

# St Michael's Church of England Primary School

The Causeway, Steventon, Abingdon, Oxfordshire OX13 6SQ

## Inspection dates

21–22 March 2017

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement

- The quality of teaching and learning is inconsistent across the school. Expectations are too low.
- Teachers do not regularly provide activities that stretch and challenge the most able pupils. These pupils do not make enough progress from their starting points and reach the higher standards they are capable of.
- The skills of subject leaders who are new to their roles are underdeveloped. They do not fulfil their roles effectively.
- Children currently in the early years make insufficient progress from their starting points, particularly in writing and number work.
- Governors do not regularly monitor the impact of actions taken by leaders. For example, they do not check routinely the attendance of different groups or challenge leaders effectively about the progress that different groups of pupils make.
- Leaders do not analyse effectively the impact of their work on improving teaching and learning or improving outcomes for pupils.
- Leaders' action planning lacks the focus and precision needed to bring about effective improvement.

### The school has the following strengths

- The broad curriculum enables pupils to have a good understanding of the school's values. The wide range of extra-curricular clubs provides pupils with the opportunity to learn new skills.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They listen to each other and work very well together.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They have a good understanding of the school rules. Bullying is rare.
- Leaders have taken effective action to improve the progress that pupils make in writing since the previous inspection.

## Full report

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

- Improve the effectiveness of leadership and management, including governance, by ensuring that:
  - leaders analyse pupils' progress incisively and take action to remedy any weaknesses
  - governors use school performance information more effectively to provide greater challenge to school leaders
  - subject leaders are trained well and have a clear understanding of how to improve the subjects that they are responsible for
  - leaders' planned actions are linked more closely to the impact they are expected to have on pupils' learning
  - leaders evaluate the impact of their work to bring about more rapid improvement in the school.
- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by ensuring that:
  - teachers have consistently high expectations
  - the most able pupils are given work that engages and challenges them to think more deeply
  - children in the early years make more rapid progress from their starting points, particularly in writing and number work.

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

## Inspection judgements

### Effectiveness of leadership and management

### Requires improvement

- Since the previous inspection, leaders have not focused strongly enough on improving the quality of teaching throughout the school. As a result, pupils, particularly the most able, do not make the progress they are capable of.
- School leaders do not monitor the progress of pupils sufficiently to check if pupils are on track to make good progress from their starting points. As a result, leaders are not able to take timely action when pupils' performance dips.
- Leaders' plans for improvement are not focused sufficiently on measurable actions to improve the school. Leaders do not prioritise the right areas for improvement effectively enough. For example, in 2016 some of the most able pupils in Year 6 did not achieve the higher standard in reading and leaders did not take action to rectify this. Similarly, they did not plan to ensure greater challenge for the most able pupils in key stage 1.
- The skills of subject leaders, particularly those new to their roles, are not sufficiently developed. Consequently, the monitoring of teaching and training has not been sharp enough to improve teaching and learning. In addition, subject leaders do not have a full enough understanding of the expectations in each key stage and areas for development in their subjects have not been identified. However, the literacy leader is effective and can demonstrate the impact that she has had in her role. She has overseen improvements in the teaching of phonics, an initiative to encourage enjoyment in reading and ensured that pupils have good opportunities to practise their writing skills in other subjects.
- Leaders did not respond quickly enough to avoid an increase in absence for some groups of pupils. However, actions taken more recently have resulted in improved attendance for some groups.
- Leaders use the pupil premium funding effectively in order to improve the learning of disadvantaged pupils. Additional support in lessons and individual teaching sessions are paying dividends. As a result, the vast majority of disadvantaged pupils are making good progress and a small proportion are making accelerated progress.
- Leaders use special educational needs funding effectively. The school's strategies to improve progress in reading and writing for pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are developed well. Leaders identify pupils' barriers to learning accurately and provide effective support so that pupils make good progress. However, pupils' progress in mathematics is weaker as support to develop pupils' mathematical skills is less effective.
- Leaders' commitment to inclusion at St Michael's results in a warm and welcoming culture where all pupils feel valued. As a result, pupils are happy and enjoy their lessons.
- The curriculum promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development effectively. Pupils develop a good understanding of different cultures and faiths by learning about a range of beliefs. The curriculum is helping pupils to develop their

understanding of British values by giving them the skills needed to be successful in modern Britain.

- The recent introduction of philosophy lessons encourages pupils to think about 'big' questions such as 'What makes a good friend?' Pupils are encouraged to think more deeply about a range of issues.
- The introduction of the new curriculum has increased pupils' motivation and enthusiasm for learning well. It also provides more opportunities to write about a variety of topics. Meaningful links are forged with the science curriculum to ensure that pupils' scientific skills are developed well across the school.
- Leaders have positive relationships with parents who are well informed and value the caring ethos of the school. Children new to the school are looked after well, enabling them to settle in quickly.
- The school makes effective use of the sport premium to provide a wide range of indoor and outdoor sporting activities. The funding also contributes to the use of specialist sports coaches. This has helped to increase pupils' physical skills and improve the subject knowledge of teachers.
- The broad range of extra-curricular clubs, including chess, choir, general knowledge, and art, alongside educational visits enhance the curriculum further.

