadvantaged pupils, including those in the focus provision, make exceptional progress. This is because support staff provide expert guidance, and work with teachers to ensure all lessons are fully inclusive. Support staff also show immeasurable personal care and compassion, both in and out of the classroom, ensuring the dignity of each individual. The STAR committee provides a platform for these pupils to consult and develop projects of concern to them. As a result, pupils who are wheelchair users now have more accessible gym equipment allowing them to participate fully in PE lessons.

Pupil leadership is a significant strength of the school. 'Student Voice' transforms the lives of pupils. Significant numbers of all ages and abilities engage with this. Leadership skills are developed, alongside a commitment to service. Pupils express this as helping them to value what they have, and to share with others. They speak with passion and maturity about the work they do. Involvement in Student Voice opens up horizons to pupils. One pupil said, 'the work we do gives people hope', and, 'we are shaping the community of the future.' A partnership with a local care home for the elderly is cited as a key example of intergenerational work. The project was extended from 3 weeks to 3 months because of the benefits to the elderly, and to the pupils. Since the project ended, some pupils continue to visit the care home. In excess of £35,000 has been raised for the local children's hospital. Many pupils and staff give significant amounts of their own time to do this. Pupils are guided in their work by a highly committed member of staff, who seeks to bring out the best in any pupil who wants to take part. The work of the group has been recognised by the police and crime commissioner, with an award for an outstanding community project. This aspect of the life of St Michael's school is not just transformational for pupils, but for staff and a community that goes well beyond their locality.

A leader for Christian ethos was appointed shortly after the headteacher began her role. He, along with other committed members of staff, have had a significant impact on the worship life of the school. Whole year group worship takes place in the hubs around the building. The worship offered is invitational allowing pupils to explore their own convictions without fear of criticism from peers. 'I don't think I believe in God,' said one pupil, 'but being in worship at school means I can at least think about whether God might be real or not'.

Discussions in form time give opportunity for issues raised in worship to be further explored. The school prayer, including the phrase, 'to act justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God', is biblical, yet invitational and inclusive, linking strongly to school values. Worship is thoroughly evaluated to ensure it is meeting the ongoing needs of the school community. School services are held at key times in the school year. These are planned and delivered by pupils and are highlights of the worshipping life of St Michaels'. Many adults and pupils speak of them as key moments for enabling them to reflect on the Christian story. A chapel is at the centre of the school building providing a place for reflection and prayer for all. Staff can meet together there once a week. They say it helps to give things a 'proper focus' for the week ahead. It also became a key place in the school for reflection and support after a Year 9 pupil died. Since the retirement of the part time chaplain, who was also the local vicar, a team of volunteers have worked in the school from a range of local churches. The breadth of the Christian faith they represent is a strength. A Pentecostal minister leads a time of reflection once a week at the staff briefing. Others have enabled pupils to further explore Christian faith, such as through the 'Grill a Christian' event. Pupils and adults speak of the positive way in which Christian faith is presented in the school.

Within the rich curriculum, RE makes a significant contribution to learning. Pupils talk of RE with enjoyment and enthusiasm. They value how the subject helps them to consider a wider world of diverse faiths and cultures. Outside of RE lessons, the multi-faith week was well received. Hearing about the role of faith in the lives of staff made a deep impression on many pupils. RE also enables pupils to engage in a deep exploration of Christianity. All of this is possible because the subject is seen as a priority in the school. All pupils at Key Stage 4 study RE to GCSE level. It is taught by highly skilled and knowledgeable specialist staff.

Everyone in this excellent church school clearly lives out an authentic and deeply held Christian vision. This transformational vision touches lives beyond the school, empowering each person to believe that they, too, can achieve all that God made them to be.



The effectiveness of RE is Excellent

All pupils, including the most vulnerable, perform significantly higher than pupils nationally by almost 1 GCSE grade. RE is the highest performing subject in the school for pupils at GCSE. Rigorous assessments take place throughout Key Stages 3 and 4. Detailed analysis can therefore be fed back to pupils to drive improvements. Pupils can identify strengths in the work they do and show understanding of how they need to improve. Teaching is therefore highly effective.

Headteacher	Jayne Gray
Inspector's name and number	Jane Lewis (27)