

St Michael's Church of England Primary School

Penberthy Road, Helston, Cornwall TR13 8AR

Inspection dates

5 to 6 June 2019

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders have taken effective action to improve the school following the last inspection. In particular, they have strengthened the quality of teaching, which is now good.
- The head of school has been key to the improvement. She has high expectations. She is approachable and collaborative. Necessary changes have been implemented effectively while maintaining high staff morale.
- The multi-academy trust and head of school have rightly recognised the need to strengthen the capacity of the leadership further. Training and coaching opportunities have been provided for individuals. Currently, the impact of the wider leadership team is inconsistent in ensuring high-quality teaching, learning and assessment.
- Sometimes, teachers do not plan learning so that pupils, particularly the most able, can build on their prior knowledge and deepen their learning further. This means that pupils are not always challenged sufficiently and encouraged to think for themselves.
- Pupils make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. They leave school well equipped to access their secondary education.
- Leaders have been successful in improving the teaching of phonics. Consistently good phonics teaching now means that more pupils are successful in the Year 1 phonics screening check. Pupils then use their skills in their reading and writing.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. At times, activities planned do not encourage pupils to deepen their knowledge sufficiently.
- Leaders ensure that disadvantaged pupils or pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. Interventions are well thought out and quickly implemented. Consequently, these pupils make good progress from their starting points.
- Safeguarding is effective. It is underpinned by the school's culture, where everyone is expected to respect and care for each other. Pupils talk readily about their school, where everyone has friends to look after them.
- Pupils behaviour is good. They are diligent in lessons. They play well together.
- Children get off to a good start in early years. Leaders and staff make sure children make strong progress from their starting points. As a result, children are well prepared for Year 1.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Continue to strengthen the wider leadership of the school to ensure that:
 - teaching is always of high quality and all pupils learn the best they can
 - the curriculum and activities planned allow all pupils, particularly the most able, to deepen their learning and further encourage their creativity and imagination.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Good

- The head of school leads St Michael's well. She is an inspiring role model for other staff. She has high expectations and expects the best for pupils. Parents praise her for being approachable and staff know she will listen. She has developed a team approach to school improvement. Necessary changes have been made but staff recognise these as positive and say that they are proud to work at the school.
- The school's self-evaluation is accurate. Leaders use a wide range of information to check the work of the school. They set the right goals for ongoing improvement. For example, leaders are aware that they must focus attention on certain year groups whose learning was interrupted by inconsistent teaching in the past.
- Leaders have taken strong action to improve the quality of teaching. They are very reflective. They adapt approaches to ensure pupils make the best progress, for example trialling different approaches to the teaching of mathematics. They have strengthened recruitment and induction procedures. Leaders have taken strong action to challenge any underperformance of teachers.
- Leadership for those pupils with SEND and those who may be vulnerable to underachievement is very effective. The inclusion team are an integral part of the regular monitoring of all pupils' progress. This means that they can pick up if any pupil is not making the progress they should and intervene quickly.
- Leaders and governors target pupil premium funding appropriately. This strengthens the achievement of disadvantaged pupils, while also focusing on their well-being. The sports premium is used well. Pupils enjoy using the bike track and are developing their cycling skills. The daily mile keeps pupils healthy.
- The head of school and multi-academy trust have rightly recognised that the capacity of other leaders must be developed to ensure that improvements are embedded and further changes are effective. Training has been provided and a leadership team developed. The impact of this wider team is inconsistent in ensuring high-quality learning throughout the school.
- Curriculum provision is broad and balanced. Pupils remember fondly 'launch days', residentials and trips. These opportunities enhance their learning. At times, the activities planned do not enable pupils to develop their subject knowledge and skills sufficiently.
- Through assemblies, the curriculum, extra-curricular activities and the strong culture of respect in the school, leaders provide good opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils respect the views and beliefs of others and are prepared well for life in modern Britain.

