

St Michael's School

Harts Lane, Burghclere, Newbury, Berkshire RG20 9JW

Inspection dates

11 October 2018

Overall outcome

The school meets all of the independent school standards that were checked during this inspection

Boarding provision outcome

The school meets all of the national minimum standards that were checked during this inspection

Main inspection findings

Part 3. Welfare, health and safety of pupils

Paragraph 7, 7(a), 7(b), 8, 8(a), 8(b), 16, 16(a), 16(b) and NMS and 11.1

- At the last inspection, inspectors evaluated that safeguarding was improving but was not yet effective. This was because not all staff shared responsibility for keeping pupils safe. Similarly, systems for assessing risk and recruiting staff were not secure. Some leaders who deputised for the designated safeguarding lead were not trained sufficiently to carry out their roles and responsibilities.
- Safeguarding is now effective. The school's safeguarding policy meets statutory requirements and is published on the school website. The designated lead for safeguarding demonstrates strong knowledge of how to keep children safe. Similarly, his deputy is well trained and knows his responsibilities well. As a result, leadership of safeguarding is strong.
- Wisely, leaders have provided additional safeguarding training for all staff. This has strengthened their understanding of child protection matters and important statutory requirements. In addition, leaders have commissioned external professional support that is helping them improve further the good systems now in place to protect pupils from harm. There is an effective, shared ethos of vigilance at St Michael's.
- Risk assessment throughout the school is now robust. The quality of written risk assessments is of a high standard, clearly identifying actions to mitigate potential harm to pupils or staff. Importantly, teachers demonstrate the effective use they make of these assessments when planning lessons and educational visits, for example. Leaders' strong monitoring of risk management is making St Michael's School a safer place in which to live, work and learn than in the past.
- These standards are now 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), 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) and NMS 14.1

- At the previous inspection, employment checks had not be carried out on some staff. Similarly, leaders had not been vigilant enough when checking the gaps in staff employment history. Finally, the school’s single central record of employment checks made on staff was not complete.
- Since the previous inspection, leaders have refined their safer recruitment practice. All staff now have the relevant employment checks in place. When recruiting new staff leaders are systematic in checking carefully candidates’ employment history. Leaders are appropriately trained in safer recruitment and demonstrate a secure ability to employ staff suitable to work with children.
- The single central record of recruitment checks meets statutory requirements. Leaders, including those responsible for governance, check it frequently. It is up to date, well managed, and identifies that all appropriate employment checks have been made on staff.
- This standard is now 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 range of independent school standards and national minimum standards (NMS) for boarding schools remained unmet.
- Leaders, including those responsible for governance, have been unrelenting in their determination to meet all standards. They have been thorough in scrutinising and understanding where past practice has not been good enough. They have worked methodically to develop systems for risk assessing, safeguarding, and recruiting safely that are both useful and easy to manage. This improved efficiency enables leaders and managers to be significantly more effective in discharging well their statutory duties.
- This standard is now met.

Boarding provision

The overall experience and progress of children

NMS 5.1, 6.3

- Risk assessments for the entire boarding environment are thorough, well considered and result in prompt remedial action if any risk is noted or repair required. The system is supported by daily visual checks by boarding staff and with the cooperation of boarders.
- Boarders’ risks in the wider community have been managed without incident. Younger boarders do not access the community independently. Risk arising from boarders’ behaviour towards each other are very infrequent and not of sufficient complexity to require bespoke plans or assessment. There is an overarching behaviour policy which boarding staff know and use. Boarding staff encourage positive relationships between

boarders and ensure that all staff are monitoring whether these relationships are ever of any concern.

- These standards are now met.

NMS 13.3

- The leadership of boarding has benefited from the recent appointment of a new head of care. His constant presence and unassuming style, coupled with the open communication between boarding staff, ensures that there is suitably-skilled leadership of boarding at all times while boarders are present.
- This standard is now met.

The national minimum standards that were assessed during this inspection

- Suitable sleeping accommodation is provided for boarders. It is well organised and managed with risk assessments undertaken and findings acted on 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 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 that appropriate action is taken to reduce risks that are identified. (NMS 6.3)
- 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's leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role. (NMS 13.3)
- 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)

Compliance with regulatory requirements and national minimum standards for boarding schools

The school meets 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. 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.

The school now meets the following independent school standards

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 national minimum standards for boarding schools

- 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 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 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's leadership and management demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role. (NMS 13.3)

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)

School details

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| Unique reference number | 116594 |
| Social care unique reference number | SC012016 |
| DfE registration number | 850/6062 |
| Inspection number | 10056882 |

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.

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| 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 | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 80 |
| Of which, number on roll in sixth form | 5 |
| Number of part-time pupils | 1 |
| Number of boarders on roll | 18 |
| Proprietor | Society of Saint Pius X |
| Chair | Father Robert Brucciani |
| Headteacher | Father John Brucciani |
| Annual fees (day pupils) | £7,200 |
| Annual fees (boarders) | £9,600 |
| 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 120 boys and girls aged from four to 18. Currently, there are 80 pupils on roll, 18 of whom are boarders. At the time of the inspection, there were 5 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 started working at the school in May 2018.
- A progress monitoring visit took place in June 2018. Safeguarding was judged to be adequate. Inspectors noted that some effective progress had been made. However, a number of independent school standards and national minimum standards for boarding schools remained unmet.
- 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 does not use alternative providers.

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.
- This was the second progress monitoring inspection. It was conducted without notice.
- The Department for Education accepted the school's action plan with modifications on 9 August 2018.
- The inspectors had discussions with the headteacher, senior leaders, a group of staff, and the chair of the governing body. He scrutinised the single central register and other documentation relating to previously unmet standards.

Inspection team

| | |
|--------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Dom Cook, lead inspector | Her Majesty's Inspector |
| Kenneth Smith | Social Care Regulatory Inspector |

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