

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Report

St. Michael's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Nursery and Primary School

Church Street Kingsteignton Newton Abbot Devon TQ12 3BQ

Current SIAMS inspection grade	Good
Diocese	Exeter
Previous SIAMS inspection grade	Outstanding
Local authority	Devon
Name of federation	United Schools Federation (USF)
Date of inspection	6 December 2016
Date of last inspection	1 December 2011
Type of school and unique reference number	113407
Executive Principal (USF)	Martin Harding
Inspector's name and number	David Hatrey 844

School context

Saint Michael's Church of England Voluntary Controlled is a larger than average school in comparison with other schools nationally. The number of children who are entitled to pupil premium support or who have English as a foreign language is below national averages. The number of children who have special educational needs is above national averages. The school is part of the United Schools Federation working in conjunction with four other schools under an executive headteacher.

The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St. Michael's Church of England Voluntary Controlled Nursery and Primary School as a Church of England school are good

- Standards at the school are frequently significantly above national expectations with children making outstanding progress which is generally attributed to the school's Christian ethos.
- The school is developing its understanding of spirituality and has made good progress towards providing quality opportunities in some aspects of it.
- Religious education makes a very good contribution to children's understanding of the Christian values and the school's Christian ethos.
- Rigorous monitoring tracks the progress of individual children academically but has not yet been extended to consider the effectiveness of its Christian distinctiveness.

Areas to improve

- Establish a rigorous system of monitoring involving all members of the school community to ensure the ongoing evaluation of all aspects of the school's Christian distinctiveness leading to significant improvements.
- Review the school's agreed understanding of spirituality and identify quality experiences across the curriculum developing the children's understanding which they are confident to express in increasing depth

in a variety of ways.

- Enable children to make explicit links which they can articulate between the teaching given in collective worship and their daily lives and actions.

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

Saint Michael's have identified five distinctive core Christian values. These are: perseverance, compassion, justice, friendship and courage. Children have a good understanding of most of them and explain what they look like in daily life. Each week children nominate someone in their class as the values champion, explaining why they have chosen them, so others recognise where these values stand out. Staff award stickers related to the value for that half term where children demonstrate that value in either learning or action. This is reinforced by all staff, including lunch time assistants who record on slips what value they have seen children use. Children make strong links between values and their learning and are confident to give examples where they have used values to support learning. They talk about the need to persevere when faced with a demanding task, or having the courage to aspire to new challenges and take risks. Staff have woven this effectively into learning. Children are not as secure talking about the values of compassion or justice, neither are they able to link values to Biblical stories which reflect their distinctive Christian meaning. All children are aware that values are God given and that we learn more about these through the teachings of Jesus. A Christian art club, expertly led, has produced some stunning art work reflecting Bible stories and values which are displayed both in school and church. A values blog is shared with parents and shows where some children use values to help them in their learning. Staff model values in their daily interaction with children, with whom they establish strong relationships, valuing everyone as a child of God. Children respond to this in the care and concern they show for others, this is seen in the way older children welcome and work with younger children becoming peer mediators. There is a real sense of being a family which they see as being important. The standard of behaviour was very high, there are few issues and where they arise they are thoughtfully dealt with, with time for reflection on values and developing a sense of empathy on how this influences others. At present though children are not able to make the link between their own behaviour and Christian values. The school has developed its provision for spirituality and reflection. There is an agreed understanding although there is little reference to considering this from a belief or faith perspective which would inform their thinking. A few good experiences have been identified for spiritual development, but these do not cover a broad range of areas, neither are they identified in planning or enable children to express these in a variety of ways. Reflection diaries give children opportunities to record ideas about their reflection on values, but these are often limited to written notes and at present do not reflect a maturity of ideas or use language to express these with clarity. This is why at present the school is not outstanding in this area. The secret garden provides time for children to be quiet which some children found helpful. Cultural awareness is effectively developed through inviting cultural champions into school who help children explore how this influences their lives and actions. There are good opportunities to question representatives of different faiths and explore through first hand experiences what faith means to them. Sponsoring a child in Belarus extends this further as do other links with schools in Kenya. Children show their care through enterprise days where they plan to fund raise for these projects recognising the impact which they have. This is a strong feature of the school. Religious education (RE) makes a good contribution to the life of the school, where teaching is at least good and often better. Children are challenged in their thinking, using higher order thinking skills to think through and reason why they have their opinions. They draw upon previous knowledge and biblical teaching to refine and shape their ideas. Children are helped to understand contexts where values might influence their thoughts and actions. New initiatives are introduced by an experienced and dedicated RE leader, which gives the subject a good profile across the school.

