

Inspection of a good school: Hathersage St Michael's C of E (Aided) Primary School

School Lane, Hathersage, Hope Valley, Derbyshire S32 1BZ

Inspection date:

15 February 2022

Outcome

There has been no change to this school's overall judgement of good as a result of this initial (section 8) inspection. However, the evidence gathered suggests that the inspection grade might not be as high if a full inspection were carried out now. The next inspection will therefore be a full (section 5) inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Hathersage St Michael's Primary School is much loved by pupils, parents and carers. Pupils are happy and say that the staff look after them well. Leaders make sure that the school is a welcoming and positive environment for pupils.

Pupils feel safe at the school and staff know them well. Pupils learn to respect each other. They behave well, are kind to each other and use their good manners around school. Pupils say that if bullying were ever to happen it would be dealt with immediately by the teachers. Bullying rarely occurs.

Parents say the staff model the school's 'golden values'. All parents who responded to the Ofsted Parent View survey would recommend the school.

The values that underpin the school's ethos thread through everything the school does. Pupils reflect these values in the way that they respect and celebrate difference. They work hard to improve their learning and their school. They live out the school motto, 'Learning, Laughing, Living'.

Leaders have high ambitions for all pupils. They provide extensive opportunities for pupils' personal development. However, leaders have not made sure that the curriculum is well planned in all subjects.

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

The personal development of pupils is a strength of the school. Leaders provide opportunities for pupils to take on extra responsibilities. For example, pupils act as

members of the school council, house captains and monitors. They contribute to changes and decisions about their school. Leaders are determined to restart the many after-school clubs as soon as possible.

Leaders have not identified the important knowledge that pupils need to know and remember in all subjects. This limits pupils' ability to build their learning securely step by step. For example, leaders do not have well-planned and sequenced curriculums for design and technology, art and geography. They do not clearly identify what pupils need to learn and when.

In mathematics, teachers use questions at the start of lessons to check that pupils understand what they are learning. This helps teachers to identify what pupils know and what they still need to learn. Teachers use this knowledge to ensure that most pupils get the level of support and challenge that they need. Teachers and support staff assess pupils' learning in lessons to pick up on and address any misconceptions pupils may have. However, this approach was not evident in all subjects. In mixed-age classes in particular, teachers do not assess pupils' understanding consistently well.

Leaders have systems in place to identify and support pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers know pupils' needs well. Leaders make sure that pupils with SEND have access to the full curriculum. Leaders have not fully evaluated the impact of the support provided for pupils with SEND. They are not able to identify what support is having the greatest impact.

Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and focus on their work. Staff have high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Strong relationships between teachers and pupils ensure that pupils are focused on their learning.

Leaders have developed a love of reading across the school. They have implemented guided reading sessions and the 'top picks' boxes where pupils recommend their favourite books. Older pupils show very positive attitudes to reading. They read often in school.

Leaders have not embedded a consistent approach to the teaching of phonics to pupils who are at the early stages of reading. Some pupils struggle to use their phonics skills to decode the books they read. They do not always get the help they need to become fluent readers. Leaders have not made sure that all staff have had the phonics training they need. The books that pupils read are not consistently well matched to the sounds that they know. This makes it harder for pupils to become confident readers as quickly as possible.

Children in early years, including the Nursery, benefit from established routines that develop the personal, social and emotional aspects of learning.

Staff say that leaders care about their well-being as well as that of the pupils. They value the support they receive. Staff enjoy working at the school.

In discussion with the headteacher, the inspectors agreed that the sequencing of the curriculum and the teaching of phonics may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have established a strong safeguarding culture in the school. Staff understand their responsibilities and use their knowledge to identify any concerns about pupils' welfare. They know how to report any such concerns immediately. Staff receive regular updates and training. Leaders are quick to act when they are concerned about a pupil's welfare. They work well with other agencies when needed. Leaders have appropriate procedures in place to manage any allegations about adults.

Pupils learn how to keep themselves safe. They are supported by pupils who are 'I-vengers', who teach them how to stay safe, including when online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have not developed well-planned curriculums in all subjects that build learning from early years to the end of Year 6. As a result, pupils do not learn the key knowledge and skills that they need at the right time. Leaders need to ensure that all subject curriculums are coherently planned and sequenced to enable pupils to build their learning over time.
- Leaders have not ensured that there is a consistent approach to the teaching of phonics. As a result, not all staff have the knowledge that they need to teach pupils to learn to read. Leaders should ensure that all staff have the phonics knowledge they need so that there is a consistent approach to phonics that enables pupils to learn to read effectively.
- Leaders have not made sure that the reading books used by younger pupils match the sounds that pupils know. This means that pupils at an early stage of reading do not become fluent readers as quickly as they should. Leaders need to ensure that all books closely match the sounds that pupils know to enable pupils to quickly learn to read and become fluent in their reading.

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 as a section 5 inspection immediately.

This is the second section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in January 2012.

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

Unique reference number	112885
Local authority	Derbyshire
Inspection number	10211562
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	142
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Mick Turton
Headteacher	Fiona Jackson
Website	http://www.st-michaels.derbyshire.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	5 October 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a Church of England primary school that is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The school provides education for two-year-olds in the Little Kinder nursery.
- The school does not make use of any alternative provision.
- The school is a Church of England voluntary-aided school. The last Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools inspection was in January 2017.

Information about this inspection

- This was the first routine inspection the school 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 of the school.
- Inspectors met with the headteacher and deputy headteachers.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at

curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.

- Inspectors looked at curriculum plans and spoke to leaders about other subjects.
- Inspectors visited the early years provision.
- Inspectors heard pupils read books and visited phonics lessons and whole-class reading sessions.
- Inspectors met with representatives of the local governing body and the special educational needs coordinator.
- Inspectors considered a wide variety of school documents, including the school improvement plan.
- Inspectors took note of the responses received on Ofsted Parent View. They considered the results of the Ofsted staff and pupil questionnaires.
- To judge the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors considered the relevant policies, scrutinised the single central record, checked the school's procedures for the safe recruitment of staff, met with the designated lead for safeguarding and spoke with staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Dave Gilkerson, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Di Mullan

Her Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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