

Inspection of St Michael's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary and Nursery School

School House Lane, Blickling Road, Aylsham, Norwich, Norfolk NR11 6EX

Inspection dates:

29–30 October 2019

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Overall effectiveness at previous inspection

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

St Michael's is a school where pupils are happy and feel safe. Leaders encourage pupils to 'dream, believe, achieve'. Staff care deeply about pupils' well-being and personal development.

There has been a decline in standards since the previous inspection. Leaders and governors are determined to improve the quality of education. Parents and carers have noticed the improvements brought about by the current headteacher. Parents are grateful to staff for their hard work and believe their children are happy and enjoy their time at school.

Leaders and governors have a heartfelt commitment to helping pupils succeed. Leaders are making sure that pupils are more interested in their learning. However, the most senior leaders are aware there is still much work to do, and in particular, that expectations for all pupils need to be higher for the quality of education they receive.

Recent focused work by leaders to improve behaviour has been successful. Pupils behave well throughout the school. They are courteous and respectful. When pupils need guidance to improve their behaviour, staff provide good support and role modelling. Pupils are confident that if any unkindness or bullying happens, adults will listen to pupils and help them resolve any problems.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Leaders, governors and local authority advisers have attempted to stem the decline in standards at the school since the previous inspection. However, it has not been until the appointment of the headteacher in September 2018 that improvements have gained momentum.

The curriculum is not well thought through and is not organised in a way that helps pupils build their knowledge and understanding as they move through the school. Although leaders have begun to give more thought to what they want the curriculum to look like, they have not made sure that the curriculum is ambitious enough in all areas or for all pupils. In addition, leaders have not been checking closely enough that what they have put in place is being taught well.

The school's reading curriculum does not support pupils to learn to read well. Although there have been some improvements in the teaching of phonics, leaders do not know enough about what is helping pupils achieve well and what is not so successful. In addition, teachers' knowledge of how pupils are taught to read is not strong enough to help pupils develop their reading.

The teaching of mathematics is not good enough. Teachers do not check rigorously that pupils understand mathematical concepts. Pupils are not fluent mathematicians because they do not regularly have the opportunities to practise what they know.

The development of knowledge and skills in subjects such as science, history and geography is not good enough. Too many pupils have developed gaps in their learning because the curriculum does not support them to build upon their existing knowledge. Too many activities are planned in isolation with little thought to how teaching will help pupils develop their understanding further.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) do not receive an effective quality of education that meets their needs. Leaders do not check whether the support provided for pupils with SEND is working or take suitable action to make improvements.

Pupils respond responsibly to their different roles, for example as members of the school council, part of the eco committee and also librarians. Pupils also enjoy the events and wide range of trips and clubs offered, such as the Star Wars club, nature art club and the 'make and take' club. A strength of the school's work is how it supports pupils to engage with the local community.

Children in both Nursery and Reception settle well. They build very positive, trusting relationships with all adults. Recently, more thought and attention have been given to ensuring the classrooms and outdoor areas have activities for different areas of learning. However, the curriculum does not consider fully how children develop their basic skills as a regular part of their day-to-day education. Consequently, children do not achieve as well as they should by the time they move into Year 1.

The headteacher has quickly earned the confidence of pupils, parents, staff and governors. Staff appreciate the support they receive and the consideration of their workload. Nevertheless, the headteacher and governors are under no illusion about the significant amount of work to be done to improve the quality of education, and consequently, pupils' achievement and preparation for the next stages of their education.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders prioritise the safeguarding of pupils. They ensure that careful, thorough checks are carried out on all adults who work in the school to ensure all staff are suitable to work with pupils.

Staff are well trained and know how to keep children safe. Regular updates for staff give them information about risks to watch out for. Staff with designated responsibility for safeguarding know pupils and families very well. This enables them to provide crucial support when circumstances make families vulnerable. Where appropriate, staff communicate effectively with outside agencies.

