

Inspection of a good school: St Michael's CofE Academy

Flanshaw Lane, Wakefield, West Yorkshire WF2 9JA

Inspection dates:

16 and 17 March 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?

Pupils are happy and feel safe. They are confident to talk to an adult in school if they have any worries or concerns. The school motto, 'Together Everyone Achieves More', reflects the strong relationships between pupils and staff. Staff have the best interests of pupils at heart. As one parent said, 'They go above and beyond for the children.'

Pupils behave well in lessons and on the playground. They play well together. Pupils understand what bullying is. Bullying is rare. When it does happen, staff deal with this quickly and effectively. Pupils know that 'adults are really good at resolving conflict'.

There are a wide range of educational visits and after-school activities. Pupils enjoy playing in the school's hockey team and participating in the school's 'reporter's club'.

Pupils enjoy their lessons and work hard. However, leaders have not thought carefully enough about what they want pupils to know and remember in some subjects. As a result, pupils do not achieve as well as they could in some subjects.

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

Leaders ensure that pupils follow a broad curriculum. In reading and mathematics, teachers are clear about the knowledge that pupils need to remember. Leaders ensure that important knowledge builds in a logical way. In these subjects, teachers explain new ideas and vocabulary clearly. They provide effective help for those who are struggling with new learning. As a result, pupils achieve well in these subjects. In some subjects, such as science and relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education, leaders have not carefully considered the knowledge that pupils should learn from the early years through to Year 6. This means that pupils do not always remember the most important content over time. Because leaders have not identified the important knowledge that pupils need

to learn, teachers do not consistently check that pupils understand what they have been taught. Consequently, pupils' learning does not always build on what they already know and can do.

Leaders ensure that the teaching of reading is a priority. Staff develop children's language skills and vocabulary well. The curriculum for two- and three-year-old children develops their interest in nursery rhymes, stories and songs. This helps to prepare them for phonics lessons when they start in the Reception class. Staff promote a love of reading. Pupils enjoy reading. Teachers make sure that pupils read books that match the sounds they know. This helps to develop their reading fluency and confidence. Staff provide effective one-to-one reading support for children who need extra help. Leaders have ensured that staff get the training they need to teach phonics well.

In the early years, leaders have designed a curriculum that develops children's curiosity, knowledge and understanding of the world. Teachers develop children's confidence and early number knowledge well. Children understand the routines and expectations. They behave well and enjoy playing together.

Teachers are quick to identify children in the early years with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Pupils are encouraged to do their best and work independently as much as possible. Teachers ensure that pupils with SEND are given the support that they need. As a result, pupils with SEND achieve well.

Leaders are passionate about providing pupils with opportunities and experiences to broaden their horizons and interests. For instance, the recent Year 6 residential visit helped pupils to overcome their fears, build confidence and establish new friendships. Pupils show respectful attitudes towards people who are different to themselves. However, older pupils find it difficult to remember what they have been taught about other faiths, religions and cultures.

Leaders have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. They have created an environment where pupils can learn without disruption. The majority of pupils follow the school's rules. They make the right choices and generally behave well. Leaders have appropriate plans in place to help teachers manage the challenging behaviour of a small number of pupils.

Leaders, including governors, have made sure that staff's workload is manageable. Staff have confidence in school leaders to look after their well-being.

In discussion with the headteacher, the lead inspector agreed that the development of the school's curriculum, particularly in science and RSE, may usefully serve as a focus for the next inspection.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have ensured that staff receive the training they need to spot the signs that a child may not be safe. Staff know what to do if they are worried about a child, and leaders take swift action when concerns are raised.

Pupils know how to keep themselves safe online. Pupils feel confident to report any concerns they have. Leaders take effective steps when this happens. Consequently, pupils feel safe in school.

Leaders make appropriate checks on the suitability of staff to work at the school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Curriculum thinking in some subjects is not fully developed. In subjects such as science and RSE, leaders have not thought carefully enough about the content that pupils must learn and the order in which this content should be taught. As a result, pupils do not achieve as well as they should. Leaders need to ensure that the curriculum is planned and sequenced effectively in all subjects from the early years through to Year 6. They should ensure that teachers know precisely what to teach and the order in which it should be taught.
- In subjects such as science and RSE, some teachers do not check that pupils are remembering the most important things. This means that leaders do not know which pupils have learned the intended curriculum in these subjects. Leaders should consider how they will check to make sure that pupils remember the important knowledge they need in order to be ready for the next step in their education.
- Pupils' knowledge of other cultures and faiths is less well developed than other aspects of their personal development. Consequently, they struggle to recall key knowledge to support their appreciation of diversity and difference. Leaders should ensure that the school's curriculum helps pupils to deepen their knowledge and understanding of other cultures and faiths so that they are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

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 December 2016.

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

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| Unique reference number | 139279 |
| Local authority | Wakefield |
| Inspection number | 10211091 |
| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Academy sponsor-led |
| Age range of pupils | 2 to 11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 486 |
| Appropriate authority | Board of trustees |
| Chair of trust | Peter Townley |
| Headteacher | Faz Islam |
| Website | www.stmichaelsceacademy.org.uk |
| Date of previous inspection | 13 and 14 December 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 |

Information about this school

- The school has provision for two-year-olds.
- The school's most recent section 48 inspection took place in October 2017.
- The school does not use alternative education provision.
- The school is part of Enhance Academy Trust.

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
- During this inspection, the inspector met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the assistant headteacher, the chief executive officer of the trust and five members of the governing body. The inspector also held a telephone conversation with a representative from the diocese.
- The inspector reviewed a range of safeguarding documentation, including the single central record of checks on the suitability of staff to work with pupils and the school's

safeguarding policy. The inspector also met with the school's designated safeguarding leads.

- The inspector met with groups of pupils.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics and science. For each deep dive, the lead inspector discussed the school's curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspector also spoke to the headteacher about the school's relationships and sex education and health education curriculum.
- The inspector observed some pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- The inspector spoke with staff about their workload and well-being.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, the online questionnaire, including the free-text comments. The inspector also considered responses to Ofsted's staff and pupil surveys.

Inspection team

Jo Bentley, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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