

Saint Michael CofE Primary School (Voluntary Aided)

Constantine Drive, Stanground South, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire PE2 8SZ

Inspection dates

4–5 December 2018

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement

- Previously, leaders and governors have not ensured that pupils have achieved well enough, especially in key stage 1. Under new leadership, this is swiftly changing.
- The quality of teaching varies too much. The most able pupils are not provided with the sufficient opportunities to use and apply their knowledge, so they can make better progress.
- Teachers have not used information of pupils' achievement as well as they should to plan learning that meets their needs and abilities. The progress pupils make in writing varies across classes and year groups.
- Pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, do not achieve as well as they should in key stage 1. For the previous three years, the proportion who reached the expected standard in reading and writing has been below the national average.
- Subject leaders, who are new to their roles, are enthusiastic and have a clear understanding of their responsibilities. The impact of their work on ensuring that pupils experience a rich and progressive curriculum is positive but remains new.
- Adults do not consistently insist on the highest standard of presentation and handwriting from pupils. At times, pupils' poor handwriting detracts from the work they produce.
- In the past, governors have not systematically evaluated the impact of the pupil premium to challenge school leaders about reducing barriers to learning.
- Parents and carers have mixed views about the quality of education. Some have not felt that leaders have communicated well enough. However, many acknowledge the improved work of the new leadership.

The school has the following strengths

- New leaders have galvanised the school into action. They now have a very clear and accurate understanding of strengths and weaknesses. Leadership has swiftly improved and is good.
- Pupils are polite, articulate and want to do well. They demonstrate a pride in their school. Pupils' personal development, welfare and behaviour are good.
- Leaders provide well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. Pupils have good relationships with each other and with adults.
- The quality of teaching in upper key stage 2 is a strength. Pupils make good progress in their final years at the school. Pupils attain well by the end of Year 6.
- Children make good progress in Reception. They are well prepared for Year 1. The quality of the early years is good.
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make good progress, personally and academically.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment by:
 - adults using assessment information to inform their planning of learning so that pupils make better progress in writing
 - ensuring that the teaching of reading is improved and better supports all pupils in key stage 1
 - adults using school policies and insisting on the highest standards of presentation and handwriting in all year groups.
- Improve pupils' outcomes by:
 - making sure more pupils reach at least the expected standards in reading and writing by the end of Year 2, so they are in line with national averages
 - ensuring that more pupils make consistent and better progress in writing, especially in lower key stage 2
 - providing the most able pupils with opportunities to use and apply their knowledge and skills in a range of ways so they can excel and more reach the higher standards by the end of key stage 2
 - increasing the proportion of disadvantaged pupils who reach the required standard at the end of key stage 2.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - subject leaders ensuring that pupils are provided with a rich curriculum that enables more pupils to be well prepared for the next stage of their education across a wide range of subjects
 - governors holding leaders more fully to account for the spending of additional funds so that the achievement of disadvantaged pupils improves further
 - leaders communicating even more effectively with parents, so more understand and support the work of the school.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- Since the previous inspection, the school has expanded significantly and now provides education for pupils up to the age of eleven. This year, the leadership of the school has significantly changed. Leaders are rapidly improving the quality of education. Pupils are well cared for and their personal development is good.
- The new and experienced headteacher, ably supported by her assistant headteachers, has an accurate understanding of the school's current performance. They are working swiftly on improving systems and procedures. Together, they are providing pupils with a richer curriculum in which pupils can excel and they are ensuring that the quality of teaching improves and is more consistent. Staff comment on the changes and say that 'there has been a culture shift for the better'.
- Where leaders have identified gaps in pupils' learning, they have been swift to provide good-quality training for staff. Recently, staff received additional training in the teaching of different techniques in subjects such as art. The impact of this work on pupils' achievement has been immediate. Around the school, pupils are producing a wealth of different and exciting artwork. Staff commented about how much they appreciate the training and development they receive.
- The local authority issued a letter of concern to the school following pupils' poor achievement in mathematics in July 2017. Leaders and staff have worked closely with the local authority and provided additional training for staff which improved the consistency in teaching practice. Pupils achieved much better in mathematics at all key stages by the end of July 2018 and made stronger progress than was previously the case. The leadership of mathematics is strong and continues to be effective.
- The leadership of provision for pupils with SEND is increasingly effective. Pupils' individual needs are known, and support staff are provided with relevant training so that these needs can be effectively met. Parents spoken with and many who responded to the online questionnaire, Parent View, commented positively about the recent improvements in the provision for their children.
- Leaders provide well for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. The school promotes its Christian ethos and values effectively. Values such as respect, tolerance, kindness and forgiveness are evident on display in classrooms and in communal areas.
- Several subject leaders are new to their role but have previously been in other leadership positions within the school. These leaders are enthusiastic and have the right aspirations and processes in place. They speak highly of the time they are now given to lead their subjects more effectively. Subject leaders communicate a clear curriculum intention and recognise that in the past, pupils have not developed their knowledge and skills across a wide range of subjects progressively enough. The impact of leaders' work on raising pupils' achievement is too early to be judged.
- Disadvantaged pupils are not achieving as well as they could. This is because their barriers to effective learning have not been identified well. Additional funds are spent

