

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Michael's Woolmer Green Church of England VA Primary School	
Address	London Road, Woolmer Green, Knebworth, SG3 6JP
School vision	
<p>'Shine like lights in the world'.</p> <p>The vision is inspired by St Matthew's gospel. It encourages everyone to discover and use the gifts and talents they have been given. Our hope is for all our children to have the confidence to use their talents and skills, to make responsible decisions as they learn and grow and contribute positively to the wider world.</p> <p>'Let your light shine before others that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.'</p> <p>(Matthew 5: 14-16)</p>	
School strengths	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The vision at St Michael's results in a deeply aspirational school. Pupils are loved, nurtured and supported to 'shine' as individuals. • Collective worship is carefully planned, inclusive and thought-provoking. Pupils and adults enjoy rich times of reflection that are grounded in the vision. As a result, worship contributes significantly to spiritual flourishing. • The provision for pupils' emotional, mental health and wellbeing is a strength. This is because the vision drives leaders to provide high-quality support to address pupils' diverse needs. • There is a strong sense of community and this supports the flourishing of pupils and adults well. Links between the school and the local church are particularly impactful. • Pupils make good progress in religious education (RE) due to the rich curriculum and high quality teaching. They are able to articulate what they have learnt and how it is relevant to their lives. 	
Areas for development	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance opportunities for pupils to to deepen their understanding of injustice and act independently as advocates for change. This is to inspire them to make a difference to the lives of those within, and beyond, school. 	
Inspection findings	
<p>The school's Christian vision is life-affirming. Everyone is encouraged to shine and thrive in this nurturing environment. The vision and values are clearly displayed around the school. This means that pupils are made aware of their importance and know what they look like in action. For instance, every classroom has a 'shine board' celebrating pupils' achievements as lights in the world. The values are displayed in the RE reflection areas in each room and a beautiful floor mosaic also emphasises their significance. A deep sense of spirituality is threaded throughout the school, especially at worship time. For example, the use of individual spirituality scrapbooks that consider</p>	

awe and mystery, raises pupils' awareness of its importance. These provide valuable opportunities for discussions on the meaning of life and our part in it. Dedicated leaders regularly and effectively review the impact of the vision. They reflect on what the school is doing well as a Church school and where improvements can be made. The eleven associated values express the vision, are known well and can be seen in action every day. Pupils articulate the values of friendship, hope and peace in deeply personal ways. They gain courage and confidence by experiencing challenging activities such as rock climbing and zip-wiring on their residential trips.

The rich curriculum and extra-curricular offer give opportunities for pupils to shine individually and in different ways. The unique talents of pupils and adults within the school are actively celebrated. This message is reinforced in the school's uplifting motto of aspiring to be 'my personal best' (MPB). It demonstrates that all can shine by working hard and showing resilience. Pupils, especially those who have special educational needs and /or disabilities (SEND), are affirmed and supported well to be the best they can be. Leaders know that flourishing looks different from person to person. This means that there is a strong emphasis on the arts, sport and music, where an impressive number of awards have been attained. Participating in the 'daily mile run', helps pupils to become physically fit and learn the importance of exercise. Another example is taking part in Young Chef', where pupils are able to cook and learn new confidence boosting skills. The school has given a great deal of thought to spirituality. It is described as a 'time to be reflective' and 'to feed the inner self'. Identified pathways in the curriculum, such as connecting to the natural world through gardening and forest school, help pupils develop spiritually.

Collective worship is a powerful expression of the vision. It makes a significant contribution to the way adults and pupils flourish spiritually. Worship is planned thoughtfully, offering opportunities for reflection, response, prayer and songs. Pupils appreciate opportunities for interaction, such as role play and lighting the Trinity candles. They especially delight in being invited to participate in spontaneous prayer. There is a varied pattern and approach to worship each week. As a result, participants encounter a broad range of spiritual experiences. The links with the local church are rich and beneficial. An inclusive weekly Bible club, led by clergy, enables pupils to ponder on deeper questions and learn from each other. Attending church for special Christian festivals, including the pilgrimage to Datchworth, is greatly valued by adults and pupils alike. Clergy also lead engaging worship at the school every week. They help organise events such as the whole school 'Easter Journey', enriching pupils' spiritual development further. Pupils are made to feel special during weekly celebration assemblies where awards are given to those who shine as 'values champions'.

The inclusive, caring environment at St Michael's has wellbeing at its core. Dedicated mental health leaders ensure that excellent support is readily available for both staff and pupils. Relationships between members of the community are strong and positive. Pupils know that they can speak to an adult at any time and that they will be listened to. The daily nurture club, held in the arboretum room has a positive impact on pupils' mental health. Here pupils can find peace and calm to reflect during the busy day. Parents welcome the regular communication, including weekly newsletters and the open-door policy. They are valued and well informed as their opinions are considered through consultations and surveys. Those who have children with SEND, especially appreciate the exemplary support they receive. Pupils are able to regulate their emotions through the well-established 'zones of regulation'. These allow them to express how they feel and know that help is available if required. Staff are well supported in their mental health and professional development. Special wellbeing days, where they receive gifts are greatly valued. Adequate time is given for staff to fulfil their leadership roles effectively because consideration is given to work-life balance.

The school's vision creates a culture of high expectations with an exemplary level of pupil leadership and active participation. They relish the opportunity to take on roles such as eco and school councillors. They recognise that these are opportunities for them to shine as leaders in line with the

vision. As such, they are respected and admired as inspirational role models. Pupils enjoy choosing and raising funds to support charities. These include the Bishop's Appeal, the local foodbank and national charities such as Red Nose Day and Sports Relief. Older pupils find the responsibility of being buddies for the younger ones rewarding and take this role very seriously. Activities such as litter picking in the local area, help the environment as part of World Earth Day. At this time, pupils are less aware that they can make a difference to the lives of others more widely. Valuable partnerships with local Church schools, sports groups and the diocese impact positively on the life of the school.

Leaders work tirelessly to ensure that the RE curriculum is challenging and exciting, offering a rich experience of religions and traditions. The enquiry-based approach enables pupils to consider 'big questions', responding positively to the opportunities to debate and share views. Drama, art and music are used to engage pupils effectively. Visits are made to places of worship, such as a Jewish synagogue. These, together with visitors representing faiths such as Hinduism and Buddhism, give pupils a deeper insight into different beliefs and cultures. Governors and leaders monitor RE well. They visit lessons, talk to pupils and review books as part of their ongoing cycle of evaluation. 'Learning journey' display boards highlight work undertaken and help pupils recall what they have learnt in the topic. Assessment systems are robust and show that pupils make good progress in the subject. The RE leader works closely with the diocese to deliver relevant training so that staff are able to teach the subject with confidence. As a result, standards are good across the school. This is evidenced by high quality work in RE books. As a result, teaching is at least good and there are examples of high quality practice. Pupils demonstrate that they have a deep knowledge and understanding of topics covered.

The inspection findings indicate that St Michael's Woolmer Green VA Church of England Primary School is living up to its foundation as a Church school.

Information			
Inspection date	2 July 2024	URN	117461
VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary aided	Pupils on roll	183
Diocese	St Albans		
MAT/Federation			
Headteacher	Jan Martin		
Chair	Debbie May		
Inspector	Jenny Earp	No.	288