

St Michael's School

Independent school progress monitoring inspection report

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Reporting inspector	Michael Best
Social care inspector	Brian McQuoid

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Purpose and scope of the inspection

This inspection was carried out by Ofsted under Section 162A of the Education Act 2002, as amended by schedule 8 of the Education Act 2005, and under the Care Standards Act 2000 having regard to the national minimum standards for boarding schools.^{1,2,3}

The inspection was conducted at the request of the Registration Authority for independent schools in order to monitor the progress the school has made in implementing its action plan following the previous inspection.

Information about the school

St Michael's School is located in Burghclere, near Newbury. It opened in 1991 in order to meet the needs and demands of the followers of the Society of St Pius X. The school is a registered charity and its goals reflect those of the Catholic Society to which it belongs, namely the preservation and continuation of the Catholic faith and tradition. The school aims to instil in its pupils knowledge, virtue and responsibility. There are currently 70 boys and girls aged between four and 16 years on roll, of whom 31 boys are boarders. The school is registered for pupils aged 4 to 18 years. There are five children in Reception in the Early Years Foundation Stage, none of whom are receiving government nursery funding. There are no pupils with statements of special educational needs. Accommodation for boarders is in a purpose-built boarding house on the school campus. Fourteen boarders are from overseas. All the overseas pupils speak English as an additional language, with varying degrees of fluency.

Context of the inspection

The school was last inspected by Ofsted in October 2011 in an integrated inspection of education and boarding provision. A significant number of requirements relating to the independent school regulations, the Early Years Foundation Stage framework and the national minimum standards for boarding schools were not met. The school submitted an action plan which was evaluated, and found to be inadequate, in January 2012. This is the first monitoring inspection visit to check the progress the school has made in implementing its action plan.

¹ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents.

² www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents.

³ www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/14/contents.

Summary of the progress made in implementing the action plan

The inspection in October 2011 found that the school did not have well-defined programme for pupils' personal, social and health education (PSHE) that set out what topics would be covered and when they would be taught. In its action plan, the school proposed completing a scheme of work to address this shortcoming. This has been produced and is now being implemented across the curriculum, providing a suitably balanced range of themes and topics.

A significant number of requirements relating to pupils' welfare, health and safety were not met at the time of the last inspection, including safeguarding matters. The school's action plan was judged to be inadequate because its proposals did not address all the failings. This inspection found that the school has taken appropriate action that has addressed all the issues raised in the inspection of October 2011. The school has revised its health and safety policy, undertaken risk assessments, and taken steps to ensure that policies and procedures are implemented consistently. Changes in procedures for maintaining the evening register now satisfy fire safety requirements, and the previously lax arrangements for checking and monitoring visitors have been made robust. The school has addressed the potential hazards identified within the school buildings and on the school site, such as student's use of the laundry room and the storage of the gang mower. A three-year action plan to improve access is now included in the school's equality policy, thereby fulfilling the requirements of the Equality Act 2010. The school's recruitment procedures have been suitably amended to ensure that all the required safeguarding checks are made on staff and volunteers prior to them having contact with pupils. These checks have been made, including some that have been made retrospectively, and all are properly recorded and evidenced. This action has also addressed the previous shortfall in the school's arrangements for ensuring the health and safety of pupils on educational visits, as the necessary checks are now made on drivers and other volunteers. The standard of decoration in the school and in the boarding accommodation was previously unsatisfactory but is now satisfactory overall, with damp-proofing work and repainting in the administration building almost completed.

The inspection in October 2011 found that the learning and development requirements, together with the welfare requirements, of the Early Years Foundation Stage were inadequate. The school has successfully implemented its plan to address the failings that led to these judgements and the provision now meets all the requirements. The restructuring of staffing in the primary department has ensured that staff with responsibility for children in the Reception class are suitably trained, including sufficient staff qualified in paediatric first aid. Improvements have been made in the resources in the outdoor provision for children's physical development and in the opportunities they have across the areas of learning to work independently, make choices and take decisions. Assessment procedures are now aligned to statutory requirements for the Early Years Foundation Stage and are maintained in a format that can be reported to the local authority. The washroom

facilities for children are satisfactory and the level of supervision for children visiting these is appropriate to the school's setting.

At the time of the inspection in October 2011, the boarding provision failed to meet a number of the national minimum standards. Although many of the school's action plan proposals were judged inadequate, the school has subsequently taken the necessary steps and now meets all of the standards. The school has surveyed its overseas boarders and without exception all confirmed that they were happy to receive induction information in English rather than their first language. The sick bay is no longer being used to accommodate day pupils for occasional overnight stays and new procedures have been implemented to ensure that pupils in the sick bay are checked regularly by staff. New arrangements have also been established for self-medication by boarders and the guidance they receive about this has been revised. The heating in the boarding houses has improved following the installation of new boilers and boarders report that they were sufficiently warm during the recent winter. Stained mattresses and pillows have been replaced and protective covers provided. New cubicles have been installed and these now provide appropriate privacy and sufficient storage for each boarder. In addition, boarders are now able to personalise their area.

The school has taken appropriate steps to ensure the integrity and security of the school premises and, through fire risk assessments, that procedures for emergency evacuation are robust. Boarders now have access to drinking water at night in their dormitories. In addition, the senior boarding house has a well-equipped kitchen area where students can prepare their own drinks and snacks while younger pupils are provided with toast and drinks within their boarding house during the evenings. The previous inspection's concerns about students using the laundry have been addressed and this is now well suited to its purpose, with clear guidance and instruction on using the equipment provided. Improvements in the way in which serious concerns and the action taken in response to these are recorded, together with revised arrangements the monitoring of records, have been implemented and now meet the standards. The previous failings in safeguarding and recruitment practices have also been addressed through training and revised procedures.

Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school has made good progress and now meets all regulatory requirements.

School details

School status	Independent		
Type of school	Roman Catholic all-age school with boarding		
Date school opened	September 1991		
Age range of pupils	4–18 years		
Gender of pupils	Mixed		
Number on roll (full-time pupils)	Boys: 50	Girls: 20	Total: 70
Number of boarders	Boys: 31	Girls: 0	Total: 31
Number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Number of pupils who are looked after	Boys: 0	Girls: 0	Total: 0
Annual fees (day pupils)	£6,165–£6,780		
Annual fees (boarders)	£7,815–£8,430		
Address of school	Harts Lane Burghclere Newbury, Berkshire RG20 9JW		
Telephone number	01635 278137		
Email address	fathersummers@gmail.com		
Headteacher	Reverend Patrick Summers		
Proprietor	The Society of St Pius X		