very broadly and are not reducing barriers to learning earlier in a pupil's school life. Where funds are used to provide trips and to support pupils' learning in upper key stage 2, they are used effectively, and help disadvantaged pupils make good progress.

- Parents who responded to Parent View have mixed views about the quality of education. Some parents remain unsure about the new leadership of the school. Inspection evidence shows that new leaders have the vision and skills to continue school improvement. Many parents commented that communication has improved recently and that they consider their concerns are listened to. However, there is still a way to go to ensure that more parents are positive about the work of the school.

Governance of the school

- The governing body is becoming increasingly effective in holding school leaders to account for pupils' achievement. This has not been consistently the case since the previous inspection. Minutes of meetings show that governors have asked challenging questions. However, they have accepted information too readily in the past without checking the accuracy of responses for themselves. This has changed.
- Governors have the necessary skills and abilities to fulfil their roles and responsibilities. Since they have been allocated specific responsibility for supporting and challenging subjects, they are better informed and involved in school improvement. Governors have an increasing understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school, so they can challenge leaders more effectively.
- Governors regularly check the use of finances and how well pupils are kept safe. Governors are dedicated to the work of the school and to improving the quality of education.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Leaders ensure that all statutory duties are carried out well to ensure that pupils are kept safe.
- Most parents who responded to Parent View agreed that their children are kept safe at school. All staff and pupils spoken with agree that there is a strong focus on keeping pupils safe. Pupils confidently explained how they learn about keeping safe through their personal, social and health education (PSHE) lessons. They are confident that adults will help them if they are concerned.
- Leaders who have responsibility for child protection ensure that concerns are acted upon in a timely and appropriate way. Records are well kept and regularly reviewed. Staff know how to report concerns they may have and are vigilant in performing their duties.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Requires improvement

- The quality of teaching in writing is too mixed and inconsistent across classes and year groups. For younger pupils, teachers do not have precise enough expectations on letter formation and handwriting, and this detracts from pupils' achievement and work. By the time pupils reach Years 5 and 6, there is still a great deal of work to be done for

more to achieve well.

- Teachers are not using the school's assessment policy with quality or consistency. Where they use it well, pupils respond appropriately and improve their work. This is particularly the case in Years 5 and 6. However, in other classes, teachers are not providing suitable guidance for pupils to improve their learning. This slows the progress pupils make. At times, pupils are given incorrect guidance or adults reinforce misconceptions. Many mistakes recur as a result.
- The teaching of reading is not consistently good. At times, in phonics lessons, adults do not pick up on pupils' mistakes swiftly and they continue to make them. Not all pupils are developing their early reading skills quickly enough. Results in the Year 1 phonics screening check are slowly improving. They are still not as good as they should be.
- In reading lessons, when a pupil is with a teacher or support assistant, then pupils are more confident and respond well to adults' questions and explanations. However, they do not show the same accuracy when working independently. When pupils are working on comprehension tasks, they make errors and mistakes. These often go unnoticed or uncorrected. Pupils are then not making the progress of which they are most capable.
- Where adults have appropriately high and consistent expectations of presentation, handwriting and spelling, then pupils produce good-quality work. Where teachers do not insist on the best work possible, then pupils' work is poorly presented or unfinished. This detracts from pupils' achievement and prevents the best possible progress in learning.
- Teachers do not use the assessment information well enough to plan learning that helps different groups of pupils to make at least good progress across a range of subjects. For example, the most able pupils are not consistently provided with the opportunities to show what they can do. Too often, they are provided with the same worksheets as others in the class, which limits the amount of explanation and analysis these pupils can produce.
- The quality of teaching in mathematics is consistently strong across the school. Teachers have received additional support and training, and this is bearing fruit. Pupils' books show that mathematical learning is thoughtfully planned. Different groups, such as those who are disadvantaged, or most-able, complete learning activities that are increasingly well matched to pupils' prior knowledge and ability. Pupils are making good progress in mathematics.
- Additional support staff are deployed well. They effectively support pupils on a one-to-one basis or in small groups as required. Where pupils have SEND, teaching assistants are skilled at providing for their personal and academic needs.
- The quality of teaching in Years 5 and 6 is a strength. In these classes, pupils are provided with appropriate sequences of learning in English and mathematics that build well on what they already know and can do. Pupils rise to the opportunities and achieve well.

