

St Michael's Church of England Academy

Saddlebow Road, South Lynn, King's Lynn, Norfolk PE30 5BN

Inspection dates

27–28 February 2018

Overall effectiveness	Good
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Early years provision	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Senior leaders know the school and its community exceptionally well. They have accurately identified the strengths and weaknesses of the school and successfully driven forward improvement.
- Staff are fully committed to improvement priorities, as indicated by this comment: 'We are a good team and we support each other. There's good leadership in the school and we're on the up and up all the time.'
- All pupils make good progress from their starting points in writing and mathematics in all year groups due to consistently good teaching over time.
- Pupils' behaviour is outstanding in lessons, around the school and on the playground due to the highly effective and consistently applied behaviour management system.
- Provision for pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding. Pupils live the school's values. They are thoughtful, kind and respectful of each other and adults.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language rapidly learn to speak English when they start at the school. Consequently, they make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Governors visit the school regularly and support improvement effectively. The Diocese of Norwich Education Academies Trust (DNEAT) give strong support and challenge to school leaders and the local governing body.
- The majority of parents and carers are very happy with the school. They typically say that they feel welcome and know can talk to class teachers or the headteacher if they have concerns.
- There is good leadership of the early years. Children settle quickly and make good progress from their starting points.
- Pupils make good progress in the special resource base due to the good teaching and support they receive.
- Although most pupils make good progress in reading, there are inconsistencies in teaching approaches that hold back progress for some pupils.
- The headteacher has recently taken a more active role in the leadership of the special resource base. However, the special resource base does not feature in school improvement plans and there is no effective link with the local governing body.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Further accelerate pupils' attainment and progress in reading by ensuring:
 - there is a consistent systematic, synthetic approach to the teaching of phonics and spelling from Reception onwards
 - leaders regularly check that pupils are in the correct phonic group for the stage of their learning and are moved on as soon as they are ready
 - teachers ensure that pupils in key stage 2 are reading widely as well as frequently
 - teachers consistently follow the school's approach to ensure that pupils' reading record books in key stage 2 are used effectively to track progress in reading skills and pupils' understanding of what they are reading.
- Further improve leadership of the special resource base by ensuring:
 - the special resource base is considered as part of the school's self-evaluation and included in the school's improvement plans, where appropriate
 - the local governing body has closer links with the special resource base.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher work as a highly effective team. Together they are constantly checking how well pupils are getting on and respond rapidly if there are dips in achievement or attendance. They give strong support to improving pupils' behaviour.
- Pupil progress meetings are held regularly. Teachers say that they are sharply focused on helping teachers to find new ways to improve teaching and pupils' attainment as well as their progress. Consequently, teachers have much higher expectations of what pupils can achieve in lessons and plan accordingly.
- Teachers are pleased with the 'very useful' training they receive to improve their practice. Training is provided by school leaders, the area group executive principal from DNEAT and training courses organised by DNEAT, where there are good opportunities to learn from other teachers in DNEAT schools.
- Subject leaders have recently taken on new subjects to lead due to changes in staff over the last year. For example, the leader for reading took on her role at the start of this term. Leaders have effective plans for developing their subjects and most have checked the quality of pupils' work. Leaders have had some opportunities to observe teaching and learning in the classroom. Senior leaders have plans in place to enable subject leaders to observe their subjects being taught.
- The special educational needs coordinator makes sure that there is good provision for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities. A wide range of interventions are in place that help pupils make good progress. Teaching assistants are thoroughly trained to deliver these programmes and give particularly effective support to pupils identified with behavioural, social and emotional difficulties. The coordinator is currently evaluating all the interventions to make sure that they are equally effective.
- Teaching assistants speak highly of the training opportunities provided by DNEAT. For example, 'We don't go on as many courses as we used to but the ones we do go to are really useful.' They find the regular conferences particularly helpful because they get a chance to meet many other teaching assistants from across DNEAT and share effective practice.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. It is based on the national curriculum. Pupils have many opportunities to go on interesting visits to support their learning, for example to a museum to see 'real mummies' as part of a project on the Ancient Egyptians. Leaders and teachers are currently reviewing the curriculum to ensure that it is relevant to the context of the school, placing, for example, a greater emphasis on local history.
- Pupils are extremely well prepared to be citizens of modern Britain. The school's ethos provides a strong foundation for the school's values. For example, forgiveness is the key value that pupils are learning about this term. One pupil explained that: 'If Horrid Henry (the main character in a series of children's stories) came to our school, I would tell him about our value of forgiveness and that would help him behave better.'

- The majority of the small sample of parents who responded to Parent View, Ofsted's online questionnaire, are positive about the school and the impact it is having on improving their child's achievement and behaviour. For example, one parent said, 'Staff are very approachable, always willing to make time for parents to discuss their concerns. I am very happy with the education my child receives at this school.' However, a small minority raised concerns about behaviour, bullying, leadership and communication. Inspectors found no evidence to support parents' concerns.
- DNEAT gives excellent support and challenge to leaders and staff. The area group executive principal has made a thorough evaluation of the school, based on regular visits and sharply focused annual reviews. As a result of these accurate evaluations, the school is considered as requiring 'light-touch' support.
- There is a special resources base within the school that provides support to pupils from other local schools. The headteacher has recently taken a more active role in leading this provision. However, the provision is not included in the current school improvement plan or the school's self-evaluation document.

