

# St Michael's Church of England Junior School

Church Lane East, Aldershot, Hampshire GU11 3SS

## Inspection dates

1–2 March 2017

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Effectiveness of leadership and management	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	<b>Good</b>
Outcomes for pupils	<b>Requires improvement</b>
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	<b>Good</b>

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- Pupils and groups of pupils do not always achieve as well as they should. This is particularly the case for disadvantaged pupils and the most able, including those who are disadvantaged.
- Leaders' actions to tackle weaknesses do not always bring about sustained improvements. Although they take rapid action when issues arise, they do not consistently embed improvements, so weaknesses sometimes recur.
- Leaders do not systematically use the information on pupils' progress to identify weaknesses in teaching. This means that they do not always take action quickly enough to ensure that groups of pupils achieve as well as they could.
- Governors do not hold leaders to account with sufficient rigour. Too often, they do not question what they are told by leaders.
- Middle leaders are not held to account for the full scope of their roles.
- Leaders' monitoring of teaching is not sufficiently systematic and rigorous to ensure that teaching is good. Mathematics and writing lessons do not always help pupils to develop their skills.
- Although interventions to support disadvantaged pupils outside the classroom are effective, these pupils are not always supported sufficiently well during lessons.
- Activities to challenge the most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, frequently do not enable pupils to deepen their learning and extend their thinking.
- Parents do not have confidence in senior leaders, particularly the headteacher. They rightly say that the headteacher is not visible, and communication, although improving, is weak.

### The school has the following strengths

- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They treat each other with respect and take account of each other's views.
- The extensive school grounds are used well to support the broad and balanced curriculum.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is supported well. Pupils demonstrate respect and awareness of others.
- Staff at the school care greatly for pupils and want the very best for them.

## Full report

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the effectiveness of leaders and governors by ensuring that:
  - governors have a thorough understanding of their roles and hold leaders to account
  - leaders know exactly how well groups of pupils in each class are achieving and use this information to identify areas for improvement
  - performance targets are measurable and link to pupils' outcomes
  - middle leaders' skills are developed so they are held to account for the full scope of their roles
  - improvements are embedded so that weaknesses do not recur
  - the headteacher and senior leaders raise their profile and improve communication so parents' confidence in leaders is restored.
- Improve the quality of teaching to at least good across the school, by:
  - developing teachers' questioning skills so that they ask open questions which encourage pupils to explore their thinking and deepen their learning
  - providing well-structured activities so pupils who are able to get on independently can start work more quickly
  - ensuring that disadvantaged pupils receive the right support in lessons
  - providing challenging and relevant activities to enable the most able pupils to achieve the higher levels.
- Improve outcomes to at least the same as in other schools nationally, by:
  - taking rapid action to improve provision where groups of pupils are not doing as well as they should
  - making sure that the most able pupils, including the most able disadvantaged pupils, are challenged to achieve their potential
  - ensuring that pupils develop their mathematical skills by practising what they have learned through relevant problem-solving activities
  - ensuring that the teaching of writing develops pupils' skills systematically so that, over time, they develop the skills expected for their age.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management can be improved.

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Leaders do not ensure that all groups of pupils make as much progress as they should. Although there are signs of improvement, too many pupils and groups of pupils are not working at the expected standard. This is particularly the case for disadvantaged pupils and the most able, including the most able disadvantaged.
- The headteacher, senior leaders, staff and governors are committed to the school and want the best for pupils. Parents who responded to the Parent View questionnaire recognise this of the teaching and support staff but have much less confidence in senior leaders. Many raised concerns about the visibility of the headteacher and about communication being unclear and last minute.
- Senior leaders check individual pupils' progress and achievement rigorously and take swift action to help them to catch up. However, this information is not yet being used to identify weaknesses in teaching and drive school improvement.
- Leaders analyse end-of-year data carefully and make sensible changes to improve areas where attainment is weaker. However, sometimes action is not taken quickly enough, so pupils do not always do as well as they could. Additionally, the changes that leaders make are not sufficiently embedded, so weaknesses sometimes recur.
- Senior leaders check teaching and provide some useful feedback but are not systematic. This means that, although teachers know what they need to do to improve, leaders do not always check that improvements are made.
- Middle leaders are becoming more effective, but are not yet held to account for the full scope of their roles. They are aware of some of the strengths and weaknesses of the teachers in their year groups but do not yet identify sharply where improvements are required and provide support.
- Leaders have ensured that the school offers a broad and balanced curriculum, so pupils develop a range of skills across all subjects. Pupils enjoy learning subjects such as history and geography, but the quality of work is inconsistent.
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding is developed well. Faith and morality is threaded through the curriculum, and pupils discuss and learn about religions and 'doing the right thing' through lessons and assemblies.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Well-planned and engaging topics, such as 'Groovy Greeks' and 'Stomp' ensure that pupils are enthusiastic and work hard. However, the quality of work in topics varies from class to class.
- Pupil premium funding is used well to provide effective support outside the classroom. For example, the 'secret' reading group brings about rapid improvements in reading and ensures that pupils catch up. The family support worker liaises very well with families to achieve the best for individuals. Although the funding is used well, overall these pupils are not doing as well as they should because, where class teaching is less effective, teachers do not know what support they need to provide for these pupils. Consequently, pupils in these classes do not make as much progress as their peers.