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are respectful of each other. They have good relationships with staff and each other. Pupils speak proudly of their school. They arrive in school keen and ready to learn.
- Pupils who receive additional provision in the nurture class are well looked after. They receive effective help and guidance so that their personal needs are well met. In most cases, pupils can rejoin their classes and become successful learners. Each individual pupil receives the same thoughtful care and consideration.
- The culture and ethos of the school are strong and built on Christian foundations. Pupils learn about a wide range of different faiths. British values are taught explicitly in PSHE lessons. The many displays around the school celebrate the success of pupils' development and welfare. Nearly all pupils who responded to their online questionnaire reported that they are taught to respect people from different backgrounds.
- Pupils have opportunities to take on roles and responsibilities, so they develop leadership skills. Through the work of the school council, pupils are involved in decision making to improve the school. Recently, pupils were involved in the choosing of the new catering in the dining hall.
- Pupils spoken with say they feel safe at school. They could name a trusted adult with whom they would talk and who would support them if they were worried. Those spoken with, and many pupils who responded to their questionnaire, stated that bullying is rare. They can explain what bullying is and what it is not. Pupils are confident that adults will sort out any issues they may have.
- Although most pupils can explain how to stay safe when using online technologies, there are a few who are not as confident about what they would do. Equally, a few pupils are less confident that adults will listen to their online concerns and help them.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils conduct themselves well around the school and appreciate the facilities and welcoming place in which they learn. Lessons flow easily, and pupils work diligently in class, even when the learning activities are not as interesting or as well matched to their ability as they could be.
- At less structured times, such as lunchtimes, pupils follow the school's expectations and guidelines easily and well. Pupils who find the school day more challenging are given appropriate support.
- Attendance is in line with the national average. In 2018, the number of pupils arriving late and those who were persistently absent were areas that new leaders identified to improve. Staff rigorously follow up on pupils who are late to school. Currently, persistent absenteeism has declined significantly, as has the number of pupils who are

arriving late to school.

- School records demonstrate that school leaders take issues of behaviour, racism and derogatory language seriously. They deal with issues swiftly. Some parents gave mixed views about how well leaders deal with concerns. Inspection evidence found that leaders deal sensitively and well with issues of pupil behaviour. One pupil told inspectors, 'This is a really friendly school.' Inspectors agree.
- Pupils understand the behaviour systems at school. Adults are consistent when applying the school's behaviour policy. They provide appropriate praise when pupils behave well and apply consequences sensitively and well when necessary. The school is a calm and orderly place.

Outcomes for pupils

Requires improvement

- Pupils' attainment in key stage 1 in reading and writing has been in slow decline over the previous three years. In both 2017 and 2018, attainment was below the national average. Currently, these pupils are not making the necessary progress to fully catch up because the teaching of reading and writing is not systematically and progressively planned and delivered.
- Similarly, by the end of key stage 2, pupils' progress has not been as consistently strong in writing as in other subjects. The proportion of pupils who reach the higher standard in writing has been well below that found nationally for the previous two years. Currently, pupils make better progress in Years 5 and 6. However, this has in the past been too late for the most able pupils to excel and deepen their knowledge and skills well enough.
- Disadvantaged pupils are not achieving as well as others nationally or within the school in key stage 1. These pupils are not developing sufficient reading and writing skills to ensure that more of them are ready for the next stage of their primary education.
- Pupils' achievement in the Year 1 phonics screening check has been below that found nationally for the previous three years. Pupils are not acquiring their early reading skills as well as they should. This academic year, adults have started to involve parents more in the teaching of reading and have higher expectations of what the pupils should achieve. Pupils currently in Year 1 left the early years with a greater and more secure understanding of their sounds. Early signs are that these pupils are making better progress.
- Pupils make good progress in Years 5 and 6. However, pupils often have a lot of ground to gain and it is too late for some to excel. In 2018, the proportion of pupils who reached the required standard in reading, writing and mathematics combined was higher than the national average. This is because more pupils reached the required standard in mathematics. Pupils can achieve exceptionally well when provided with good and consistent opportunities to do so.
- In 2018, pupils achieved well in mathematics at both key stage 1 and key stage 2. No group was disadvantaged by poor achievement. Pupils who left the school were well prepared in mathematics for the demands of secondary school. Work in pupils' books demonstrates that this positive achievement is set to continue.

