

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

Stone St Michael's Church of England VC First School	
Address	Weavers Lane, Off Lichfield Road, ST15 8QB
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	Good
The impact of collective worship	Excellent

School's vision
<p>Through God we love, laugh and learn.</p> <p>'This is the day that the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.' (Psalm 118:24)</p> <p>Our Church of England school community is where all children flourish into confident, happy individuals with a love of learning. Where curiosity, independence and a feeling of self-belief are encouraged and valued by all.</p>
Key findings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The distinctive Christian vision empowers choices, experiences and courageous decision making. Consequently, St Michael's is a welcoming, caring community, where each person is enabled to reach their potential. • Leadership at all levels is highly effective. Supported by knowledgeable governors, the inspiring headteacher ensures that this inclusive school is self-reflecting and ambitious. • Leaders have a clear understanding of spirituality. Within the curriculum, they plan learning that encourages spiritual development. However, opportunities for independent spiritual growth leading to personal flourishing, are less well defined. • The quality, breadth and creativity of collective worship is exceptional. It spreads joy throughout the community and demonstrates a powerful school and church partnership. • The religious education (RE) curriculum makes a significant impact upon pupils' learning. The subject leader's enthusiasm, knowledge and expertise ensures a rigorous and academic learning experience enjoyed by all. There is potential to share this expertise more widely.
Areas for development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extend opportunities for pupils to experience spiritual moments beyond the formal curriculum so that their capacity for spiritual growth and independent reflection is enhanced. • Share the impressive practices in RE and collective worship so that more schools, including wider church schools, can benefit from the impact of leaders' expertise.



Inspection findings

St Michael's is a good Church of England first school to which all are proud to belong. The carefully and collaboratively developed Christian vision and associated values permeate every decision, choice and activity. Knowledgeable and engaged governors provide effective support to the headteacher who leads with integrity, compassion and ambition for all. Consequently, adults and pupils are resilient, confident, happy and have a curiosity for learning. They flourish, socially, emotionally, mentally and in their academic learning. Leaders regularly and robustly evaluate the continuing impact of decisions, initiatives and established practices and routines. This includes their evaluation of their effectiveness as a church school. They trust and encourage all staff. As a result, adults seek new responsibilities and thereby grow in their confidence, expertise and impact within the community. The school enjoys rich, collaborative and energising relationships with the diocese and local community schools. However, links with church schools are less developed and therefore, leaders are not able to share their expertise more widely. This is particularly true in relation to the impressively revitalised collective worship and RE provision.

This school determinedly offers hope and nurture to each person. The rich, exacting and constantly evolving curriculum is shaped by the embedded Christian vision. It captures and encourages pupils' interests, imaginations and abilities. This ensures that all pupils including the most vulnerable, the most able and those with additional personal or academic needs, can thrive. The school's extensive grounds are an extension of formal classrooms. Pupils relish outside learning and speak excitedly about their forest school experiences. This allows them additional ways of expressing their emotions, talents and enthusiasm. Pupils reflect maturely upon the environment pledging to responsibly care for the world that a pupil explained 'must last for ever'. WOW weeks and enrichment days enhance learning across the curriculum. Together with impressive extra-curricular activities, they nourish pupils' creativity, excitement in learning, spiritual development and overall wellbeing. Activities enable pupils to experience moments of wonder in creation that they frequently attribute to the nature of a loving God. However, opportunities for pupils to develop their personal reflection and spirituality beyond formal learning are underdeveloped.

Pupils appreciate the recognition they receive for demonstrating the school's important Christian values. They regard showing friendship, thankfulness, responsibility and forgiveness as essential ways of being a good person. Moral and character development occurs through formal learning opportunities and because adults provide excellent modelling of values and behaviours. This extends beyond caring for each other to being advocates for those in need in wider local, national and international communities. Adults and pupils determinedly address issues of injustice and inequality so that they inspire hope for the future. Through supporting the local foodbank, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) collaborations and activities such as Tap Twinning, pupils appreciate the difference they can make. Equally, they see prayer and trusting in God as purposeful ways to respond to need and achieve beyond expectations.

Respectful and affirming relationships are a strength of this welcoming and embracing school, where smiling is infectious. Attendance is high and incidents of poor behaviour are rare because pupils enjoy the challenges of each school day. They appreciate the concept of disagreeing respectfully and allowing fresh starts. Pupils readily use the language of 'being kind and kinder' to one another. Pupils are knowledgeable about the impact of bullying and personal safety. Adults teach them how to recognise and respond to wrong behaviour and stay safe. Parents and carers appreciate the school's holistic approach and how leaders involve them in their child's experiences. This was particularly successful during the COVID



related periods of remote learning, when pastoral care extended to the wellbeing of the entire family. As all recover from the pandemic, extra support is in place to build additional resilience and support the mental wellbeing of everyone.

While not overtly diverse, St Michael's community is a mix of experiences, backgrounds and aspirations. It is a family that welcomes pupils of all worldviews. Pupils with additional needs, whether physical, emotional or educational, like their peers, enjoy a range of rich experiences. Adults and pupils joining the school, including those from Ukraine, are nurtured and quickly welcomed into existing friendships. This is because all are valued as unique individuals created as children of God and deserving of the very best. All are treated with dignity and display a respectfulness towards each other. Adults creatively expand pupils' knowledge and understanding of other cultures and environments through the rich, imaginative curriculum. This is leading to pupils having increased empathy and interest in the cultural diversity that exists in Britain today.

Collective worship is at the heart of each school day. Carefully and collaboratively planned and evaluated, its memorable impact echoes in homes, the local church and the wider community. Inspiring and inclusive, worship invites the participation of all. The themes of worship closely reflect the school's Christian vision, associated values and the church year. Gathering in different groups and spaces inspires the richness of worship. Pupils are enthused and adults say they are uplifted by the opportunity to listen, watch and reflect. Always current and cared for, reflection tables in classrooms create important focal points. They encourage personal and spontaneous prayer and a rejoicing 'in the day that the Lord has made'. Older pupils attend Eucharist regularly and understand why this coming together of believers is important. Worship brings the Bible and Jesus alive to all through using simple, yet powerful, words, symbols, music, drama and quiet contemplation. Pupils recognise the Christian belief in God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The after-school adventurers club typifies the excellent school and church partnerships that exist and extends worship beyond the school day.

RE makes an exceptional contribution to the learning experience of pupils. Taking the Christian vision as her starting point, the talented subject leader has transformed learning. She shares her enthusiasm, knowledge and expertise generously with colleagues, so that, learning challenges pupils and ensures excellent progress. This expertise is not shared with other church schools, so the impact of excellent provision does not extend beyond the school. Learning is exciting and engaging. Visits and visitors bring an additional depth to pupils' experiences of Christianity and other major religions and worldviews studied. Consequently, pupils appreciate that for many, a religious faith is a living experience. Pupils confidently ask and answer big questions and do so in the security that their opinions are valued. Even the very youngest pupils express their knowledge and understanding of difficult theological ideas using excellent religious literacy. Like so many of their experiences at St Michael's, pupils enjoy their learning in RE.



Information			
School	Stone St Michael's Church of England VC First School	Inspection date	17 November 2022
URN	124275	VC/VA/Academy	Voluntary controlled
Diocese/District	Lichfield	Pupils on roll	224
Headteacher	Julia Wass		
Chair of Governors	Alan Rees		
Inspector	Fiona Ashton	No.	860