- Sports funding is used effectively to promote physical education and participation in sports. Through high-quality training and carefully planned purchase of resources, leaders ensure that pupils develop their fitness and sports skills.
- The local authority provides useful support through sharply focused leadership visits and useful subject training and advice. Advisers have a good understanding of the school's priorities and are working effectively with leaders and governors to drive improvements.

## **Governance of the school**

- Governance requires improvement.
- Governors do not hold leaders sufficiently to account for the progress pupils make. They ask appropriately challenging questions, but are too accepting of what they are told.
- At times, governors are not focused sharply on the strategic direction of the school. They visit the school regularly but, because their visits are not linked to aspects of school improvement, their focus is on whether pupils are having a nice time rather than whether the school is improving.
- Governors have taken some useful actions to become more effective, such as undertaking training and appointing a pupil premium governor. However, they are not sufficiently effective in driving school improvement.

## **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Staff are appropriately trained and are confident about their responsibilities and how to fulfil them. Concerns are taken seriously and reported and recorded appropriately. The school works well with outside agencies to take further action when required.
- Appropriate checks are made before staff join the school. Governors are involved in the annual safeguarding audit and have some oversight of safeguarding processes. However, they are not as knowledgeable as they need to be. They do not hold leaders to account as rigorously as they should. This does not, however, detract from the robust systems and processes in place. Leaders and staff follow policies and procedures carefully to ensure pupils' safety and well-being.

## **Quality of teaching, learning and assessment**

**Requires improvement**

- Teaching is inconsistent. Recent improvements have ensured that, in most classes, lower- and middle-ability pupils' needs are met well. However, in some classes pupils are not getting to where they need to be by the end of the year. This is because some teachers do not adapt their teaching sufficiently well to meet the needs of some groups of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, the most able and the most able disadvantaged.
- Questions are often too specific to enable pupils to explore their learning and deepen

their thinking. Where teaching is effective, teachers ask open questions and give pupils time to think and discuss their ideas. However, too often, teachers look for a right answer so the learning is limited.

- Teaching of reading has improved recently and is helping pupils to catch up to where they need to be. This is particularly the case for middle- and lower-ability pupils, many of whom receive further support. Pupils read books at the right level to embed their existing skills and develop further. They are taught how to decode unfamiliar words and understand what they read. Reading is promoted well and has a high priority among pupils. For example, on World Book Day, which took place during the inspection, pupils dressed up as a wide range of interesting characters from children's books and participated in useful and enjoyable reading activities.
- The teaching of mathematics has been a focus for development over time. Consequently, pupils are often clear about the concept they are learning and develop their understanding through well-planned activities and appropriate resources. However, this is not consistently the case. Some teachers ensure that pupils practise their skills through exploring and solving relevant problems, but this does not happen in all classes.
- The teaching of writing is similarly inconsistent. There are many opportunities for pupils to practise writing. However, because some teachers do not build up pupils' writing skills over time, pupils do not systematically develop and improve the quality of their work.
- Teaching assistants provide effective support for pupils' learning. They ask useful questions to help pupils complete tasks for themselves, without doing it for them. Teaching assistants recognise that they do not assess pupils' learning as much as they could.
- Disadvantaged pupils are not always supported as well as they need to be. For example, some pupils need encouragement or positive feedback, but this is not consistently forthcoming in class. Leaders provide some positive feedback to these pupils, through informal daily or weekly meetings, and this is helping these specific individuals to make better progress. However, teachers' awareness of these pupils and their particular needs is not always sufficient for them to identify and support the individual challenges which some of these pupils experience.
- Teachers try to meet the needs of pupils with different abilities by providing work at different levels. However, in almost all lessons these pupils sit through the whole class introduction, whether they need to or not, before starting work. The activities are also often not challenging enough to help pupils achieve their potential. One pupil commented, 'Work is too easy; sometimes the extension work is too easy as well.' As a result, very few pupils achieve above expected standards.

