



## Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St Michael and All Angels Church of England Primary and Pre-School	
Address	Meadow Close, Greenacres Estate, Shelf, Halifax, West Yorkshire, HX3 7QU

### School vision

Promoting pupils to be resilient, responsible learners with curious minds and a thirst for knowledge. Striving to become compassionate and respectful members of the community; embracing diversity and encouraging the best in others.

‘Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.’ – Joshua 1:9

### School strengths

- A powerful culture of welcome and acceptance exists here. This creates a deep sense of belonging for pupils and adults to grow as the unique people they are.
- Leaders work tirelessly to promote wellbeing and the positive mental health of adults and pupils. Prioritising wellbeing enhances lives, as people are nurtured and cared for.
- Partnerships with parents and the local community demonstrate the school’s commitment to ‘encouraging the best in others’. Positive relationships with the local church and the diocese strengthen the foundation of this as a Church school.
- Religious education (RE) is a strength of the school, and it is led effectively. The development of a rich curriculum, and developing staff subject expertise, ensures that pupils understand their place in our diverse society.

### Areas for development

- Raise the profile of the biblical basis of the Christian vision in order that it can be articulated more consistently by the school community. This is so that the Christian vision is the explicit driver for the work of this Church school.
- Develop a shared understanding for spirituality that is woven throughout the curriculum and collective worship. This is so that pupils and adults experience greater spiritual flourishing.
- Extend curriculum opportunities for pupils to identify issues of injustice in the world. This is in order that they are enabled to initiate action to become agents of change.

### Inspection findings

St Michael and All Angels is a welcoming and inclusive community where pupils and adults experience being loved and belonging. Leaders know the needs of their pupils and families well. They seek to serve the school community. Their actions are marked by compassion and respect.

The school’s values are part of the natural language of pupils and adults. Pupils are able to identify Bible stories that exemplify these values. They talk confidently about how the values help them in

their lives. Recent work by the governing body, in partnership with the diocese, has identified that the language of the Christian vision which underpins these values is less well known. Pupils are unsure about the root of the vision in the biblical book of Joshua. Staff also identify more readily with the values rather than the school's Christian vision. Governors have created an action plan to ensure the centrality of the Christian vision in steering the school's strategic direction. At this stage, the strategic development of the school as a Church school is not reflected in school development plans. Work is underway to create more formal structures for systematic monitoring and evaluation of the Christian vision. These are at too early a stage of implementation for their impact to be known.

Close relationships characterise the school. Parents are appreciative of the support they and their children receive from school. One parent commented that staff 'go the extra mile'. This enables their children, and particularly those who are more vulnerable, to grow in confidence and become more resilient. Promoting positive mental health and wellbeing is a priority for leaders. Mental health support is available for pupils, parents and staff through school. Consequently, staff are valued and treated with respect as individuals. There is a strong sense of team and care for one another. Staff are guided by the school values in their work. They take inspiration from Joshua to 'be strong and courageous'. This helps them to persevere when challenges arise.

The curriculum is designed to meet the needs of the community, including more vulnerable pupils. Staff seek to remove barriers to learning so that pupils can 'be strong and courageous'. Pastoral care is a priority and adults work hard to support pupils to be ready to learn. Additional funding is allocated to meet the needs of the most vulnerable so that all can thrive, regardless of background.

Driven by the school's vision, leaders work hard to create a community where 'embracing diversity' is firmly embedded. For example, leaders have adopted the 'Halo Code' that protects Black pupils and staff against hair discrimination. A gender-neutral uniform policy, with adaptations for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), ensures that uniform is not a barrier to inclusion. Pupils are taught about the protected characteristics outlined in the Equality Act 2010 so that they can be 'respectful members of the community'. The school's vision, centred around the Christian belief that all are loved deeply by God, drives leaders' work on inclusivity. Difference is not only accepted but is celebrated here. As a result, pupils feel free to be who they are and are respectful of difference and diversity.

Pupils are confident to challenge when prejudice related language is used. They are taught not to be bystanders but instead to be 'strong and courageous' to challenge things that are not right. These themes are woven through the curriculum. Leaders work hard to ensure representation in the curriculum and resourcing, including a recent review of library stock. For example, the RE subject leader recently invited a Muslim visitor from a local mosque to support pupils' learning. Leaders rightly identify that there is more to do to ensure that the curriculum offer is representative of the wider community.

Leaders seek to open pupils' eyes to injustice in the world, for example, through watching a news programme regularly. During Friday's collective worship each week, pupils often share about charitable activities they have taken part in outside school. This spurs others on to action and pupils ask to carry out some of these activities in school also. At present, pupils' expression of their concerns appears to be associated primarily with fundraising. This means that pupils' understanding of how to challenge the root causes of injustice is limited.

Time for collective worship is important to the school community, and themes chosen are relevant to pupils' lives. Pupils and adults are welcomed and invited to share in worship, as they feel comfortable. Staff describe how this time provides them with a moment of calm at the start of the

school day. This enriches their own spirituality. Collective worship is a time for thinking and reflection. At present, pupils associate the language of reflection more closely with the school's restorative approach to behaviour than with spirituality. This lack of a shared understanding of spirituality is inhibiting spiritual development.

The school fosters its relationship with the local church. Several governors, who are members of the congregation, nourished these links when the post of parish priest was vacant. This ensured that the partnership continued to impact positively on both school and church. A recently formed 'Open the Book' team has begun to visit school to share Bible stories in collective worship. These regular visits help pupils to understand the unique relationship that the school has with the church. Parents notice the impact that attending a Church school has on their children through the values they express. For example, upon encountering a homeless person whilst shopping, wanting to buy something for them to eat. Their children eagerly share what they have learned at school from the Bible. As a result, parents speak of how they too are growing spiritually and some have begun to attend church.

Active partnership with the diocese has strengthened staff confidence in teaching RE. Professional development opportunities and support have resulted in effective leadership of RE. As a result of subject monitoring, curriculum changes have been made so that progression is clear as pupils move through school. Curriculum time is enhanced by additional RE days to enrich pupils' experience of the subject. Consequently, pupils view RE as an important subject that helps them to respect the beliefs of others. The curriculum includes a range of religious and non-religious worldviews that reflect our diverse society. However, pupils are not always able to match their learning with the particular tradition it has come from. Work is underway to increase the level of challenge in the RE curriculum, including understanding the diversity within Christianity.

The inspection findings indicate that St Michael and All Angels Church of England Primary and Pre-School is living up to its foundation as a Church school.

Information			
School	St Michael and All Angels Church of England Primary and Pre-School	Inspection date	20 March 2024
URN	107570	VC/VA/Academy	Foundation
Diocese/District	Leeds	Pupils on roll	179
MAT/Federation			
Headteacher	Claire Berry		
Chair of Governors/ Trust Board	Joanne Feltham		
Inspector	Caroline Weir	No.	C.23/24