Governance of the school

- Governance of the school is good.
- Members of the local governing body have a clear plan for regular, sharply focused school visits to monitor the quality of education pupils receive. For example, a recent visit to observe mathematics and talk to the mathematics leader resulted in actions for governors and a recommendation for the next school visit.
- Members of the local governing body carefully monitor the use of additional funding to ensure that it is having an impact on pupil progress. For example, they check that the pupil premium funding is having an impact on diminishing the difference between eligible pupils' achievement and that of other pupils.
- DNEAT provides strong challenge and support to the local governing body. The scheme of delegation clearly sets out their expectations for local governors. There are regular checks to make sure that local governors are effective in carrying out their duties.
- DNEAT provides good support for the recruitment of staff and school financial management.
- Although governors receive regular information about the special resource base within the school, they do not have specific governor oversight of the provision.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- All statutory systems to ensure pupils are safe are in place and meet requirements. Staff receive regular and effective training and know how to pass on pupils' concerns to designated safeguarding leads.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher keep a very careful record of the support provided for the most vulnerable pupils. They work effectively with external agencies to ensure that pupils get the help they need in a timely and effective way.

- Pupils in the special resource base are safe due to the effective and vigilant oversight of the headteacher and deputy headteacher. Staff are well supported by school leaders, particularly in managing the sometimes very challenging behaviour of a few pupils.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- Teachers have an accurate and strong understanding of what pupils can achieve in lessons. They have high expectations and keep a careful check that pupils select the most appropriate level of challenge to move their learning forward.
- Teaching of mathematics is effective because teachers use resources effectively to help pupils to understand new ideas and solve mathematical problems. Teachers develop pupils' problem-solving skills effectively because they expect pupils to justify their answers and explain their reasoning orally and in writing.
- Teachers explain learning very carefully so pupils understand what they are learning about and precisely what they are expected to achieve by the end of a lesson.
- Teaching assistants are well trained and consequently have a good understanding about how to support pupils' learning in lessons. They give support to all pupils in the class and help ensure that pupils with SEN and/or disabilities select appropriate challenges. They give particularly effective support to pupils with emotional, social and behavioural difficulties so that they can learn well and not disrupt the learning of other pupils.
- Teachers and teaching assistants give highly effective support to pupils who are new to speaking English. There are two specialist teaching assistants who speak a number of the pupils' home languages. They also provide support for parents and teachers. Pupils speak very highly of the support they receive.
- Higher-level teaching assistants work very effectively with pupils in the special resource base. They have an excellent understanding of pupils' individual needs and plan interesting and engaging lessons that inspire pupils to learn as well as they can.
- The teaching of reading is effective but not consistent across all year groups. For example, the school uses a range of schemes and approaches for phonics teaching. Consequently teachers do not have one systematic, synthetic approach. In key stage 1, pupils are not moved between groups rapidly enough, so some do not make as much progress as they are capable of.
- In key stage 2, pupils carefully complete their own reading records and read often to themselves. However, teachers do not use these reading record books effectively to monitor pupils' progress with their reading.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school because teachers make lessons interesting for them. For

example, pupils are enthusiastic about telling visitors about their learning. One pupil said: 'It's actually a really good school. It's the best in England! They explain everything to you and the teachers are the nicest too.'

- Attendance and punctuality has improved due to the highly robust systems to support parents who find it difficult to get their children to school on time every day. The headteacher and deputy headteacher work closely with parents and family support workers to come up with practical solutions to any difficulties.
- The school's values are lived and breathed by pupils and staff throughout the school day. Pupils show respect for adults and for each other at all times. One parent commented: 'The values that the children are being taught are visible in my child's behaviour at home and throughout the school.'
- Pupils say there is some bullying but they are confident to talk to all adults about this and teachers deal with any incidents very rapidly.
- There are exceptionally strong systems in place for pupils to talk about how they feel and why they are happy or sad. The circle talks after registration and the 'talking area', where pupils post a peg if they need to talk to an adult, are highly effective ways of enabling pupils to share any concerns they may have. Consequently, pupils have a strong understanding of their emotional needs and are confident that adults listen and support them in resolving their worries.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Teachers and teaching assistants apply the school's highly effective behaviour management approach consistently well through the school. All adults have very high expectations for good learning behaviour and consequently pupils listen attentively and concentrate well during lessons.
- Lunchtime is a pleasant social occasion. Pupils come in quietly and line up to collect their lunch in an orderly and respectful manner. They eat sensibly and enjoy chatting quietly to their friends. Pupils are active outside on the playground. They share equipment and play team games sensibly.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have developed simple yet highly effective individual behaviour plans for those pupils who need additional support. Targets are agreed with parents and pupils together. Targets are supported with rewards and consequences understood by pupils and consistently implemented by all staff.
- Pupils' behaviour in the special resource base is usually good because pupils are well supported by the higher-level teaching assistants. If there is a behaviour incident and a pupil is removed from the classroom, the approach used to manage behaviour is effective. In the rest of the school, fixed-term exclusions have reduced significantly as a direct result of the effectiveness of behaviour management and the individual behaviour plans.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- All groups of pupils make good progress from their starting points in mathematics. This is due to the effective training and support that teachers and teaching assistants have received and applied in their daily practice in lessons.
- Progress in writing is improving rapidly in key stage 2 for all groups of pupils. This is due to the teaching approaches recently introduced. There are more opportunities to write in other subjects such as history but pupils do not get as much time as they could to write at length and practise the skills they learn in their English lessons. Leaders are addressing this through their curriculum review.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language or who are new to speaking English make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics due to the excellent support they receive.
- Pupils with SEN and/or disabilities and disadvantaged pupils make good progress due to good teaching and the highly effective support for their behaviour.
- Pupils in the special resource base make good progress from their starting points due to the effective support they receive, which helps them to regain confidence rapidly in their ability to learn.
- Progress in reading is improving. However, teaching is not having sufficient impact on accelerating attainment and progress in reading due to the mix of approaches to teaching phonics being used in key stage 1. The lack of rigorous monitoring of reading choices and pupils' understanding of their reading in key stage 2 prevents pupils from achieving their best.