### **Governance of the school**

- Governors do not hold leaders to account strongly enough for the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the school. They do not monitor the work of the school closely enough. For example, governors do not regularly consider school performance information. As a result, they do not fully understand the areas that need to be developed further or if the school is beginning to improve.
- Governors ensure that all health and safety requirements are met.

### **Safeguarding**

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Clear policies, procedures and systems are in place to make sure that no pupil is at risk of harm. Pupils say that there is always an adult who they can talk to if they have any worries.
- Adults are well trained and have a thorough understanding of what to do if they have a concern about a child. Leaders have made sure that all adults know how to report concerns they may have. Communications with external agencies are managed well. Leaders ensure that records are sufficiently detailed and securely stored.
- Appropriate checks are carried out on adults' suitability to work with children. Safer recruitment guidance is used to ensure that all relevant checks are completed for those newly employed by the school.
- Staff, parents and pupils are positive about the culture of safety in the school.

## Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

## Requires improvement

- There are inconsistencies in the quality of teaching. Work set by teachers does not consistently challenge pupils' thinking or probe their understanding deeply enough. Consequently, many pupils, particularly the most able, do not achieve the higher standards.
- Where teaching is less effective, teachers do not use pupil performance information effectively enough to adapt tasks to meet the needs of different groups of pupils, particularly the most able. Activities lack sufficient depth and are not challenging enough. As a result, pupils do not make the progress that they are capable of, particularly in reading and mathematics.
- Where teaching is stronger, teachers have secure subject knowledge and high expectations of pupils. They plan learning based on what pupils already know and need to learn next. This challenges pupils and motivates them to learn well. Teachers question pupils effectively to monitor pupils' understanding and move pupils' learning on. Teachers intervene effectively to ensure that pupils make good progress over time.
- Pupils value the verbal and written feedback they receive. Pupils, particularly in key stage 2, respond well to guidance. As a result, pupils take greater responsibility for their own learning and make good progress.
- Overall, teaching assistants support pupils well, particularly those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. They encourage pupils to do their best using effective questioning to check pupils' understanding.
- The teaching of phonics is effective. In 2016, most pupils achieved a good understanding of the sounds that letters make by the end of Year 1. Pupils in key stages 1 and 2 read texts expressively and possess an appropriate range of strategies to use if they are stuck. However, some of the most able pupils struggle with understanding the meaning of more complex vocabulary. Consequently, they do not make sufficient progress from their starting points. The recent initiative to encourage pupils to read more at home has increased enjoyment and enthusiasm for reading.
- The teaching of writing has improved since the last inspection because teachers are planning appealing topics. A focus on the key skills of punctuation, grammar and spelling is helping to develop pupils' stamina to write longer pieces. Staff training on the retelling of stories has helped pupils to improve and develop their ideas. Self-editing by pupils is helping them to take more responsibility for improving their work.
- The teaching of mathematics is variable. When more effective, pupils are given opportunities to deepen their learning through problem-solving and reasoning activities. Teachers adapt learning to meet the needs of all groups of learners, including the most able. Where teaching is less effective, teachers do not challenge pupils sufficiently. When this is the case, pupils do not make sufficient progress.
- When teaching is effective, teachers provide a range of exciting learning opportunities across the curriculum. These are enabling pupils to develop their enquiry and research skills well. For example, in one lesson pupils were taught effectively how to summarise key information from engaging information texts about Egyptian pharaohs. Pupils enjoy learning about interesting topics, including learning from visits to the local Ashmolean

and Pitt Rivers museums in Oxford.

## Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Good

### Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are encouraged to be caring and responsible citizens. Older pupils have opportunities to work with younger ones, helping to nurture pupils and build caring relationships.
- Pupils feel happy and safe at school. They enjoy coming to school and are keen to learn new things. In lessons, they want to learn and most concentrate well. Pupils appreciate the assistance they receive from adults.
- Pupils receive a range of opportunities to find out how to stay safe. This includes learning about online safety through a cyber week of special activities. They also learn how to stay healthy by participating in sporting sessions led by trained coaches and in competitions. Pupils understand the benefits of eating healthily and are encouraged to eat healthy snacks at breaktime.
- Staff and parents feel that pupils are cared for well. There are no concerns about the welfare of children. For example, one parent commented, 'St Michael's is a nurturing and caring village school which gives the children confidence and a sense of belonging.' Another said, 'My child feels incredibly safe and happy at St Michael's.'
- Pupils have a good understanding of what bullying is. Adults support pupils well and any concerns are resolved quickly. Bullying is rare.
- Pupils take pride in their work and older pupils are encouraged to work hard. One pupil commented that they were encouraged to make their work 'the best that it can be'.

### Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. They are polite and courteous.
- The school provides good opportunities for pupils to develop respect and care for each other, which includes opportunities to share their views and feelings with their peers. For example, pupils in Year 6 discussed themes related to the recent election in the United States, such as immigration.
- Attendance is in line with the national average and persistent absence is lower than national figures. The attendance of specific groups is beginning to improve as a result of actions taken by leaders.

