

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Michael's Church of England VA Infant School

Vision

A special place to learn and grow. We believe that if we open our hearts and minds to the possibilities, each and every one of us, no matter how small, can achieve and make a difference in our school and beyond. The parable of the Mustard Seed teaches us that God can do a lot with a little!

St Michael's Infant School is living up to its foundation as a Church school and is enabling pupils and adults to flourish. It has the following notable strengths.

Strengths

- The Christian Vision at St Michael's is lived out through leaders strategic planning and day to day exchanges. Staff understand their school's context and facilitate meaningful interactions to allow pupils to thrive.
- An abundance of opportunities is provided for pupils to develop spiritually. Collective worship allows pupils a safe space to explore the relevance of the school values in their lives.
- The vision, 'doing a lot with a little', drives meaningful, caring partnerships that make a difference in the school and beyond.
- The bespoke curriculum allows pupils to ask and answer deep questions as well as to take responsibility for their learning. Pupils are nurtured and encouraged to express their individuality, making decisions about their learning and how to express their opinions.
- Religious education (RE) offers well sequenced opportunities for pupils to build knowledge across a range of faiths and beliefs. Pupils demonstrate a depth of knowledge and express their views with confidence.

Development Points

- Continue to work with pupils on articulating what the vision and parable of the Mustard Seed means to them. In this way they can live out the high expectations leaders have to meet pupil needs and learning styles.
- Utilise St Michael's outward facing approach to support and develop an understanding of spirituality across the federation.



Inspection Findings

St Michael's is a special place to learn and grow. A close partnership with the federated school is enabling the school to embrace challenges in its strategic development with positivity. Governors are actively involved in the life of the school. They conduct monitoring, helping to develop the school into the future. They are also an important source of support for leaders and staff. Leaders have a vision for growth and new developments of the school. This can be seen in the new flexi-schooling offer they have introduced. Leaders regularly reflect on the school's vision to ensure its continuing relevance. In this way pupils see St Michael's as a special place where they are valued as individuals. At present the parable of the Mustard Seed is not known and understood by all pupils. As a result, they are unable to articulate what it means to them. Strong partnerships with the Diocese support leaders in their curriculum planning and in growing staff expertise. This inspires an environment that is driven to do its best for pupils. The federation makes a meaningful impact on the life of the school. Staff enjoy being part of both school communities, supporting each other in their learning, teaching and leading.

The vision, having 'open hearts and minds to the possibilities', is embodied in the bespoke curriculum. It is unique, being designed to meet the requirements of this small community. Pupils are encouraged to grapple with big questions and embrace the challenge of thinking deeply. They are taught responsibility for, and make decisions about, their own learning. As a result, pupils are engaged and enjoy their time in school. Staff are knowledgeable about pupils' starting points, targets and progress. In this way the most vulnerable pupils are enabled to flourish in their learning and development. Adults' constant interactions with pupils ensure they are well informed about progress. Bespoke next steps are then created, as appropriate, to help pupils learn and grow. Opportunities for spiritual development have been well thought out and woven through the curriculum. Leaders, staff and pupils demonstrate a shared understanding of spiritual development and its importance. This can be seen in the work of the 'spirituality spreaders group'. Pupils are given time and space in this group to respond creatively to the world around them. At present St Michael's have not shared this work across the federation. The school have also devised lessons to introduce pupils to a diverse range of individuals that have helped to shape the world. Pupils talk enthusiastically about this and how it impacts their lives, inspiring them to make changes in the local community. For example, their learning about David Attenborough has led the pupils to litter pick and make conscious decisions about their environment.

Collective worship is a central part of the school day. It enables pupils and adults to reflect on the vision and values so that they form a meaningful part of their daily life. Worship is carefully planned and sequenced, monitored and adapted for the community. Pupils understanding of spirituality is enhanced by practical activities. For example, a 'fizzy forgiveness' activity enabled pupils to let go of things that have gone wrong. Spirituality is further enhanced through worship allowing staff and pupils to think deeply, reflect and share ideas. All pupils are included and are supported to participate and respond in ways that are suitable to their needs. Governors regularly attend worship. Their monitoring shows that pupils respond with enthusiasm to the theme. A close supportive partnership with the church nurtures the worship life of the school. It also encourages and fosters links between the school and wider community, securing St Michael's position as a central part of village life.

At this school adults and pupils form a close, supportive community where people live well together. Pupils particularly value the school's 'bee rules' in helping them understand how to respect and treat one another. School leaders promote the celebration of difference, they value individual's opinions and are keen to make adaptations to suit pupils' needs. Staff take great pride in seeing pupils thrive and achieve. In this way the school has become a



place of understanding and safety that supports pupils to be the best they can be. Staff flourish here because their development is encouraged. They share subject leadership, training and planning, drawing colleagues around a common purpose. They are ready to step in and support one another when needed personally and professionally. Pupils and adults are continually interacting and communicating throughout the day. This builds pupils' confidence and teaches them that they matter.

RE is valued by staff and pupils at St Michael's. Training is shared effectively. As a result, staff are knowledgeable and supportive of each other. Pupils build knowledge of the Christian faith and different world faiths and views. Learning is enriched by visits to places of worship. Staff speak positively of the difference RE makes to pupils, exposing them to beliefs outside their own culture and community. Pupils retell Bible stories with confidence. They particularly enjoy learning about world faiths. Activities and discussion enable pupils to effectively apply learning to their own lives. This makes RE meaningful and purposeful.

The curriculum for RE is well sequenced and balanced, reflecting the vision that pupils are encouraged to be open to possibilities. It ensures that learning builds over time. The Diocese supports the training of leaders in the effective teaching of RE. Leaders regularly review plans to ensure they meet the pupils' needs and take the school's context into account. RE is given a prominent place in the school's curriculum and is regularly taught by school leaders. As a result, pupils produce a wealth of high-quality work through the year. A range of monitoring strategies, including a thorough process for assessment, ensures that pupils make progress. These in-depth processes help to uphold high standards in the subject.

Leaders are committed to helping pupils understand that they may be little in age and number, but they can make a big impact. Pupils are given key roles in school, such as being 'little governors'. Pupils take these roles seriously. This can be seen in their sponsored charity events and in prayers they write and lead in collective worship. Pupils learn that they can make a difference in the world from a young age. In this way pupils at St Michael's are empowered to speak up for themselves and others. Pupils are allowed to present ideas for fundraising and improving their community through events such as litter picking. By running such activities staff and pupils are sharing their special place to learn and grow with the wider community.

Information

Address	School Lane, Mickleham, Dorking, RH5 6EW		
Date	01 May 2025	URN	125170
Type of school	Voluntary Aided	No. of pupils	33
Diocese	Guildford		
Federation	Mole Valley Gateway Church of England Schools Federation		
Headteacher	Nicola Cleather		
Chair of Governors	Alok Agarwal and Patricia Ann Hand		
Inspector	Kate Penfold-Attride		