

St Michael's Church of England Primary School

School Road, Sunninghill, Ascot, Berkshire SL5 7AD

Inspection dates	13–14 July 2016
Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Requires improvement

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders have secured improvements since the last inspection and developed a strong culture and high expectations of good teaching and learning across the school.
- Pupils' achievement has improved because of the carefully planned approach to teaching and the checks to ensure planned improvements have been effectively implemented.
- The senior leaders have high expectations of themselves, staff and pupils. They ensure that disadvantaged pupils catch up and achieve well during their time in the school.
- Children are taught well and make good progress in the early years. Teachers plan varied and interesting activities for children to encourage their learning.
- Pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare are good. They are confident that any adult will solve their concerns quickly and ensure that they are well looked after.
- Pupils say that they feel safe. The school offers a safe and secure environment where pupils recognise that everyone has their welfare at heart. Staff provide strong pastoral care to promote pupils' welfare effectively.
- Pupils enjoy their learning and make good progress because lessons are exciting. Teachers use previous assessments and resources to challenge pupils' thinking and to check their understanding.
- Behaviour is good and pupils conduct themselves well around the school. They are very caring and considerate towards each other.
- Governors offer effective support and challenge to senior leaders to bring about improvements. As a result of regular visits to the school, they have a secure knowledge of its strengths and areas for improvement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The most able pupils are not challenged sufficiently.
- Staff do not ask questions that make pupils think deeply about their work.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to extend their writing skills in other areas of the curriculum. These rich opportunities to make greater progress are at times lost.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and the rate of pupils' progress, by ensuring that:
 - the most able pupils are consistently challenged in lessons through tasks that extend their thinking
 - teachers and 'teaching partners' (teaching assistants) ask questions that rigorously test pupils' knowledge and understanding
 - as many opportunities as possible are provided for pupils to practise and refine their writing skills across other subjects.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The leadership at all levels in the school has improved since the last inspection. Through her drive and determination, the headteacher has built a highly effective team. She has brought about substantial improvement to the school in many areas and created a culture of continuously improving teaching.
- Leaders have a clear and accurate view of the school's strengths and areas for development. The school improvement plan identifies appropriate priorities to improve the quality of teaching and raise pupils' achievement further.
- Teachers who hold leadership responsibilities demonstrate a drive and energy similar to senior leaders. Middle leaders are new to their roles but are, nonetheless, enthused and have a clear understanding about what needs to be done to improve progress in their subjects.
- Leaders have high expectations, setting appropriate performance targets for teachers through performance management. As a result, teachers receive helpful feedback which guides them to improve alongside carefully selected training opportunities. Attainment across the school continues to improve. Some teachers would benefit from more precise guidance, particularly in meeting the needs of the most able pupils.
- The monitoring of teaching and learning by senior leaders is thorough. Where needed, follow-up is immediate, but sensitive and supportive. There have been some staff changes in recent years, but now the school is benefiting from a stable, happy and committed team.
- The pupil premium funding is used effectively. As a result, disadvantaged pupils make particularly strong progress. Staff plan exciting ways to increase the confidence of these pupils and ensure that additional activities are focused very sharply on their individual learning needs. Leaders regularly check these pupils' learning so that plans are changed if specific activities are not helping them to make progress quickly enough.
- The primary school physical education and sports premium is also used well. Teachers have had additional training and pupils have benefited from opportunities to be involved in a wide range of sporting activities both during the school day and after school. At playtime, they enthusiastically select activities to develop their sporting skills further.
- The new curriculum and assessment arrangements are bedding in well. All staff are confident in the school's assessment arrangements. Leaders keep a close eye on pupils' progress and provide effective challenge and support for teachers to meet the needs of individual pupils. This is leading to pupils making faster progress. A wide range of visits bring learning in classrooms to life and contribute well to the curriculum. Clubs also help enrich the curriculum and provide memorable learning experiences for pupils.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effective. This means that the school is a calm and very considerate environment where pupils mix happily together. Pupils are actively involved in the school community, which contributes to developing and promoting the school values.
- The curriculum strongly supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. There are many opportunities for learning about the local culture and those different from their own. Pupils also have a deep awareness of other religions in modern British society and have visited a number of religious centres. Pupils consider national and world events on a daily basis. Teachers use these to help them understand the dangers of radicalisation and extremism. Pupils follow the progress of national elections and have a good grasp of the values that underpin life in modern Britain.
- Since the last inspection, leaders have embraced opportunities for working with other schools. Effective steps have been taken to respond to the challenge to move the school forward following the most recent monitoring inspection. The school has benefited from the effective support provided by the local authority and diocese.
- **The governance of the school**
 - Since the last inspection, governors have undertaken training and provide the right balance of challenge and support to the headteacher. They understand the needs and priorities of the school well because they regularly visit and get detailed information from senior staff.
 - Governors have a good grasp of assessment information. They receive regular reports from the headteacher about the progress made by different groups and cohorts of pupils. They set challenging targets for the headteacher, which are based on whole-school priorities, and monitor these carefully. As a result, they have a good overview of the quality of teaching. They use this wide range of

information well to check the quality of pupils' education. The impact of their commitment and work to improve the school can be seen in the raising of the quality of teaching and the outcomes for pupils.