## Outcomes for pupils

## Requires improvement

- In 2016, pupils' attainment at the end of key stage 2 was above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics. Although progress overall was good, many prior higher-attaining pupils did not make sufficient progress in order to achieve the higher standards in reading.
- In key stage 1 in 2016, pupils' attainment was above that seen nationally. However, too few pupils who had previously reached the expected standard at the end of the Reception Year achieved greater depth in mathematics at the end of Year 2.
- The proportion of Year 1 pupils who met the expected standard in phonics in 2016 is in line with that seen nationally. This has improved from previous years and standards are rising. The proportion of disadvantaged pupils meeting the standard required at the end of Year 1 has varied over the last three years. However, most achieve the standard required by the end of Year 2.
- Pupils' progress in writing across key stages 1 and 2 has improved since the last inspection. Evidence in pupils' books, supported by the school's assessment information, shows that pupils are making good progress in writing. From their starting points, pupils' skills and knowledge are improving, including for those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities. For example, pupils edit their writing confidently to improve their use of vocabulary and types of sentence structure.
- The progress of current pupils varies across subjects. Progress in reading and mathematics is weaker than in writing, particularly for the most able pupils. However, disadvantaged pupils are currently making better progress across the school than their peers in reading, writing and mathematics.
- The majority of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress in reading and writing, due to effective support. In mathematics, progress is slower as interventions do not focus precisely enough on developing pupils' mathematical skills.

## Early years provision

## Requires improvement

- Children join the Reception class with skills and knowledge that are typical for their age. In 2016, the proportion of children who left Reception well prepared for Year 1 was similar to the national average. However, the proportion of children reaching the expected standard in reading and writing was below the national figures.
- Other areas of learning were also below the national figures at the end of 2016, including understanding of the world, exploring media and materials and being imaginative. Current children are now making better progress in these areas. Children have more opportunities to learn about their local community and explore themes through art and imaginative play activities.
- Current children's progress in writing and number work requires improvement. Teachers do not provide children with sufficient opportunities to write in sentences or to develop their mathematical understanding and skills. Teachers do not plan effectively to stretch and challenge pupils, so that more exceed the early learning

goals.

- Leaders do not check the progress that children make with enough care to identify when their progress is too slow, for example in writing and number work.
- Overall, teaching in the early years provides a wide range of activities, both inside and outside. Adults engage well with children to develop their understanding. For example, in a mathematics session, children developed their conceptual understanding of 'long, longer, longest, short, shorter and shortest', when comparing objects. Children also concentrate for sustained periods to complete tasks.
- The teaching of phonics provides children with opportunities to practise blending their sounds. Children who have lower starting points and those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities benefit from repetition and practice provided in regular phonics sessions. However, there are not enough opportunities for all children to apply their phonic knowledge to writing tasks.
- Relationships between the children and staff are a strength. Children feel safe and secure. They are happy and growing in confidence to tackle tasks independently. Partnerships with parents are also effective. Parents welcome the opportunities to share what their children are learning at home.
- Behaviour in the early years is good. Interactions between children and adults are positive. Children play well together. Staff give children's safety and well-being a high priority and make sure that all statutory welfare requirements are met.
- Training given to staff to develop children's speech and language skills is improving the speech of those children who have lower starting points, including those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Additional funding for disadvantaged children has been used well to provide extra support for those who need it. As a result, these children are beginning to catch up with their peers.



## School details

Unique reference number	123160
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10024657

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	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	174
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Daniel Ashford
Headteacher	Mrs Judy Spiller
Telephone number	01235 831298
Website	<a href="http://www.stmichaelssteventon.co.uk">www.stmichaelssteventon.co.uk</a>
Email address	<a href="mailto:headteacher.3241@st-michaels-pri.oxon.sch.uk">headteacher.3241@st-michaels-pri.oxon.sch.uk</a>
Date of previous inspection	27–28 September 2012

## Information about this school

- St Michael's Church of England Primary School is a smaller than average-sized primary school. Most pupils are of White British heritage.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, supported by an education, health and care plan, is above average.
- The school has a smaller-than-average proportion of pupils who are supported by pupil premium funding.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.

- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum requirements for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 12 lessons or parts of lessons across all year groups, some with senior leaders.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, other staff and governors. Inspectors evaluated documents including the school improvement plan, the school's self-evaluation report, minutes of meetings, reports on attendance and behaviour, and records related to pupils' safety and academic progress. The lead inspector spoke to the school improvement representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' work in lessons, scrutinised a sample of work across different ages and abilities and listened to pupils read. Pupils' behaviour was observed at breaktime and lunchtime and around the school by inspectors.
- Inspectors took account of the 19 responses to the confidential questionnaire from staff. Inspectors spoke with pupils and took account of the 12 responses to the confidential pupil questionnaire.
- Inspectors took account of the results of the 53 responses from Parent View, which included 29 free-text comments and spoke to parents at the beginning of the school day.

## Inspection team

Mo Galway, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Robert Howell	Ofsted Inspector
Sue Rolfe	Ofsted Inspector

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