Governance of the school

- Celtic Cross multi-academy trust is effective in supporting the school through setting clear expectations and policies and recognising the individuality and distinctiveness of the school. The trust provides external school improvement support that allows the

school to verify its own judgements and consider improvements. It provides opportunities for training across the schools, which teachers value. The trust has clarified effectively the role of the local monitoring council, ensures effective induction and ongoing training for the members, and has therefore strengthened oversight of the school.

- The members of the local monitoring council are deeply committed to the school. They are knowledgeable about the school and hold leaders to account well through regular visits, audits and meetings. The communication with the board of trustees is effective. This means the multi-academy trust has the necessary information in order to make strategic decisions.

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding is led by reflective and caring professionals who are determined to do the very best for individuals and their families. Clear policies and procedures underpin the good work. There is effective monitoring by the local council. Staff are well trained and can clearly explain their responsibilities. Leaders make the required checks on all adults who work in the school.
- Leaders are very aware of the particular needs of their community. They work hard to maintain an open and honest dialogue with parents and carers and make sure that they are readily available to deal with concerns. Leaders maintain good relationships with other agencies to support with more complex issues.
- Pupils say they feel safe in school. Almost all parents and carers who responded to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, and all staff who responded to the staff questionnaire agreed that pupils are kept safe.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Good

- The quality of teaching is good. As a result, pupils make good progress over time in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teaching is typically interesting and engages pupils. Clear routines and expectations create purposeful environments to support learning. Pupils are encouraged to be resilient and grapple with new ideas, particularly in mathematics.
- Good relationships are evident in all classrooms between adults and pupils and the pupils themselves. Pupils are happy to work and talk together. The frequent opportunities to discuss issues strengthens pupils' speaking and listening skills and, subsequently, enhances their writing.
- Within lessons, staff use questions very effectively to check if pupils have understood. They intervene quickly to help pupils so that issues are clarified, and no time is lost.
- Support for pupils who find learning more difficult is effective. In almost all classes additional adults are deployed very well. Small group and individual work help pupils to focus on the task and clarify concepts and their understanding.
- The challenge for the most able pupils is not consistent. Planned activities and

expectations do not always stretch pupils sufficiently, encourage them to deepen their learning or stimulate their curiosity or imagination.

- The teaching of phonics has improved and is effective. Pupils use the sounds they have learned to read and write unfamiliar words.

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 very proud of their 'friendly' school. They are clear that everyone makes friends quickly and no one is left out. Pupils play and work together well.
- A few parents who responded to the Ofsted survey were concerned about bullying. Pupils are very clear that any issues are very quickly sorted out. They describe pupils falling out from time to time but no problems with bullying. Examination of the school's records shows that leaders take any reported issue very seriously and monitor behaviour closely to ensure that relationships between pupils are positive.
- Pupils enjoy opportunities to take part in the wider life of the school, such as being a member of the school council or a zone leader. These opportunities develop pupils' leadership and organisation skills.
- Pupils are clear that if they have a concern, there is always someone they can talk to. They are confident that adults will sort out any issue. The school provides a family support worker, play therapist and a counsellor. These professionals successfully support pupils and families who have more complex issues, such as social and emotional difficulties, anxiety or trauma.
- The school encourages pupils to be healthy and active through wake and shake activities, healthy school meals, completing a daily mile and enjoying cycling at lunchtime. Pupils engage in these activities energetically.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Staff have high expectations of pupils. Behaviour management is clear and respectful. Pupils respond by complying with requests and following routines well. This means that learning proceeds well in classrooms.
- Pupils are polite and well mannered. They listen attentively. They respectfully share ideas and thoughts.
- The inclusion team supports pupils with challenging behaviour well. As well as ensuring that good classroom strategies are in place, the team successfully addresses the underlying causes through small nurturing groups. This mean that pupils become emotionally more secure, less disengaged and display less negative behaviour.
- Leaders have taken good action to improve attendance, particularly of those pupils who are persistently absent. Leaders communicate their expectations of high attendance effectively. They follow up non-attendance rigorously. They motivate pupils

to come to school regularly through certificates and prizes. Attendance is now similar to the national average.