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are confident in the care they receive from staff and know who to talk to if they have concerns.
- Pupils like the vertical class groups, called 'families', as they get to know the older children in their family well. They rightly say older and younger children are nice to each other and play together because they know everyone well.
- Pupils' personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education is developed well. Pupils demonstrate respect for and awareness of other people's needs. For example, they stand aside and hold doors open for adults and take care of other children when they are hurt.
- Pupils are encouraged to be independent and articulate. Pupils share their ideas and points of view with confidence, but also listen and respond encouragingly to the views of others.
- Across the school, pupils learn to be healthy and safe. They have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe because they are taught what they should do, such as when using the internet or riding a bicycle on the road. They are taught about healthy eating and exercise through topics such as 'bodyworks' and 'survival of the fittest'.
- Opportunities for taking responsibility and being leaders are appropriate and plentiful. For example, the school council devised the new-style library, keeping to budget. Pupils are also responsible for moving lunch trolleys, looking after the library and providing playground support. Pupils carry out their roles sensibly and confidently.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils conduct themselves well in lessons and around the school. At times, inspectors observed exemplary behaviour. For example, when pupils sat for some time waiting for one class to arrive in assembly. There are slight variances when teaching does not meet pupils' needs well enough.
- Approximately a third of parents who responded to Parent View say that bullying does occur and that it is not managed well enough. However, their comments reflect a general dissatisfaction with school leaders' visibility rather than referring to specific incidents. Pupils are vehement that they do not experience or witness bullying often and say it is resolved quickly when it occurs. Behaviour records support this.
- A few exclusions have been used to manage behaviour. A detailed review of records indicates that leaders use this sanction carefully and appropriately. These sanctions are managed appropriately and legal requirements are met.
- Work to improve attendance of specific groups is bringing results. Absence for all groups has declined this year and, at the current time, attendance is above the national average.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- Over time, pupils and groups of pupils have not achieved as well as they should. This is particularly the case for disadvantaged pupils, the most able and the most able disadvantaged.
- Over a number of years, national tests show that pupils do not make as much progress as they should from when they join the school to the end of Year 6. Attainment is erratic but, with the exception of 2015, where pupils achieved broadly in line with the national average, results have been lower than other schools nationally. School information and work in books shows that this is now beginning to improve. However, these improvements are not as rapid as they need to be. Across the school, a high proportion of pupils are not working at the expected standard. This is particularly the case for disadvantaged pupils, the most able and the most able disadvantaged.
- Pupils' reading skills are beginning to improve but there is more to do. As a result of recent improvements in teaching, the percentage of pupils working at the expected standard in reading is increasing over time, but this needs to accelerate. Pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the texts they read and are developing their understanding of inference.
- Typically, the proportion of pupils achieving the expected standard in writing has been higher than in reading and mathematics. However, according to school information and work seen in pupils' books, this is not currently the case. Leaders recognise that there is significant variation from class to class but are not systematically working with individuals to address weaknesses.
- In mathematics, pupils have begun to make steady progress. In a few classes, where teaching is strong, a high proportion of pupils are working at the expected standard. In almost all other classes, pupils are developing a sound understanding of concepts and filling gaps that have been left by weaker teaching. Although there is still work to do, results are improving over time.
- The progress of groups of pupils is variable. Pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are catching up well due to the useful support they receive. Disadvantaged pupils, the most able and the most able disadvantaged often do not do as well as they should.
- The quality of art produced across the school is good, reflecting effective teaching and pupils' enjoyment and motivation to do well. In physical education lessons, teachers deliver well-planned lessons so pupils make good progress.
- In some other subjects, such as history and geography, outcomes are inconsistent. Pupils usually develop useful skills over time and produce work of a good standard. However, in some classes, teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve in these subjects are too low and pupils do not make as much progress as they should.

## School details

Unique reference number	116333
Local authority	Hampshire
Inspection number	10024756

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. The inspection was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Junior
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	367
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Reverend Tom Moore
Headteacher	Mrs Lynne Hignett
Telephone number	01252 322933
Website	<a href="http://www.stmichaelscejunior.co.uk">www.stmichaelscejunior.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:adminoffice@st-michaels-jun.hants.sch.uk">adminoffice@st-michaels-jun.hants.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	18–19 September 2012

## Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is larger than the average-sized junior school, with three classes in each year group.
- The percentage of pupils who are eligible for pupil premium support is smaller than for other schools nationally.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is higher than the national average. There are currently no pupils with an education, health and care plan or a statement of special educational needs.
- The percentage of pupils who come from minority ethnic groups is below the national average, as is that for pupils with English as an additional language. The majority of



pupils come from a White British background.

- The government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress, are exceeded by the school.

## Information about this inspection

- This inspection started as a section 8 short inspection. During the first day, the lead inspector converted the inspection to a full section 5 inspection. One of Her Majesty's Inspectors quality assured the first day of the inspection. She took over as lead inspector on the second day and was joined by three team inspectors to complete the inspection.
- During the inspection, meetings were held with the headteacher and other senior leaders, middle leaders, teachers, teaching assistants and governors. A telephone conversation was held with an adviser from the local authority, and inspectors met with the local authority area manager.
- Parents' views were gathered through informal discussions at the beginning of the school day and through 74 responses to Parent View.
- Pupils were spoken to informally in the playground and in lessons, as well in a formal meeting.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including the school's self-evaluation document, the improvement plan, performance appraisals, governors' minutes and reports, safeguarding policies and records, progress and attainment information and reports about attendance and behaviour.

## Inspection team

Louise Adams, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Sue Child	Ofsted Inspector
Deborah Gordon	Ofsted Inspector
Claire	Ofsted Inspector
Luisa Gould, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector

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