

# Inspection of a good school: St Michael's Church of England (A) First School

Market Place, Penkridge, Stafford, Staffordshire ST19 5DJ

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Inspection date:

3 February 2022

## Outcome

St Michael's Church of England (A) First School continues to be a good school.

## What is it like to attend this school?

St Michael's Church of England (A) First School is a happy and welcoming school where the Christian ethos underpins everything that happens. There is a strong sense of community and mutual respect. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school. A typical comment sums up the views of many: 'a lovely little community that we are proud to be a part of'.

Pupils love school. They say that they are happy and feel safe. They know that any adult in school will help them. Pupils are polite and courteous and have positive attitudes to school. They understand what bullying is and are confident that adults will quickly resolve any issues.

Leaders and staff have a clear vision for the school. They have high expectations of pupils. Pupils meet these expectations to work hard and achieve their best. Pupils behave very well in lessons, at breaktimes and when moving around the school.

Pupils benefit from a wide range of opportunities that enrich the curriculum. These promote pupils' confidence and sense of responsibility. Pupils can become eco-councillors, play leaders or vision ambassadors. They enjoy these roles and take their responsibilities seriously.

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

Leaders have prioritised reading across the curriculum to ensure that every pupil develops a love of reading. Staff immerse children in stories and rhymes as soon as they start in Nursery. This develops their speech and language. Children quickly learn their sounds in early years through daily phonics sessions. Staff have had training in the teaching of phonics so that they can support pupils effectively with their reading. Pupils read regularly at home and in school. Staff are quick to spot any pupils who need extra help to keep up. This support is quickly put in place and carefully monitored for impact. Most pupils read

fluently by the end of key stage 1 and continue to read widely as they move up through the school.

Leaders have an ambitious vision for the school. The curriculum is broad and interesting. Leaders have thought carefully about the progression of skills and knowledge in different subjects. They have also worked with staff to develop curriculum leadership teams. Pupils are proud to show the work in their books and talk about their learning throughout the school. Leaders have planned a curriculum that builds pupils' knowledge and skills well in many subjects. For example, in mathematics, leaders have identified end-points that are clearly broken down into appropriate parts for each year group to learn. There is a clear and logical sequence to the curriculum, so that pupils will revisit and build on knowledge and skills, lesson by lesson and from term to term. This ensures that pupils can remember and use what they have learned. However, occasionally, pupils are given work that is not as demanding as it could be in a small number of subjects. This work does not match the aims of the school's curriculum and does not contribute effectively to pupils gaining sufficient knowledge in these subjects. When this is the case, pupils' knowledge is not as secure as it could be.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive good support and are included fully in all aspects of school life. Staff receive regular training on how to support pupils with SEND. Leaders and teachers work with parents to put suitable plans in place. Leaders and staff understand pupils' needs well.

Leaders prioritise pupils' personal development. Pupils welcome and respect everyone in school and celebrate their differences. Adults know pupils well and listen to them. Pupils feel valued and cared for. This is reflected in the excellent way in which they treat each other. Leaders have carefully linked the values and social issues that they want pupils to learn about to a planned list of texts. Community links are strong and, when possible, pupils sing at the local residential home and collect for charities. They also take part in clubs such as those for drama, coding and football. Staff prepare pupils well for their next steps in education.

Staff work closely together and support each other well. They are reflective and thoughtful about their work and keen to improve. Governors know the school well. They want pupils to succeed and provide appropriate support and challenge. The well-being of everyone is important to leaders.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong, effective culture of safeguarding within the school. Staff know their pupils very well and are quick to pick up on any concerns. They receive training regularly that ensures they can identify any problems that pupils may face. Staff have a thorough understanding of the role they play in keeping pupils safe. Safeguarding records are thorough and well maintained. Strong communication ensures that staff share concerns swiftly. Leaders work effectively with pupils and families who need extra help and support.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe in the locality and online through curriculum activities, assemblies and visitors.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Work given to pupils is not sufficiently challenging in a small number of subjects. This does not match the aims of the school's curriculum and does not contribute effectively to pupils gaining sufficient knowledge in some subjects. As a result of this, pupils do not know and remember as much as they could. Leaders must ensure that work given to pupils is sufficiently demanding so that it helps them to deepen their understanding and to know and remember more.

## **Background**

When we have judged a school to be good, we will then normally 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 or outstanding school, because it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on a section 8 inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, 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 deem the section 8 inspection a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in July 2011.

## **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 information from Ofsted Parent View 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 the school and 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	124343
<b>Local authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10199733
<b>Type of school</b>	First
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3 to 9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	146
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Martin Officer
<b>Headteacher</b>	Zoe Cahalan
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.stmichaelspenkridgeschool.co.uk">www.stmichaelspenkridgeschool.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	4 May 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The school does not use any alternative providers.
- The school is within the Diocese of Lichfield. Its most recent section 48 inspection took place on 5 March 2017. Section 48 inspections were suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic. They restarted in September 2021. The next section 48 inspection will be within eight years of the previous inspection.

## Information about this inspection

This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders, and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher and other leaders.
- Inspectors met with representatives of the governing body and the local authority.
- The inspection focused on reading, mathematics and physical education. Inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders and undertook joint visits to lessons. They also talked to pupils and teachers and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- Inspectors scrutinised a wide range of documents, including those related to safeguarding arrangements, behaviour and attendance. Inspectors also reviewed the school’s evaluation of its own performance and the school’s development plans.
- Inspectors talked to staff about their role in keeping pupils safe.
- Inspectors held informal and formal discussions with pupils and observed lunchtime.
- Inspectors reviewed responses to Ofsted’s online survey, Parent View, including additional free-text comments. They also took account of responses to Ofsted’s online staff and pupil questionnaires.

### **Inspection team**

Emma Gater, lead inspector

Her Majesty’s Inspector

Helen Forrest

Her Majesty’s Inspector

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