

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Michael's Church of England Primary School, Tenterden	
Address	Saint Michaels, Tenterden, TN30 6PU
How effective is the school's distinctive Christian vision, established and promoted by leadership at all levels, in enabling pupils and adults to flourish?	
Overall grade	Excellent
The impact of collective worship	Good

School's vision
<p>Based on the parable of the Good Samaritan</p> <p>Whoever you are, wherever you're from, we welcome you into our loving, learning community. This is a place that nurtures everyone with the wisdom and resilience to face all that life brings. Each and every person has the opportunity to flourish here and achieve their God-given potential.</p>
Key findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Christian vision is deeply embedded in the daily life of St Michael's. Everyone within the school community embodies the role of the Good Samaritan, quietly and humbly transforming lives. • There is an in-depth and robust monitoring and school improvement cycle. Led by school leaders and the local governing board, this impacts strongly on positive outcomes for all. • The school's vision, fully woven through the curriculum, inspires pupils to become advocates for change within their local community and beyond. • Collective worship is an affirming and joyful part of the daily life of the school. However, opportunities are missed to review, record and share the impact of collective worship for pupils, staff and families. • The meticulously and thoughtfully planned religious education (RE) curriculum ensures all pupils, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), achieve well.
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustain and further embed the 'Good Samaritan' practices across the school to enable future children, staff and families to flourish • Develop ways to capture and share the influence of collective worship across the school community. This will enable the identification of key strengths, as well as areas for development.

Inspection findings

In this school, the Christian vision is so deeply woven that it has become the way of life. The exceptional school leaders have built a culture where the active welcome and care for all is tangible. Underpinned by the parable of the Good Samaritan, the vision empowers everyone to treat others with acceptance and love. Leaders articulate an extensive understanding of the theological principles underpinning this. All within the school passionately articulate what the distinctive Christian vision means to them personally. Pupils rightly celebrate being Good Samaritans. They understand how the school values, the Fruits of the Spirit, teach them how to act. Role play 'Good Samaritan' boxes enable even the youngest pupils to understand the parable and its meaning. Leaders have ensured the Christian vision drives all aspects of strategic planning, policy and procedure. The strong local governing board's active monitoring provides effective support and challenge. A robust system of monitoring and self-evaluation drives school improvement in all areas. This has been shared within the Tenterden Schools Trust as an example of excellent practice.

Leaders at all levels have enhanced their knowledge and skills through accessing high quality training from the Diocese of Canterbury. There is a strong and mutually beneficial relationship between the school and its neighbouring church. Staff value the pastoral care provided for them by local clergy. Pupils benefit from experience days at St Michael's church and Godly Play sessions held in school. Local projects such as the Christmas big wrap and the foodbank are used by and supportive of the community. Alongside working closely with other settings in the trust, the school actively collaborates with other schools in the Tenterden Rural Alliance. All of this enhances provision and positively impacts on school improvement. Innovative staff appraisal and the culture of professional development is driven by the belief of God-given potential in all. Staff feel valued and listened to. Leaders recognise their potential, resulting in a transformational impact on their professional lives. The parable of the Good Samaritan underpins the offer of welcome and acceptance to all families. Parents appreciate how all pupils are treated as individuals and comment on the personalised support offered to them.

School leaders, alongside staff, have created innovative and cohesive learning opportunities that are sparked by the Christian vision. Themes such as 'The world united' and 'Inspiring People', provide a broad and rich experience. With ethical questions framing each topic, there are many occasions for reflection and discussion. A shared staff understanding of pupils' spirituality ensures there are both intentional and unplanned experiences for all. Pupils are passionate about local, regional and global issues of equity and justice. Topics including Victorians, slavery and human rights, provide opportunities to be agents of change. Unplanned chances for pupils to stand up for what is right are embraced. An example of this involved Year 6 pupils visiting a local secondary. They spoke to hundreds of students about the impact that local vandalism of their forest school had on them personally. A broad range of visits, visitors and extra-curricular clubs allow all to participate in a well-rounded learning experience. Carefully planned tailored support for all learners with special educational needs or disabilities ensures all make strong progress. Provision such as school-funded play therapy, drawing and talking plus emotional literacy sessions, have a notable impact on pupils.

There is a desire to ensure everyone is accepted and included. This brings long-lasting transformational change to the lives of the pupils, their families and staff. Whatever challenges or barriers to learning there are, nothing is seen as insurmountable. As an expression of the Christian vision, staff go above and beyond to serve those in the school community. The wellness of everyone within the community is paramount, with opportunities

to 'check-in' with each other integrated into daily life. Positive relationships underpinned by forgiveness and reconciliation enable all to thrive within this community. 'Good Samaritans' relish their role as ambassadors to promote the message of acceptance and love. They lead opportunities for all pupils to be agents for social change. This includes work with the local foodbank and on tackling climate change. Throughout the texts and topics chosen, pupils are provided with opportunities to embrace and celebrate the differences between people. Diversity week offers all within the school community the chance to learn from families different to their own.

Collective worship is the joyful heartbeat to this school starting in church on Mondays, setting the tone for the week. The example of the Good Samaritan and the values of the Fruits of the Spirit are woven into every day. There is space for role-play, singing, reflection, story and prayer. All major Christian festivals, as well as those of other faiths, are acknowledged and celebrated. With the support and coaching of leaders, staff are empowered to lead school worship. The pupil 'Good Samaritans' regularly plan and lead in their classes as well as for the whole school. Worship is exciting and inclusive. This ensures all are enabled to participate and benefit from the time together. However, monitoring provides limited opportunities for staff and pupils to give feedback. As this is less well planned, chances are missed to reflect and act on aspects that would enhance the impact of worship.

RE is held in high regard by staff and pupils. Extensive thought and careful planning has resulted in rich ambitious provision. The syllabus adds suitable and engaging material to reflect the school's vision. Lessons encourage high-level discussion and reflection that promotes respect and understanding of believers. Pupils enjoy and value their RE lessons. They eagerly share their knowledge and explain how it is okay to have differing beliefs. Joint visits, such as the trip to a synagogue by two year groups together, support pupils' understanding of major world faiths and other worldviews. A research project in school based around opportunities to think philosophically has impacted positively on pupils' critical thinking skills. Expectations are high in RE for all pupils. Those with special education needs and disabilities are supported well to share their thinking in ways other than in writing.

St Michael's is a school where the parable of the Good Samaritan permeates every aspect of daily life, welcoming all and providing a safe space for everyone to become the best version of themselves.

Information			
School	St Michael's Church of England Primary School, Tenterden	Inspection date	16 June 2023
URN	143788	VC/VA/Academy	Academy
Diocese/District	Canterbury	Pupils on roll	165
MAT/Federation	Tenterden Schools Trust		
Executive Headteacher	Sara Williamson		
Chair of Trust Board	Hilary Honeysett		
Inspector	Sarah Alexander	No.	2108