

St Michael's School

Harts Lane, Burghclere, Newbury, Berkshire RG20 9JW

Inspection dates

20–21 June 2018

Overall outcome

The school does not meet all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection

Boarding provision outcome

The school does not meet all of the national minimum standards that were checked during this inspection

Main inspection findings

Part 1. Quality of education provided

Paragraph 2(1), 2(1)(a), 2(1)(b), 2(1)(b)(i), 2(1)(b)(ii)

- At the last inspection the curriculum was judged to be 'fit for purpose'. This standard had not been met because the school did not have a curriculum policy.
- The school now has a curriculum policy that meets requirements. Leaders are clear about the education provision for pupils who may have special education needs and/or disabilities. The policy has appropriate due regard for how the curriculum promotes British values.
- This standard is met.

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 7, 7(a), 7(b) and NMS 11.1

- Safeguarding is improving but is not effective. Leaders are taking action to change the culture in the school. However, they do not believe they have got all staff fully understanding their collective responsibilities to keep pupils safe. Standards relating to the assessment of risk and staff recruitment are not met. Leaders who would deputise for the designated lead in his absence are not appropriately trained.
- The designated safeguarding lead now has the required knowledge and understanding to fulfil the role. Records show that the designated lead is systematically recording all concerns that staff raise regarding pupils' well-being. Staff are now better trained to watch and listen to pupils, for example when their behaviours change. Communication with parents and other professionals, such as the local authority, is well recorded.
- At the time of the last inspection, the child protection policy on the school's website met the requirements of the Secretary of State. This remains the case.

- This standard is not met.

Paragraph 8, 8(a), 8(b)

- Leaders have ensured that many more national minimum boarding standards are now met. However, not all standards that ensure boarding pupils' safety and well-being are met.
- This standard is not met.

Paragraph 9, 9(a), 9(b) and NMS 12.2

- At the last inspection pupils' behaviour was judged to be good. This standard was not met because the school did not have a behaviour policy that met standards.
- The behaviour policy meets requirements. It is clear about what behaviour is expected, how good behaviour is rewarded, and how staff use sanctions for unwanted behaviours. Sanctions are recorded carefully and effectively. Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school remains good.
- This standard is met.

Paragraph 12 and NMS 7.1 and 7.2

- At the last inspection, leaders had not, over time, undertaken appropriate fire-risk assessments.
- Leaders have ensured that a full independent fire-risk assessment of the school premises has taken place. Leaders have acted swiftly to rectify the many actions that they were tasked to undertake to ensure that the building is safe.
- Maintenance personnel check fire alarms and fire-safety equipment regularly. They swiftly report any defects to the relevant contractors to rectify.
- Fire drills now take place at least termly in the boarding provision. Early morning drills ensure that pupils are now able to practise safe exits when it is dark.
- This standard is met.

Paragraph 16, 16(a), 16(b) and NMS 5.1 and 6.3

- At the time of the last inspection leaders did not have a written risk-assessment policy.
- The school now has a risk-assessment policy. However, leaders recognise that the school culture has not, historically, focused well enough on risks to pupils' safety and well-being. The quality of written risk assessments is too variable. Some staff think carefully about potential risks and how to control or mitigate risks, but others do not.
- Pupils are no longer expected to clean the dormitories or bathrooms. Therefore, the risks to boarders when using cleaning products unsupervised are no longer prevalent.
- This standard is not met.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

Paragraph 18, 18(1), 18(2), 18(2)(a), 18(2)(b), 18(2)(c), 18(2)(c)(i), 18(2)(c)(ii), 18(2)(c)(iii), 18(2)(c)(iv), 18(2)(d), 18(2)(e), 18(2)(f), 18(3) and NMS 14.1

- Leaders have undertaken a full audit of all historic recruitment processes. As a result, leaders are now fully aware of the gaps that exist in staff recruitment files. Some staff do not have all relevant checks in place.

- Current recruitment practices are improving. However, leaders have not been diligent enough in exploring long gaps in staff employment history.
- Leaders and the proprietor know what is required of them. The proprietor is increasing the frequency of suitability checks on all staff because the trustees recognise that this aspect of the school's work is not good enough.
- This standard is not met.