The impact of collective worship on the school community is good

Planning of themes for worship draws upon the 'Values for Life' programme, where each value is explored in some depth over the course of a half term. A variety of leaders are involved, including staff who are effectively supported by the coordinator. Local clergy and leaders from different Christian denominations also lead worship regularly so children experience different styles of worship which they appreciate. Collective worship has a high profile in the life of the school and is seen by children as a special time for all to share with God. Children are generally engaged in worship due to a good emphasis on media and questioning which challenges their thinking. The target from the previous inspection has been achieved with the introduction of a wider variety of songs which are sung with enthusiasm. Whilst children value worship, they recall a limited number of these and only a few children feel that worship helps them. Experience days are significant occasions providing opportunities for each year group to explore one of the Christian festivals. A series of workshops are undertaken where children interact well whether

in making models or representing ideas in art or drama. Church members plan and lead these which enable children to talk about them in some depth recognising their importance for Christians. Prayer is well taught in the early years. Children use figures from the Lost Son parable to help write prayers which have sorry, thank you and asking for something or offering praise. Children are confident to use these ideas and write prayers for worship. They appreciate that this is a time to share thoughts with God and that they can do this anywhere and in different ways. This is extended for older children who consider praying for others or in response to national events. Their prayers show the beginnings of a growing maturity. A number of Jesus' stories and teachings are known by children; however, they are not able to share what they know about the Trinity. Recently children have begun to plan and lead worship, thinking about what message they want to give and linking prayers and music to this. This is still at an early stage but is developing well. Monitoring and evaluation of worship is undertaken by both staff and governors but at an informal level. Whilst these may be shared at governors' meetings this has not led to any action plans to develop this further. There is no current target to raise the impact of worship further and children do not contribute to this. Some changes have been made, such as enabling children to lead worship and more age related worship times, but these are not informed by talking with children.

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

The school has an astute and strong leadership team who are committed to building upon the good practice they have established. They have a clear vision for their work as a church school. Each child is valued as a child of God and supported to achieve their potential, particularly academically, hence their strap line, 'achieving higher, achieving more'. Children experience being part of a caring Christian community where Christian values underpin its life and work. A dedicated and cohesive staff team has been created who work well together putting children at the centre of their work. Christian distinctiveness is reflected in the priority given to RE and worship, where the leader's expertise is recognised and valued. It is evident in the work to become a dementia friendly school, as well as the way children respond with compassion when their friends need support. There are high expectations for children to be successful. Attainment by children when they leave school is frequently significantly beyond national expectations with children making outstanding progress in all core subjects. Disadvantaged children make equally good progress from their starting points. Interventions are well focused and led by skilled teaching assistants and staff. Provision for pupil well-being and personal development is important. There is a wide range of care, from drama therapy to counselling, that meets emotional and social needs. Support for parents and families are good because strong links have been created which have mutual benefits. Monitoring of pupil progress is rigorously tracked leading to early intervention as required. Governors are involved in evaluating initiatives put in place. However, this has not yet been extended to include monitoring and evaluating the impact of the school's Christian distinctiveness or other aspects of being a church school. Monitoring is at an informal level and lacks sufficient depth and has not led to further plans to develop these areas. The school is not yet fully aware of the impact which its provision for spirituality has as children have not been consulted. Good links are established with other schools in the federation, sharing examples of best practice, which has enabled schools to grow and develop. Links with the diocese are strong, where new projects are piloted and refined as well as drawing upon expertise offered for further professional development which makes an impact on teaching and learning for example. The local church makes a full contribution to the life of the school particularly through the experience festival days but also leading worship and through governance. Parents recognise the time and care staff give to children and the school has a fine reputation in the locality. The school meets statutory requirements for RE and collective worship.

SIAMS report December 2016 St. Michael's CE VC Nursery and Primary School Kingsteignton Devon TQ12 3BQ