



CHURCH OF ENGLAND
ARCHBISHOPS' COUNCIL
EDUCATION DIVISION



National Society Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools Report

St Michael's Church of England Primary School

Pilgrim's Way Church of England Multi Academy Trust (MAT)
Penberthy Road
Helston
Cornwall
TR13 8AR

Previous SIAMS grade: Satisfactory

Current inspection grade: Good

Diocese: Truro

Local authority: Cornwall

Dates of inspection: 10 November 2015

Date of last inspection: 9 July 2012

School's unique reference number: 111994

Headteacher: Shaun Perfect

Inspector's name and number: Patricia Morris 626

School context

St Michael's is a larger than average primary school with 412 children on roll. The majority of children are of white British heritage. A high percentage of children are from service families. The number of children with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below the national average. The proportion of children supported by pupil premium is in line with the national average. For the past two years the school has operated as a single school within The Pilgrim's Way Church of England Multi Academy Trust.

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

- The dedication and commitment of the headteacher in developing a Christian environment.
- Core Christian values are clearly expressed and reflected in children's attitudes to learning and behaviour.
- Strong relationships based on Christian values in which children are nurtured and valued.
- The high level of involvement with the local community resulting in an effective partnership.

Areas to improve

- Provide opportunities for children to plan and deliver worship to encourage greater pupil ownership of worship.
- Develop a school wide understanding of what spirituality means to children and adults so that high quality opportunities for spiritual development can be identified.
- Ensure the quality of prayer spaces in order to contribute to children's development and spiritual awareness.

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

The Christian character of St Michael's is good because the five distinctive core Christian values are clearly expressed and have a significant impact on the lives of children. The mission statement, values and school motto 'Living and Learning Together' are displayed throughout the school and children are able to make links confidently with Bible stories. These values permeate the school resulting in children saying they feel 'peaceful and special'. The significance of this can be seen in the way children show respect for adults and how they treat each other. Children say 'we chose our values because it is what we do and they help us to be better people'.

Relationships between all members of the school community are consistently well linked to the school's core values. For example, the impact of these values is reflected in children's good behaviour to the extent that members of the wider community comment very positively on children's behaviour and manners when they represent the school. Rigorous provision maps and minutes from meetings show that the initiation of a pupil premium team and a nurture group has contributed significantly to this positive aspect of school life and as a result disadvantaged children are making progress equal to that of other children. The stimulating school environment reflects the high profile of the school as a church school. Christian symbols of crosses are found in every area and children speak proudly of the fact the crosses were made from old wooden beams from a local church reflecting their strong links with the local churches. Opportunities to support children's spiritual development are identified across parts of the curriculum and children recognise spirituality as 'having a good soul inside us'. Areas for reflection in the school halls are obviously valued by children who talk enthusiastically of times and reasons for their need to be reflective. The development of outdoor reflection areas excite the children and the school, based on evaluation of feedback, has identified that these would be even more effective if they incorporated gardening and wildlife areas that the school council feel will impact on children's appreciation for God's world. However, there is no shared understanding of spirituality among adults in the school community and as a result opportunities to explore children's spiritual development are sometimes missed. High quality religious education(RE) promotes children's awareness of Christianity as a multi-cultural world faith resulting in an understanding of diversity within Christianity. Opportunities for children to compare similarities and differences between Christianity and other faiths can be seen in many displays around the school. This aspect of learning is highly supported through an annual multi-cultural day when each year group studies aspects of a different faith. The impact of this is seen in children's knowledge and respect for other faiths and how they speak so enthusiastically about what they have learned which is shared in a special whole school assembly. Parents speak positively about the Christian character of the school and the values that are instilled in their children. They praise the 'small family feel' of such a large school where all children 'merge to look after each other'. As a result, they feel that each child is highly treasured and the school are meeting the needs of all children.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Collective worship is at the heart of school life and plays a central role in promoting Christian values and the ethos of the school. One child stated 'worship is special and is what makes us a church school'. Children show a deep respect when listening in worship and are keen to

contribute either through role-play or by responding to questions. Worship is planned thoroughly and based around the church year. There is a good understanding of the church calendar and Christian festivals that are celebrated especially those festivals that are specifically linked with their school such as St Michael's day or with their county such as Flora day. Children talk enthusiastically about these festivals and the impact can be seen in their knowledge and how proud they are to promote these. There are extremely good links to Jesus' teachings in the Bible. This results in children confidently making links to their own lives. Worship includes teaching about God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit and children show a simple understanding of this as reflected in such comments as 'it is like three rings interlinked with each other'. Partnerships with local churches are strong resulting in a wide range of leaders from different churches that enhance children's experiences of worship. Children particularly enjoy the Light and Life and the Open the Book teams visiting and the opportunity this gives them to participate in worship. Relevant themes in worship make good contributions to children's spiritual development with opportunities for reflection that encourage children to take responsibility for their own actions. Prayer has a high profile and is said at various times of the school day and at the beginning of school council meetings. Children are familiar with The Lord's Prayer and responses to praise. They are encouraged to write their own prayers and share them in class or hang them from prayer trees in classrooms. A prayer corner in every classroom supports the importance of prayer although these are not consistent in quality across the school. Children are clear about who they are praying to and the purpose of prayer saying that 'prayer helps us to be better Christians' and 'it helps us to think twice about our behaviour'. They are particularly enthusiastic about the bowl of pebbles in the entrance area that gives them the opportunity to think of others who are ill or less fortunate than themselves by placing a pebble in the water. The impact of this physical act is obvious in the respectful way they talk about how it has helped them at certain times of their lives. Regular monitoring and evaluation has been initiated and is successfully identifying ways to move forward in worship. For example, the school recognises the need for more opportunities for children to be involved in planning and leading worship themselves in order to develop a sense of ownership.

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

The headteacher has worked exceptionally hard to develop the Christian character of the school amidst the challenge of becoming a single school within a multi-academy trust. He articulates and promotes a vision based on distinctive Christian values and can confidently describe the impact of core values on children's lives and the whole school. Foundation governors have a comprehensive understanding of the school based on thorough self-evaluation strategies. As a result, they are well informed and regularly challenge the leadership of the school with insightful questioning. This rigorous form of accountability together with an established annual cycle of monitoring has led to improved achievement and distinctiveness since the last inspection. The co-ordinator ensures RE is based on the school's distinctive Christian values making good contributions to children's behaviour and attitudes together with their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Links with the Diocese are strong and have contributed to continued professional development resulting in effectively maintaining a high profile for RE. The co-ordinator is fully supported by an RE sub-committee who meet regularly and are totally committed to promoting RE in the school community. Strong links with local churches contribute successfully to school life with children visiting regularly for Christian festivals and to support the curriculum. The involvement of the local Canon has a significant effect in promoting partnerships with the school. For example, children are asked to design covers for the church magazine and school displays are particularly welcomed in the church enabling the wider community to share in children's learning. Parents say they are fully informed through newsletters and recognise the good opportunities to give their views both formally through regular questionnaires and informally through half-termly coffee mornings. They feel that all staff are very approachable and any concerns are dealt with promptly and effectively. Parents especially speak highly of the commitment and dedication of the headteacher and say

they feel the school is going from strength to strength. Fund raising for the wider community contributes fully to school life and covers a very wide range of activities including a Help for Heroes club in recognition of the many service families at the school. This impacts considerably on children's developing understanding of local and national communities. Use of the pupil premium in the form of enrichment activities and a nurture group has successfully supported the Christian ethos of the school and led to raised aspirations and the provision of opportunities for children to be well prepared for future life.

SIAMS report November 2015 St Michael's CE Primary School Helston TR13 8AR