Paragraph 21, 21(1), 21(3), 21(3)(a), 21(3)(a)(i), 21(3)(a)(ii), 21(3)(a)(iii), 21(3)(a)(iv), 21(3)(a)(v), 21(3)(a)(vi), 21(3)(a)(vii), 21(3)(a)(viii), 21(3)(b) and 21(4)

- The single central record of recruitment checks is no longer poorly administered. However, the record still has too many gaps to meet requirements.
- This standard is not met.

Part 6. Provision of information

Paragraph 32(1), 32(1)(a), 32(3), 32(3)(a), 32(3)(c), 32(3)(d)

- Leaders have ensured that the new curriculum and behaviour policies are available on the school's website.
- This standard is met.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

Paragraph 34(1), 34(1)(a), 34(1)(b), 34(1)(c)

- At the time of the last inspection, a wide range of independent school standards and national minimum standards (NMS) for boarding schools were not met. The headteacher had only been in post for a month but knew that many aspects of the school were not compliant.
- Leaders are making steady progress to ensure that all standards are met. They know and understand which aspects of the school's work need to improve further, for example the assessment of risks. Leaders have accurately identified their own training requirements and where they need external help or expertise.
- The proprietor has good oversight of leaders' work. Trustees have an accurate view of what actions have been taken to meet relevant standards. The proprietor is also realistic about the amount of cultural and administrative changes that have been required. Trustees are ambitious for the school and clear that it is 'not there yet'.
- This standard is not met because leaders have not ensured that all relevant standards are met.

Boarding provision

The overall experience and progress of children

NMS 3.1 and 3.4

- The school has improved the medication storage and updated the administration of medicine policy. Procedures for medicine administration are now safe, including clear recording of any prescribed medication and any homely remedies administered.

- All prescribed medication, including that from overseas, has the original pharmacy label. Older students who self-administer medicine must now do so in the presence of an adult. The medication remains stored in a locked cabinet.
- All parents have been sent updated medical information and consent forms. Leaders are diligent in pursuing completed forms. Consent forms are available for those who have prescribed medication.
- These standards are met.

NMS 6.1 and 6.2

- A suitable health and safety policy is now in place. External contractors check the facilities on site, such as gas and electrical equipment, to ensure that they remain safe.
- The boarding areas, including the bathrooms, are due to for an upgrade in the upcoming school holidays. This will provide a safer and better maintained environment for pupils.
- Boarding provision is now cleaned to a better standard.
- These standards are now met.

NMS 13.1, 13.2, 13.7, 13.8 and 13.9

- The proprietor of the school has a sound knowledge and oversight of the school, including the boarding provision. Trustees visit the school at least half-termly and have good oversight of leaders' work.
- The senior leaders within the school now have half-termly meetings with the boarding staff. Various areas, including safeguarding, boarders' welfare and the development of boarding provision, are discussed. Leaders now provide a challenging and reflective environment for staff to develop their professional skills and attributes.
- The school complies with requirements noted in the appendices to the NMS by maintaining and following required policies and documents, keeping the required records, and monitoring the outcomes.
- These standards are met.

NMS 13.3

- There have been steady improvements in leadership and management. As a result, many more NMS are now met. However, the leadership of boarding is not as strong as it needs to be. Those who deputise for the head of boarding do not have the knowledge, skills or understanding to fulfil their roles and responsibilities. School leaders and the proprietor know this.
- This standard is not met.

NMS 14.2, 14.3 and 15.1

- Staff and volunteers who live on the school site now have relevant and up-to-date checks to assess their suitability to work with pupils. All have read and signed the new code of conduct. Adults who live on site are now clear regarding what is expected of them, including the provision for any visitors and their contact with boarders.
- Clear guidance is now in place regarding staff use of mobile phones within the boarding provision.

- Copies of job descriptions have been made available to all staff and volunteers. These specify clearly their roles and tasks within the school. These link to the newly implemented performance monitoring process.
- The above NMS are met.

NMS 20.3

- Leaders have alerted the local authority to any boarding arrangements which could be considered as private fostering. They have also ensured that all international pupils and students have a UK-based guardian.
- This standard is met.