- Governors manage finances well. They know how the pupil premium and sports premium funds are being spent and the effects they are having on the academic, personal and physical development and well-being of pupils.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders ensure that there are robust systems in place to keep pupils safe. Staff and governors receive up-to-date training to ensure that all requirements are fully met. This includes having an informed awareness of the dangers posed by radicalisation and extremism. Leaders are persistent in cases where the school is concerned for a pupil's welfare. There are effective partnerships with other agencies which ensure that pupils are kept safe and their welfare needs are met.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- The quality of teaching, learning and assessment has improved since the previous inspection and is now good. Reading, writing and mathematics are taught well and pupils make good progress in these subjects.
- Relationships with pupils are strong and based on mutual respect. Teachers communicate their own enthusiasm for whatever is being taught so that pupils learn in a lively and purposeful atmosphere. Pupils settle promptly to their tasks and are motivated to achieve their best.
- The subject knowledge of teachers is good. There is a sense of pace in lessons and often an excitement about learning. Mistakes are seen by staff and pupils as another opportunity to learn.
- Teachers give pupils useful feedback which makes clear what they have done well and offers helpful guidance to help them improve their work further. Pupils are taught how to assess their own work and provide supportive comments and advice to their peers.
- Teaching assistants are briefed well and know specifically how they should promote pupils' learning in each lesson. As a result, teaching assistants make a significant contribution to pupils' learning and their personal development and welfare. The school works effectively with a range of services to support the health and emotional well-being of pupils, as well as their academic achievement.
- The reading programmes and access to a wide variety of books are having a positive impact on pupils' enjoyment of reading.
- Pupils apply their strong knowledge of mathematical facts and concepts to practical problem-solving situations. Pupils of all abilities are thinking more for themselves in all aspects of mathematics. Teachers say that this particularly helps pupils to be more confident in explaining their reasoning in mathematical tasks and problem-solving activities.
- The teaching of writing has improved since the last inspection and is a strength. There are many good examples of writing in pupils' books and in displays of their work in the classroom and around the school. Pupils are encouraged to write at length in English but have fewer opportunities to develop their extended writing skills across a wide range of different subjects.
- Assessments are used effectively to plan activities that generally match pupils' needs. However, this is less effective for the most able pupils who are not always challenged sufficiently through tasks that extend their thinking. This slows the progress that they make.
- The progress of all pupils is checked frequently and teachers work closely with senior leaders to identify individual pupils or groups who may be falling behind or who are not making good enough progress.
- Effective and timely one-to-one and small-group support led by teachers and skilled teaching assistants ensures that pupils make good progress, particularly the lower-attaining pupils. However, teachers and teaching assistants do not make good use of questioning to test and deepen pupils' understanding, especially for the most able.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good. The pupils are self-confident and happy because they feel well cared for and valued by the adults in school.
- Pupils are polite and courteous, and they develop strong moral values for their age. They show respect and tolerance for differences, and pupils from all backgrounds get on well with each other. Assemblies

and 'circle time' help them to learn about the differences between wrong and right and to reflect on how they can be kind and help each other.

- Pupils thrive because they feel valued and extremely well supported. They understand the teachers' expectations for good work and behaviour. The high-quality support given to the most vulnerable pupils and their families is making a positive contribution to developing pupils' self-esteem and well-being.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school and talk confidently about what they should do if they hurt themselves or are upset in any way. Teachers provide messages for pupils about how to stay safe when they are using their computers online.
- All pupils spoken to said that bullying was rare and previous isolated incidents were dealt with effectively by leaders. Pupils were confident that any problems would be addressed effectively.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils eagerly welcome visitors to their school and take pride in describing their work. They conduct themselves well around the school and contribute well to their class code of conduct. Pupils collaborate effectively and show respect and sensitivity when listening to each other's contributions in class.
- There is a productive atmosphere in the classrooms, with the vast majority of pupils having a positive attitude and visibly enjoying their learning. They are attentive and eager to participate in lessons and generally work well supporting each other. Very occasionally, pupils struggle to settle to activities if they do not have an adult close at hand to help them focus. Despite this, lessons typically flow uninterrupted and pupils can concentrate well.
- Pupils understand and are motivated by the school's reward system. They especially like the positive praise for pupils who consistently behave well and do their best.
- The pupils display positive attitudes to their work because they find it interesting and they know that the adults in school take a genuine interest in their achievements. Pupils' work in their books is usually tidy and carefully presented.
- Attendance is above the national average. Leaders have developed effective strategies to tackle absences and staff work hard to engage the support of other professionals where necessary.
- Almost all parents responding to Ofsted's online Parent View survey agree that the school makes sure that its pupils are well behaved.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Until recently, national test results have shown that the progress of pupils has been slower than expected. The school's achievement information and work in pupils' books indicate that progress has quickened and is now good for all groups of pupils. This is particularly the case in reading and mathematics.
- Attainment is broadly average and is rising across the school. This is confirmed by the school's information on pupils' progress and evidence gathered during the inspection, including the scrutiny of pupils' work in their books. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage in their education.
- Children start school with skills, knowledge and understanding that are typical for children of this age. By the end of key stage 2, the vast majority of pupils make at least expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Since the last inspection, some pupils are making very rapid progress from their individual starting points.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities receive good support both in class and through one-to-one tuition. This enables their individual needs to be met. Consequently, these pupils make good progress and achieve as well as others in their class.
- In reading, pupils are supported well to build fluency and read a range of books. Teachers carefully check on their skills and make quick adjustments to guide pupils when they fall behind. The most able pupils value the opportunity to read challenging texts and broaden their knowledge of different authors.
- Writing progress is good but is behind the pace of progress in reading and mathematics. The attainment of pupils in writing is above average but the progress pupils make is limited because they do not use their writing widely enough across the curriculum. This means that pupils do not always have the opportunity to practise higher-level skills.
- The disadvantaged pupils in the school make good progress because leaders use pupil premium funding

