

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

Marston Road, Marston, Oxford, Oxfordshire OX3 0EJ

Inspection dates:

22 and 23 March 2022

Outcome

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

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are bright, lively and eager to learn. They enjoy coming to this welcoming school because they feel safe, see their friends and love playing together in the spacious grounds. Pupils are kind to each other and are proud of their nurturing school. This is because relationships are prioritised at St Michael's.

The strong ethos and values are evident throughout all aspects of school life. Pupils enjoy their learning and experience a broad and balanced curriculum. The school continues to work hard in improving this curriculum offer.

Leaders set high expectations for pupils' learning and behaviour, and pupils rise to the challenge. Pupils behave well in lessons and when moving around the school. They are friendly, polite and supportive of each other. Pupils say that bullying is not an issue. They are clear that if it did happen, adults would deal with it straightaway. Pupils are happy and confident. They speak very highly of the staff.

Teachers plan events that extend and enrich the school's curriculum, such as theatre experiences, creative writing opportunities and visiting local museums.

Parents are very supportive of the school's caring approach, centred on children as individuals. One parent said, 'St Michael's is a lovely, inclusive school that celebrates diversity.'

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

Leaders want every pupil to reach their full potential. They have developed a curriculum that aims to meet the needs of their many different learners. Knowledgeable staff identify the support required for all pupils to achieve well. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. These pupils learn alongside their classmates, with adults providing timely help when this is needed. Appropriate adjustments to the curriculum and resources are well considered to strengthen pupils' learning, and so that

they feel included with their peers. For example, in early years, the language intervention programme enables children to build their vocabulary, learn comprehension skills and use new knowledge confidently alongside their friends in class.

Leaders have made important changes to enhance the curriculum and address identified weaknesses. Teaching in some foundation subjects, such as history, is now helping pupils build up knowledge step by step. However, leaders accept that this curriculum development is not yet finished and have clear plans to address this. Teachers and leaders do not use assessment well enough to improve learning. For example, it is not used to help pupils embed and use knowledge fluently. Neither is it used to consistently check understanding or inform future teaching in all areas of learning.

In the early years, the caring environment ensures that children settle quickly. Staff confidently build children's knowledge and skills across all the areas of learning. Children's introduction to reading and early mathematics is a positive and enjoyable experience. Consequently, children are well prepared to enter Year 1.

The teaching of reading is given high priority here and begins immediately when children join the early years. Pupils develop a love of reading through exploring challenging books. Pupils enjoy reading books both with their teachers or when choosing from the well-stocked, popular library. Staff interact skilfully with pupils to develop, assess and enhance their reading skills. They follow a sequenced programme that helps them learn and practise their phonics. Committed staff provide additional support for any pupils who find reading more difficult.

Lessons are busy and purposeful. Pupils know and follow the clear rules and routines that are in place. Staff model their high expectations and positively reinforce these to keep the focus on learning. This starts from the early years onwards. Pupils respond very well, showing a willingness to learn and make the right choices. At playtimes, pupils are well supervised to take part in a wide range of challenging activities. They are proud of their outside environment and look after it carefully.

Leaders prioritise personal development with all pupils in mind. Pupils understand why it is important to show respect for others because they are skilfully taught to do so. Planned opportunities also promote pupils' character development and enable them to reflect on the school's embedded values, such as love, determination and honesty. Pupils' knowledge of friendship and manners is reflected in their kind and responsible actions. For example, they have considered their own impact and reduced food waste at school. Pupils have engaged in anti-bullying programmes and worked with their local MP to understand about life beyond the school gates. Clubs, residential trips and local visits to parks and gardens enhance pupils' school life.

Governors work well with leaders and are committed to the school. They have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They are planning carefully to prioritise the school's next steps with leaders. Staff are proud to work at St Michael's. They appreciate and value the way that leaders are considerate and compassionate. For example, leaders listen and include staff in decisions about workload and new initiatives.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders know the community very well. This means they are alert to any concerns around the safety and well-being of pupils. Effective training ensures that staff know their role in reporting concerns so that prompt action can be taken. Leaders work well with external agencies to provide support when it is needed. Pupils are given help and advice about how to stay safe, including when online. Leaders check staff's suitability to work with children before they start work at the school. When it was identified that some records were incomplete the headteacher took prompt action to address this.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Not all subjects in the curriculum have sufficiently detailed plans that set out the essential knowledge pupils should learn. This means that pupils cannot always securely build on prior knowledge because the component knowledge and sequencing of the curriculum has not been finished. The history curriculum is a particular example. Leaders should therefore continue to develop their curriculum thinking in a few foundation subjects to ensure that plans fully prioritise improving teachers' expertise through further training.
- Assessment in some foundation subjects, for example in history, is not consistently in place. As a result, teachers do not know how secure pupils are in their knowledge acquisition. Teachers do not always know where gaps in knowledge are to assist in producing the next steps in learning. Leaders should monitor the effectiveness of assessments to ensure that pupils embed knowledge and use it fluently.

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 first section 8 inspection since we judged the school to be good in February 2017.

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	123143
Local authority	Oxfordshire
Inspection number	10211455
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	195
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Elaine Bardwell
Headteacher	Rosalind Owen
Website	www.st-michaels-oxf.oxon.sch.uk/
Date of previous inspection	21 February 2017

Information about this school

- St Michael's Church of England Primary School is voluntary aided and received its last section 48 inspection in January 2017. The next inspection is due in 2022/23.
- There is an after-school and breakfast club, run on site and managed by the school.
- The school currently uses an unregistered alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the special educational needs coordinator. The inspector met with 11 governors, including the chair of governors. The inspector held separate meetings with a representative from the Diocese of Oxford and the local authority.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, the inspector discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample

of lessons, spoke to teachers and teaching assistants, spoke to pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector also heard pupils read.

- To inspect safeguarding, the inspector reviewed a wide range of safeguarding documentation, including the school's record of recruitment checks. The inspector met with the designated safeguarding lead and also spoke with pupils and staff.
- The inspector took account of parents' responses to Ofsted's survey, Ofsted Parent View, and parents' written comments. The inspector also talked with parents on the morning of the second day of inspection.
- The inspector gathered pupils' views throughout the day, during lesson visits as well as at playtimes and lunchtime, and took account of the confidential pupil survey.
- The inspector met with a range of staff to gather their views about the school and took account of staff's responses to Ofsted's confidential staff survey.

Inspection team

Gareth Flemington, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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