The national minimum standards for boarding schools that were assessed during this inspection

- The school has, and implements effectively, appropriate policies for the care of boarders who are unwell and ensures that the physical and mental health, and emotional wellbeing of boarders is promoted. These include first aid, care of those with chronic conditions and disabilities, dealing with medical emergencies and the use of household remedies. (NMS 3.1)
- All medication is safely and securely stored and proper records are kept of its administration. Prescribed medicines are given only to the boarders to whom they are prescribed. Boarders allowed to self-medicate are assessed as sufficiently responsible to do so. (NMS 3.4)
- Suitable sleeping accommodation is provided for boarders. It is well organised and managed with risk assessments undertaken and findings acted upon to reduce risk for all boarders. Where boarders are aged 8 years or over, sleeping accommodation for boys is separate from sleeping accommodation for girls. (NMS 5.1)
- The school ensures compliance with relevant health and safety laws by drawing up and implementing effectively a written health and safety policy. (NMS 6.1)
- The school premises, accommodation and facilities provided therein are maintained to a standard such that, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of pupils are ensured. (NMS 6.2)
- The school ensures that the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy and appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified. (NMS 6.3)
- The school complies with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005. (NMS 7.1)
- In addition, fire drills are regularly (at least once per term) carried out in 'boarding time'. (NMS 7.2)
- The school ensures that:
 - arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and
 - such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State. (NMS 11.1)

- The school must have a behaviour policy, which complies with the relevant legislation, has regard to guidance, and is understood by staff and pupils. (NMS 12.2)
- The school's governing body and/or proprietor monitors the effectiveness of the leadership, management and delivery of the boarding and welfare provision in the school, and takes appropriate action where necessary. (NMS 13.1)
- There is clear leadership and management of the practice and development of boarding in the school, and effective links are made between academic and residential staff. (NMS 13.2)
- The school's leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role. (NMS 13.3)
- The school follows and maintains the policies and documents described in Appendix 1. (NMS 13.7)
- The records specified in Appendix 2 are maintained and monitored by the school and action taken as appropriate. (NMS 13.8)
- The issues specified in Appendix 3 are monitored, and action is taken to improve outcomes for children as appropriate. (NMS 13.9)
- Schools operate safe recruitment and adopt recruitment procedures in line with the regulatory requirements and having regard to relevant guidance issued by the Secretary of State. (NMS 14.1)
- For all persons over 16 (not on the roll of the school) who after April 2002 began to live on the same premises as boarders but are not employed by the school, an enhanced certificate with a barred list information must be obtained from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). (NMS 14.2)
- There is a written agreement between the school and any person over 16 not employed by the school but living in the same premises as children (for example, members of staff households). This specifies the terms of their accommodation, guidance on contact with pupils, their responsibilities to supervise their visitors, and notice that accommodation may cease to be provided if there is evidence that they are unsuitable to have regular contact with pupils. They must be required to notify an unrelated designated senior member of staff if they are charged with, or convicted of, any offence. (NMS 14.3)
- Any staff member or volunteer employed or volunteering in a position working with boarders has a job description reflecting their duties, receives induction training in boarding when newly appointed, and receives regular reviews of their boarding practice, with opportunities for training and continual professional development in boarding. (NMS 15.1)
- Schools alert the local authority to any arrangements made by the school that may constitute private fostering. (NMS 20.3)

Compliance with regulatory requirements and national minimum standards for boarding schools

The school does not meet the requirements of the schedule to the Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards'), the national minimum standards for boarding schools and associated requirements that were checked during this inspection, as set out in the annex of this report. This included the standards and requirements that the school was judged to not comply with at the previous inspection. Not all of the standards and associated requirements were checked during this inspection.

School details

Unique reference number	116594
Social care unique reference number	SC012016
DfE registration number	850/6062
Inspection number	10054532

This inspection was carried out under section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008, the purpose of which is to advise the Secretary of State for Education about the school's suitability for continued registration as an independent school.

The inspection of boarding provision was carried out under the Children Act 1989, as amended by the Care Standards Act 2000, having regard to the national minimum standards for boarding schools.