effectively. The leaders closely track what difference specific activities are making to the progress of individual pupils.

- The most able pupils generally achieve well because provision has strengthened for this group. Pupils' books and assessments show that the most able pupils are making good progress across different subjects. There are occasions when there is more limited challenge that hinders progress.
- Leaders ensure that information about what pupils know, can do and understand is shared between teachers when pupils are changing classes. Good arrangements with the secondary school ensure that pupils feel confident when they move on.

Early years provision

is good

- In 2015, the proportion of children achieving a good level of development at the end of the Reception Year was above the national average; it was also above average in 2014. Leaders are aware that some boys performed less well than others. The school has been successful in improving the resources and outside provision to increase the engagement of boys. Current assessment information shows that any attainment gaps are closing quickly.
- The early years leader, supported by the local authority and senior staff, has provided clear and determined leadership to develop the provision and improve teaching, learning and assessment in the Reception class. Consequently, this year, more children are on track to exceed the early learning goals by the time they leave the Reception class. Children are well prepared for starting Year 1.
- Teaching is effective and creates a rich and varied learning environment for all children both indoors and outdoors. Activities are fun, capture the children's imagination and allow them to practise their skills. Children have plenty of opportunity to explore with a range of equipment that encourages them to build, create and try out their ideas. At times, adults do not provide sufficient direction and guidance to ensure that children are challenged as much as they could be.
- The children have daily opportunities to explore a wide range of books and stories. As a result, by the end of the Reception Year, they talk confidently about their favourite authors, are well on the road to becoming fluent readers and are beginning to write their own stories.
- Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics, in line with their classmates. They are supported well in lessons by adults who guide them to build their confidence to test out their ideas.
- The children's good behaviour and desire to learn and explore contribute significantly to their learning. They are respectful and tolerant of others. During an assembly, pupils discussed attitudes to learning with confidence.
- Accurate assessment information enables adults to identify clearly where support is needed. All adults record what children have said and done as supporting evidence for their progress and as a means to identify next steps in their learning. Evidence to support children's progress is presented well in the excellent 'learning journeys'.

School details

Unique reference number	110019
Local authority	Windsor and Maidenhead
Inspection number	10009197

This inspection was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	212
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Becky Smith
Headteacher/Principal/Teacher in charge	Lorna Anderton
Telephone number	01344 622962
Website	www.st-michaelsprimary.co.uk
Email address	office@stmichaelsce.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	25–26 February 2014

Information about this school

- The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- Children in the early years are taught in one full-time Reception class.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average compared to schools nationally.
- The proportion of pupils supported with additional government funding, known as the pupil premium, is below average. This funding is provided for those known to be eligible for free school meals and children looked after.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The headteacher started in April 2016.
- The majority of the governors joined the governing body during the last academic year.
- The school meets the government’s current floor standards. These are the minimum expectations for attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 12 lessons, across all year groups. Pupils were also observed being taught in small intervention groups.
- Meetings were held with pupils, the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, governors, including the chair of the governing body, and representatives of the local authority and the diocese.
- Inspectors looked at a range of pupils' work, heard pupils read, observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school and at breaktimes, and talked informally with pupils.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents, taking into account the 65 responses to the online parent questionnaire, Parent View. Inspectors also considered 62 free-text question responses submitted by parents and a letter from a parent. Responses to 30 online questionnaires completed by staff were also taken into account.
- Inspectors also scrutinised a range of documents, including those to do with safeguarding, behaviour and attendance, minutes of meetings of the governing body, records of visits by the local authority, information about pupils' outcomes supplied by the school, the school's evaluation of its own performance, and the school improvement plan.

Inspection team

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