Pupils are aware of the dangers they may face online and how to avoid these. They are also taught how to keep themselves safe both inside and outside school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- While the school is now starting to raise standards, it still does not provide a good quality of education. Leaders need to ensure their intent for the curriculum is well considered and implemented effectively. Leaders need to make sure that plans are suitably precise to ensure that the school offers a good quality of education in all subject areas, including in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Teachers do not meet the needs of all pupils, including pupils with SEND. As a result, some pupils do not achieve as well as they could. Leaders should ensure that all teachers know how to adapt their teaching or the learning activities to focus on what pupils need to learn next.
- Pupils' reading skills are not good enough. This is because staff knowledge about how to teach pupils to read is not well developed. Leaders need to ensure all staff know how to teach reading effectively so teaching provides pupils with the knowledge and understanding they require to become fluent readers.
- Pupils' mathematical skills are not as strong as they need to be. This is because pupils do not have enough opportunity to practise their mathematical skills. Leaders need to ensure that teachers check pupils have the chance to demonstrate what they know and apply it frequently so teachers know what pupils can and cannot do.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use Ofsted Parent View information when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you're not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

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.

School details

Unique reference number	121027
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10110323
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	129
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Olivia Corfield
Headteacher	John Neenan
Website	www.stmichaelsaylsham.co.uk/
Date of previous inspection	6–7 November 2014

Information about this school

- St Michael's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary and Nursery School is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The school is currently changing from an infant and nursery school to a primary school. The school currently has pupils up to Year 4.
- Since the previous inspection, there have been significant changes to staffing. A new headteacher was appointed in September 2018 and there have been changes in the teaching staff.
- The chair of the governing body was appointed at the beginning of this school year.
- St Michael's is a Church of England voluntary-aided school. The school's most recent section 48 inspection was on 10 June 2015.

Information about this inspection

We carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- During this inspection, inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, who is also the special educational needs coordinator (SENCo), the senior teachers and

teaching staff. Inspectors also met with the subject leaders for reading, mathematics, history, geography and science.

- The lead inspector met with the school business manager to discuss safeguarding arrangements and also met with members of the governing body, including the chair and a representative from the local authority.
- The subjects of reading, mathematics, science, history and geography were considered in detail as part of this inspection. Inspectors also checked the curriculum provision in other subject areas during the second day of the inspection. Inspectors spoke to curriculum leaders, visited lessons, looked at a range of pupils' work, and met with teachers and pupils. Inspector visited phonics lessons and heard pupils read to staff.
- Alongside leaders, inspectors looked at a sample of pupils' books from all year groups and across a range of subjects to evaluate pupils' learning in English, mathematics, science, history and geography and throughout the wider curriculum.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils about their experiences of school life and their learning to find out what it is like to be a pupil at St Michael's School. There were no responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire for pupils. Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and during break- and lunchtime.
- An inspector joined a whole-school collective worship during the first day of the inspection.
- Inspectors considered the views of parents, taking into account the 37 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, as well as the 38 free-text responses. Inspectors also scrutinised the school's own parent surveys carried out by leaders in May 2019.
- Inspectors took account of the 17 responses to Ofsted's online staff questionnaire and met with staff who are new to teaching.
- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documents, including those related to curriculum planning and development, safeguarding, behaviour, attendance, exclusions, the school's evaluation of its own performance, the school's development plans and the local authority's work to support the school.

Inspection team

Tracy Fielding, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Lynsey Holzer

Ofsted Inspector

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, further education and skills, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for children looked after, safeguarding and child protection.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 1231, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may reuse this information (not including logos) free of charge in any format or medium, under the terms of the Open Government Licence. To view this licence, visit www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/, write to the Information Policy Team, The National Archives, Kew, London TW9 4DU, or email: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.

This publication is available at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>.

Interested in our work? You can subscribe to our monthly newsletter for more information and updates: <http://eepurl.com/iTrDn>.

Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 1231
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.gov.uk/ofsted

© Crown copyright 2019