

Inspection of a good school: St Michael's CofE Primary School, Great Lever

Green Lane, Bolton, Lancashire BL3 2PL

Inspection dates:

12–13 November 2019

Outcome

St Michael's CofE Primary School, Great Lever continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, parents and carers, staff and governors are proud of their school. The school's motto, 'Sharing, caring and learning together', threads through all aspects of school life. Leaders have high aspirations for all pupils. They provide a curriculum which meets the needs of pupils.

Pupils work hard in lessons. They enjoy learning and they value their education. Pupils are respectful towards each other, staff and visitors. They told me that they feel lucky to be able to attend their school. They are happy and feel safe because staff look after them. Pupils told me that staff always have time for them to have a chat. If they have any worries, they know that staff will help them. The pupils spoken to stated that bullying does not happen at St Michael's. Parents agree that their children are safe and happy at school.

Pupils enjoy learning about what it means to be a good citizen. They told me that teachers make sure that they know what is happening in the world. Pupils enjoy the roles and responsibilities that they hold across the school. All pupils in Year 6 have different roles of responsibility. They take these roles seriously. Pupils take pride in the ways they can make the school even better.

Pupils are excellent ambassadors for their school. They regularly take part in extra-curricular sporting activities. Pupils represent their school in tournaments. Their strong skills in different sports have led to success in many competitions. The entrance hall celebrates the wide range of trophies and awards that pupils have achieved.

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

Leaders have reviewed the curriculum and made it clear what they would like pupils to achieve in every subject. The curriculum aims to help pupils to learn in a logical way. It offers pupils the opportunity to explore a suitable range of academic subjects. It also provides many activities and experiences beyond the academic subjects.

Leaders and governors are determined that pupils will leave the school as well-rounded, caring

citizens of the future. The school is a diverse and inclusive community and has achieved many awards to celebrate this fact.

In classes and around school, pupils are kind and considerate to others. Their behaviour is good and disruption to learning is rare.

Pupils make strong progress in reading, writing, mathematics and physical education (PE). Pupils remember what they have learned in many subjects. However, in some subjects, teachers do not systematically check that pupils can remember what they have been taught in previous years. In addition, opportunities to broaden pupils' vocabulary are not yet embedded.

Leaders have put reading at the heart of the curriculum. Leaders and staff make sure that pupils learn to read and enjoy listening to stories as soon as they start in Nursery. Pupils across the school make strong progress in reading by the end of Year 6. In every classroom, there are well-resourced reading areas which pupils use daily.

The teaching of phonics is effective. Staff have strong subject knowledge and meet the needs of pupils well. Books that pupils read are linked to the sounds that they are learning. Pupils' progress in phonics is checked well and extra help is given to pupils who need to catch up. Most pupils reach the expected standard in the Year 1 phonics screening check.

The early years is a strength of the school. Children get off to an excellent start in their learning and make strong progress. Children's learning, both inside and outside, is impressive. The learning environment is vibrant and well resourced. Many children attend the school's Nursery when they are two years old. They settle quickly into school life. Staff ask children questions that develop their learning well. Children learn how to count, read letters, develop their language and improve their writing.

Teachers make sure that disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well. They learn alongside their classmates and are included in all aspects of school life.

Pupils are confident, resilient and want to achieve. They told me that the school inspires them to be the best that they can be. They have high career aspirations, for example becoming barristers, doctors or professional sportspeople.

Staff enjoy working at the school. They work well as a team and are keen to continually improve the education that pupils receive. They told me that leaders have taken effective steps to reduce their workload. They feel supported and valued.

Despite the strong work of leaders and governors to improve pupils' attendance, it remains below the national average. This is mainly because several parents continue to take their children on unauthorised holidays. This causes gaps in pupils' learning and slows the progress that these pupils make.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that keeping children safe is a priority across the school. They know the local community well and have strong relationships with families. Staff are trained well. This helps them to carry out their roles effectively. They are vigilant and know what to do if they think a pupil may be at risk. Arrangements for safeguarding are checked regularly by the school's safeguarding governor.

Leaders have effective relationships with other professionals. They act quickly to make sure that vulnerable pupils and their families get the help that they need. Pupils spoken with during the inspection know how to stay safe when they are online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have reviewed the curriculum to ensure that it develops pupils' vocabulary and their use of language, particularly for pupils who speak English as an additional language. However, this is not yet fully embedded in all subjects. Leaders need to make sure that teachers continue to consolidate and extend pupils' vocabulary so that pupils better understand the meaning of unfamiliar words.
- Teachers make effective use of assessments to check what pupils have learned in lessons. However, in some subjects, teachers do not check that pupils remember what they have been taught in previous years in the same logical way as they do in reading, writing, mathematics and PE. Leaders need to make sure that they implement a clear strategy so that pupils remember important curriculum content. This will ensure that pupils know and remember more in all subjects. Ofsted's transition arrangements were used in this inspection to confirm that pupils benefit from a good quality of education.
- Leaders have improved pupils' attendance recently. However, pupils' attendance remains below the national average because several parents take their children on unauthorised holidays. This has a detrimental effect on their achievement. Leaders should continue their strong work to ensure that levels of pupils' attendance are improved further.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good, we will go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called a section 8 inspection of a good school or non-exempt outstanding school. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find some evidence that the school could now be better than good or that standards may be declining, then the next inspection will be a section 5 inspection. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the section 8 inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will convert the section 8 inspection to a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good on 16–17 June

2015.

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 are 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	105214
Local authority	Bolton
Inspection number	10087745
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	508
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Margaret Brockie MBE
Headteacher	Alison Hart
Website	www.stmichaelscepbolton.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	16–17 June 2015

Information about this school

- The school has a Church of England religious character.
- The school has a breakfast club and an after-school club.
- The school has provision for two-year-olds.

Information about this inspection

- During the inspection, I spoke with pupils, both formally and informally, about their work and school life. I spoke with members of the governing body, a representative from the local authority, the headteacher, deputy headteacher, assistant headteacher and members of staff.
- I reviewed a range of documentation, including documentation about attendance, safeguarding and checks undertaken on newly appointed staff. I spoke with leaders and staff to evaluate the school's work to keep pupils safe.
- I considered the 41 responses to Ofsted's online survey, Parent View, the 46 responses from the online staff survey and the 57 responses to the pupils' survey.
- I looked in depth at reading, mathematics and PE. This entailed discussions with subject leaders, visits to lessons, looking at examples of pupils' work, discussions with

teachers, discussions with pupils and listening to pupils read.

Inspection team

Julie Barlow, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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