Outcomes for pupils

Good

- Effective teaching ensures that pupils are making good progress overtime in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Children make good progress in the early years. Many children join the Reception classes with low starting points. Most catch up quickly. More children than average reach a good level of development.
- The proportion of pupils who meet the expected standards in the Year 1 phonics screening check has risen in recent years. It is now above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who reach the expected standard by the end of Year 2 is similar to the national average. Leaders have taken effective action to ensure that teaching in key stage 1 has been strengthened. Current books show that pupils' progress is now good.
- The proportion of pupils who achieve the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 is similar or better than the national average. The proportion of pupils achieving higher standards or greater depth has increased.
- Pupils learn to read well. They say they enjoy books and read frequently at home. They can discuss their favourite authors.
- Pupils learn to write with increasing complexity and accuracy. This is evident in their English and 'Big Write' books. Leaders' focus on pupils developing a consistent handwriting script has been successful and presentation is good. At times, the quality of pupils' writing in topic books is inconsistent and expectations are not high enough.
- Topic work themes and lessons capture pupils' interest. However, work seen in books shows that their specific skills and knowledge in history, for example, are not developed well enough.
- Pupils with SEND or disadvantaged pupils make good progress. This is because their barriers to learning are identified by leaders and work is carefully adapted by skilled adults. Pupils are well supported in classrooms. Individual sessions enable pupils to make progress in specific areas such as their phonological awareness or memory.

Early years provision

Good

- Children get off to a good start. Staff manage children's learning well and help them develop the necessary skills to be ready for the next stage of their education.
- The early years leader is effective. She has high expectations and is very knowledgeable. She oversees the effective assessment of children's progress. This information is then used effectively to ensure that pupils are making good progress and, if they are not, to intervene when necessary.
- Staff provide a wide variety of interesting activities to develop early reading, writing and mathematics skills. Staff support pupils closely, gently encouraging and coaxing them. They provide well-prepared apparatus to support learning. This results in

children becoming increasingly confident to write or attempt number problems. They develop appropriate pencil grip, make plausible attempts to spell words to write sentences and begin to add and subtract.

- Staff provide a good range of free-choice activities both inside and outside the classroom. These interest the children but are not always challenging enough to develop their independent learning, extend their curiosity or problem-solving skills.
- The successful promotion of children's personal development and well-being begins in the early years. Adults care for children well. There are positive relationships between adults and children. There are clear routines and expectations. Children play and work together well. Adults effectively support children who may find learning difficult so that they make progress.
- Parents are very satisfied with the provision. Nursery providers praise the good communication with the school, which means that children's transition is smooth.

School details

Unique reference number	140027
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10088322

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	397
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	John Kidman
Head of School	Claire Johnson
Telephone number	01326 572 386
Website	www.st-michaels.cornwall.sch.uk
Email address	stmichaels.head@celticcross.education
Date of previous inspection	8 to 9 November 2016

Information about this school

- The school is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The school is close to the Culdrose Royal Naval Air Station and a large number of children from service families attend the school.
- The proportion of pupils with SEND is broadly average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is slightly below average.
- The school is a member of the Celtic Cross multi-academy trust.
- Governance is undertaken by the board of trustees, the chief executive officer and a local monitoring council.
- The school was subject to a Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools in November 2015. Its distinctiveness as a Church of England school was judged to be good.

- A privately-run pre-school operates on the school site but, as it is not managed by the school, it is not included in this inspection.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors visited classrooms in all year groups. Several of these visits were carried out jointly with members of the school's leadership team or the chief executive officer of the Celtic Cross Trust.
- The inspection team heard pupils read. They talked to pupils in classrooms and looked at samples of pupils' work. They met with the school council.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, improvement plan and assessment information.
- Inspectors met with teachers and middle leaders. Meetings were held with members of the local monitoring council, the vice-chair of the board of trustees and the CEO. The school's external adviser was spoken with by telephone.
- The views of parents were obtained through informal discussions, the 72 responses to the online Parent View survey and free-text responses. Inspectors took account of the 28 responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Stephen McShane, lead inspector	Her Majesty's Inspector
Adam Morris	Ofsted Inspector
Julie Jane	Ofsted Inspector

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