- Pupils with SEND achieve well. They make good progress from their starting points because their needs are well and thoughtfully met.

Early years provision

Good

- In 2018, after a long period of low achievement, the proportion of children who reached a good level of development (GLD) was in line with the national average. This represented a significant increase and improvement for the children in Reception. These children made good progress from their starting points and were well prepared for Year 1. Provision in the early years is good, and children are happy and well looked after.
- New leadership in the early years during 2017 has energised staff. The early years leader is enthusiastic and highly skilled. She has created a strong team where everyone is involved in the education of children and ensuring that all children make good progress from their individual starting points. Even where children start with lower skills and abilities in speech and language, for example, adults work skilfully so these children can succeed.
- Both classes are equally warm and inviting. Children settle well into school life and follow routines easily and well. The learning activities are of good quality and thoughtfully chosen, so children can gain the very best from each task. Over the inspection, children relished playing elves in the role play area. They practised their skills of wrapping presents, becoming increasingly adept at using scissors and measuring the paper.
- Children behave well whether indoors or outside. They are kind and patient with each other. They respond well to adults' instructions and try their best when forming letters or practising their number formation. They persevere with activities even when it is difficult. Adults are kind and help children develop their resilience in learning.
- Children's work in their books demonstrates that all staff are involved in observing children's progress. Adults use different assessment tools effectively to capture how well children are progressing, personally, socially and academically.
- The outdoor area is well equipped with all areas of learning available. One strong example of success was where boys were deciding how they could roll balls through some tubes. They used good technical vocabulary, worked well together, and enjoyed solving their problems.
- Relationships with parents are a strength in the early years. Staff carry out well-planned transitions and induction activities so that children settle into school life quickly and make good progress. Information is regularly provided to parents about the progress their child is making.
- For children who speak English as an additional language, leaders have recently introduced a family course to learning English. This course has been highly successful. One parent commented, 'I am so proud of the confidence my son has gained through extra opportunities to learn English.'
- There is still more to do to ensure that more disadvantaged children consistently reach a GLD. Leaders also have action plans in place to increase the achievement of the most able children, so more children exceed a GLD.

School details

Unique reference number	136514
Local authority	Peterborough
Inspection number	10058702

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	349
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Alice Kupara
Headteacher	Rebecca Smith
Telephone number	01733 306778
Website	www.stmichaelschurchschool.co.uk/
Email address	office@stmichaelschurchschool.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	11–12 December 2013

Information about this school

- This is a large school with two classes per year group from Reception to Year 4. Year 5 and Year 6 are currently one class per year group. Currently, the school has capacity for 420 pupils and will be fully two-form entry by the end of 2020.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for pupil premium is around 20%.
- The school was opened in 2012 and has rapidly expanded over time.
- The school is a voluntary aided church school and is part of the Diocese of Ely.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is below that found nationally. Similarly, the proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan is below the national average.
- Over one third of pupils speak English as an additional language. There are 21 different first languages spoken by pupils at the school.
- The new headteacher started at the school in September 2018.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors gathered a range of information to judge the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. This included observing learning in all classes, most of which were jointly seen with school leaders.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils and considered work in a large range of pupils' books to check the progress pupils make over time. Their views were also analysed from 58 responses to the pupil questionnaire.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, other senior leaders and subject leaders. A meeting was held with the governing body and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors looked at a wide range of documents, including plans for future improvement and the school's evaluation of its own performance.
- Policies and procedures for safeguarding pupils were examined, including statutory information on the recruitment of staff.
- The inspectors spoke with parents and staff to gather their views. Parental views were analysed from 63 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and comments parents made using the free-text service.
- The views of staff were analysed from 34 responses to the staff questionnaire.

Inspection team

Kim Hall, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Sally Garrett	Ofsted Inspector
Lesley Daniel	Ofsted Inspector

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