Early years provision

Good

- Children generally start in the early years foundation stage with skills, knowledge and understanding similar to other children of their age. Children make good progress due to good teaching and an interesting curriculum. This year, a higher proportion of children than usual are on track to achieve early learning goals in personal and social development, communication, English and mathematics.
- Disadvantaged children, those who are new to English and those with SEN and/or disabilities make good progress from their starting points due to the effective support they receive. For example, several of the class started in the early years new to English; they have made rapid progress in learning to speak, read and write in English.
- There is good teaching of early reading skills resulting in the most able children reading simple sentences accurately and with understanding. Children's mathematical skills and understanding are developed through direct teaching and through a range of number activities inside and outside the classroom that children can choose from. For example, one child was able to construct a number line from 1 to 10 during the morning and by the afternoon was able to order numbered dinosaurs on a number line from 0 to 20 in the outside area.
- Behaviour is outstanding in the early years because the curriculum is based on children's interests and enthusiasms. For example, the current theme is dinosaurs. Children listened intently as each child presented their dinosaur trap to the class. Even

the shyest children were able to give a detailed description of their trap because they enjoyed the activity so much.

- Children play and work together with great consideration and sensitivity. This is because adults give strong support for their personal development and welfare. The teacher has high expectations for how children behave towards one another and the school values are put into practice from the moment a child starts school.
- Children are safe in the early years classroom and outdoor area. Adults set out activities carefully so children have space to play. Children can come in and out of the classroom freely. There is good support and supervision inside and outside the classroom.
- There is good leadership of the early years. During the current leader's absence, the headteacher and deputy headteacher have stepped in to ensure that the effective systems are continued and built on. For example, adults use an online assessment system to capture effectively key moments of children's learning.
- The early years leader has developed good links with parents. For example, before children start school, home visits are carried out. There are good links with other early years providers in the area, including the Nar Children's Centre.

School details

Unique reference number	141360
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10041743
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	208
Appropriate authority	The local governing body
Chair	Julia Little
Headteacher	Emma Scarisbrick
Telephone number	01553772420
Website	www.stmichaelskingslynn.norfolk.sch.uk
Email address	office@stmichaelskingslynn.norfolk.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- The school is an academy within DNEAT. This is its first inspection as an academy.
- The school is an average-sized primary school located in the south of Kings Lynn, an area of high disadvantage.
- 51% of pupils are of White British heritage.
- The school meets the current government floor standards, which set minimum requirements for attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- A growing number of pupils are joining the school from Eastern Europe. Most of these pupils are new to English and have to learn to speak, read and write in English from scratch. A growing proportion of these pupils join the school in key stage 2.
- A higher than average proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals and pupil premium funding.
- An average proportion of pupils are identified with SEN and/or disabilities.
- The school is responsible for a 10-place special resource base funded by the local

authority. Two specialist advisers support the base from the local authority.

- The school is lead partner for the Nar Children’s Centre. Nursery provision is located within the same building and is run through the St Michael’s Family Centre.

Information about this inspection

- Meetings were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, middle leaders, groups of pupils, parents, teachers, support staff, members of the local governing body and representatives from DNEAT.
- Inspectors scrutinised pupils’ written work in foundation subjects in key stages 1 and 2, and learning journals in Reception.
- A wide range of documentation was examined, including safeguarding procedures, attendance records, the school’s own assessment information, the most recent school self-evaluation document, the current single change plan, minutes of the local governing body and the DNEAT scheme of delegation to governors.
- Inspectors observed teaching in all classes, including the special resource base. All visits to classrooms were made jointly with the deputy headteacher.
- The lead inspector scrutinised 26 responses to Parent View, Ofsted’s online questionnaire, and 12 text messages from parents. There were no responses to the staff or pupil questionnaires.

Inspection team

Julie Winyard, lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Sarah Warboys

Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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