Type of school	Other independent school
School status	Independent boarding school
Age range of pupils	4 to 18
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Gender of pupils in the sixth form	Boys
Number of pupils on the school roll	115
Of which, number on roll in sixth form	18
Number of part-time pupils	None
Number of boarders on roll	31
Proprietor	Society of Saint Pius X
Chair	Father Robert Brucciani
Headteacher	Father John Brucciani
Annual fees (day pupils)	£7,000
Annual fees (boarders)	£8,800
Telephone number	01635 278 137
Website	http://fsspx.uk/en/st-michaels-school-homepage
Email address	headmaster@sanctusmichael.com
Date of previous standard inspection	10–12 October 2017

Information about this 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 Saint Pius X.
- The school is a registered charitable trust. Its goals reflect those of the Catholic society to which it belongs, which are 'the preservation and continuation of the Catholic faith and tradition'.
- The school is registered for up to 130 boys and girls aged from four to 18. Currently, there are 121 pupils on roll, 31 of whom are boarders. At the time of the inspection there were 18 students attending the sixth form, but no children in the early years.
- The current headteacher joined the school in September 2017, having moved from another of the society's schools in the United States of America. A new deputy headteacher has very recently started working at the school.
- The last full integrated inspection took place in October 2017. The overall effectiveness was judged to be inadequate. Safeguarding was judged ineffective. The school did not meet all of the independent school standards or all of the national minimum standards for boarding schools at that time. The action plan submitted to the Department for Education was not accepted.
- The school was subject to an unannounced emergency inspection of the education provision in June 2013, when the school was found not to have addressed the latest regulations regarding the promotion of partisan political views in schools. Unmet independent school standards were also found at this time.
- A further monitoring inspection of the educational provision was carried out in December 2013. It found that school leaders had successfully addressed the issues identified in the previous emergency inspection and that all of the previously identified unmet independent school standards were then met.
- The school has recently acquired and is using a neighbouring property. At the time of this inspection, the proprietor had not requested from the registration authority for independent schools a material change to expand the school site.
- The school does not use alternative providers.
- The leader with responsibility for boarding was not present during this inspection.

Information about this inspection

- This inspection was carried out at the request of the registration authority for independent schools. The purpose of the inspection was to monitor the progress the school has made in meeting the independent school standards and other requirements that it was judged to not comply with at its previous inspection.
- The inspection was unannounced.
- Inspectors met with leaders to review a wide range of documents relating to unmet standards, including risk assessments, policies and records relating to pupils' behaviour and well-being.
- Inspectors spoke with a representative of the proprietor over the phone.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils and staff around the school and in the evening.
- Inspectors met the designated safeguarding lead and evaluated their work; they also spoke to the designated officer who works for the local authority. They reviewed the single central record of recruitment checks and sampled a number of recruitment files.

Inspection team

Mark Cole, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Jennie Christopher

Social Care Regulatory Inspector

Annex. Compliance with regulatory requirements

The school does not meet the following independent school standards

Standards that were not met at the previous inspection and remain un-met at this inspection

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

- 7 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that—
 - 7(a) arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils at the school; and
 - 7(b) such arrangements have regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State.
- 8 Where section 87(1) of the 1989 Act applies in relation to a school the standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that—
 - 8(a) arrangements are made to safeguard and promote the welfare of boarders while they are accommodated at the school; and
 - 8(b) such arrangements have regard to the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools or, where applicable, the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools or the National Minimum Standards for Accommodation of Students under Eighteen by Further Education Colleges.
- 16 The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that—
 - 16(a) the welfare of pupils at the school is safeguarded and promoted by the drawing up and effective implementation of a written risk assessment policy; and
 - 16(b) appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified.

Part 4. Suitability of staff, supply staff, and proprietors

- 18(2) The standard in this paragraph is met if—
 - 18(2)(a) no such person is barred from regulated activity relating to children in accordance with section 3(2) of the 2006 Act where that person is or will be engaging in activity which is regulated activity within the meaning of Part 1 of Schedule 4 to that Act;
 - 18(2)(b) no such person carries out work, or intends to carry out work, at the school in contravention of a prohibition order, an interim prohibition order, or any direction made under section 128 of the 2008 Act or section 142 of the 2002 Act, or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in either such direction;
 - 18(2)(c) the proprietor carries out appropriate checks to confirm in respect of each such person—
 - 18(2)(c)(i) the person's identity;
 - 18(2)(c)(ii) the person's medical fitness;
 - 18(2)(c)(iii) the person's right to work in the United Kingdom; and

- 18(2)(c)(iv) where appropriate, the person’s qualifications;
 - 18(2)(d) the proprietor ensures that, where relevant to any such person, an enhanced criminal record check is made in respect of that person and an enhanced criminal record certificate is obtained before or as soon as practicable after that person’s appointment;
 - 18(2)(e) in the case of any person for whom, by reason of that person living or having lived outside the United Kingdom, obtaining such a certificate is not sufficient to establish the person’s suitability to work in a school, such further checks are made as the proprietor considers appropriate, having regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State; and
 - 18(2)(f) in the case of staff who care for, train, supervise or are in charge of boarders, in addition to the matters specified in paragraphs (a) to (e), the proprietor checks that Standard 14 of the National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools or, where applicable, Standard 14 of the National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools, is complied with,
- 18(3) The checks referred to in sub-paragraphs (2)(c) and (except where sub-paragraph (4) applies) (2)(e) must be completed before a person’s appointment.
 - 21(1) The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor keeps a register which shows such of the information referred to in sub-paragraphs (3) to (7) as is applicable to the school in question.
 - 21(2) The register referred to in sub-paragraph (1) may be kept in electronic form, provided that the information so recorded is capable of being reproduced in legible form.
 - 21(3) The information referred to in this sub-paragraph is—
 - 21(3)(a) in relation to each member of staff (‘S’) appointed on or after 1st May 2007, whether—
 - 21(3)(a)(i) S’s identity was checked;
 - 21(3)(a)(ii) a check was made to establish whether S is barred from regulated activity relating to children in accordance with section 3(2) of the 2006 Act;
 - 21(3)(a)(iii) a check was made to establish whether S is subject to any direction made under section 128 of the 2008 Act or section 142 of the 2002 Act or any disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in such a direction;
 - 21(3)(a)(iv) checks were made to ensure, where appropriate, that S had the relevant qualifications;
 - 21(3)(a)(v) an enhanced criminal record certificate was obtained in respect of S;
 - 21(3)(a)(vi) checks were made pursuant to paragraph 18(2)(d);
 - 21(3)(a)(vii) a check of S’s right to work in the United Kingdom was made; and
 - 21(3)(a)(viii) checks were made pursuant to paragraph 18(2)(e),
 - 21(3)(b) in relation to each member of staff (‘S’), whether a check was made to establish whether S is subject to a prohibition order or an interim prohibition order, including the date on which such check was completed.

- 21(4) The information referred to in this sub-paragraph is, in relation to each member of staff in post on 1st August 2007 who was appointed at any time before 1st May 2007, whether each check referred to in sub-paragraph (3) was made and whether an enhanced criminal record certificate was obtained, together with the date on which any check was completed or certificate obtained.

Part 8. Quality of leadership in and management of schools

- 34(1) The standard about the quality of leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the school—
 - 34(1)(a) demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;
 - 34(1)(b) fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently; and
 - 34(1)(c) actively promote the well-being of pupils.

The school now meets the following requirements of the independent school standards

- The proprietor must ensure that a written policy on the curriculum, supported by appropriate plans and schemes of work, is drawn up and implemented effectively; and the written policy, plans and schemes of work:
 - take into account the ages, aptitudes and needs of all pupils, including those pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan; and
 - do not undermine the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths (paragraph 2(1), 2(1)(a), 2(1)(b), 2(1)(b)(i) and 2(1)(b)(ii)).
- The proprietor must promote good behaviour among pupils by ensuring that a written behaviour policy is implemented effectively (paragraph 9, 9(a) and 9(b)).
- The proprietor must ensure compliance with the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (paragraph 12).
- The proprietor must ensure that the information specified in sub-paragraph (2) is provided to parents of pupils and parents of prospective pupils and, on request, to the Chief Inspector, the Secretary of State or an independent inspectorate. The information specified in this sub-paragraph is:
 - particulars of the school's curriculum policy
 - particulars of the school's policy on and arrangements for misbehaviour and exclusions
 - particulars of arrangements for meeting the standards contained in paragraph 9, by providing a written behaviour policy(paragraph 32(1), 32(1)(a), 32(3), 32(3)(a), 32(3)(c) and 32(3)(d)).

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