

Inspection of a good school: St Michael's Church of England Primary School, Stoke Gifford

Ratcliffe Drive, Stoke Gifford, Bristol BS34 8SG

Inspection dates:

18 and 19 May 2022

Outcome

St Michael's Church of England Primary School, Stoke Gifford continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

The school is a busy and vibrant community. Even so, staff know all pupils well and greet them by name. Pupils and parents like this. A pupil echoed the views of many by saying, 'It's a big school, but I can still be a unique child.'

Leaders aim high for pupils' personal development and academic success. Art, music and drama give pupils widespread opportunities to shine. Pupils are currently rehearsing 'Suessical', the latest in a series of successful school productions. The whole school gets involved. Pupils enjoy and compete in a wide range of sports. The community is rightly proud of the girls' under-11 football team that competed against teams from across the country and won the 'fair play' trophy.

Staff have recently raised their expectations of pupils' behaviour. Pupils' behaviour and conduct are usually good. Pupils like the clarity of what happens if they fail to make good choices. Equally, staff recognise the best behaviour. Pupils love to be 'recommended'. 'Hot Chocolate Friday' is a particular honour. Pupils are realistic that bullying could happen. However, they believe staff take pupils' problems seriously and things get sorted out.

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

Leaders have established an effective curriculum that pupils enjoy. Pupils are enthusiastic learners. There is an emphasis on creativity across the curriculum. In some subjects, pupils learn particularly well. In music, for example, leaders have designed the curriculum so that learning builds step by step from the early years. The curriculum for art is equally precise about what learners should know and by when. Teachers are knowledgeable about these subjects. Consequently, expectations of pupils are high. Children in the early years can vary the pitch of their music. They can read simple notation. Older pupils can use their technical knowledge in simple composition. Across the school, displays of

beautiful artwork demonstrate the wide-ranging techniques that pupils master.

Teachers make learning interesting. For example, events such as the recent 'Viking Day' enthused pupils in history. However, leaders are keeping history and some other subjects under development. While pupils learn well within 'topics', the key steps of learning are not sequenced clearly enough. Therefore, teachers cannot identify the most important knowledge that pupils need in order for them to learn more.

Leaders have set out exactly what they want pupils to know in reading and mathematics. They ensure that all teachers understand how to teach these subjects well. Children in the early years and pupils in Year 1 practise phonics with well-matched books. This sets them on the path to being good readers. Across the school, teachers prioritise reading to help pupils learn to read swiftly and with understanding. Consequently, pupils see reading as an enjoyable activity and are successful across the curriculum. Teachers check pupils' individual reading and guide them in reading widely. Well-stocked book corners encourage pupils to be keen readers.

Teachers explain learning clearly in mathematics. Pupils learn to think deeply and develop their mathematical reasoning. In response to the recent disruption to schooling, teachers have focused on fluency in number. For example, older pupils are now confident in their multiplication tables.

Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities have extensive additional support. This is helping many of them to keep up in reading and mathematics. Teachers, including in the early years, regularly check pupils' learning. Nevertheless, they do not always use this information sharply enough to help vulnerable learners catch up as quickly as they could.

The school embraces and celebrates its increasing diversity. Displays recognise people from many cultures who have made important contributions to society. Teachers encourage pupils to share their first language. The school's Christian values teach respect for different religions. Teachers promote pupils' mental and physical well-being through daily, healthy exercise. There is extensive pastoral support for those few who need extra help.

The school council and 'green team' support the work of the school. Pupils are now taking the initiative for fundraising. Recently, a group of pupils raised money for those suffering in the Ukraine crisis by running laps around the field.

The new headteacher has swiftly gained the confidence of staff. Staff feel valued. They believe that leaders and governors are mindful of their well-being. Governors maintain strong oversight of the school. This has contributed significantly to the smooth handover of leadership this year.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Senior leaders and governors check that the school is a safe place for pupils. Leaders ensure that staff have training and regular updates on possible risks to children. Staff are vigilant and know how to report concerns. Leaders follow up on any concerns promptly. They work with external agencies that provide support for families.

Recruitment checks are thorough. Leaders check that all adults who work with pupils are safe to do so.

Pupils learn how to stay safe through the curriculum. They have age-appropriate knowledge of using the internet safely.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some subjects, teachers do not emphasise the core knowledge pupils need because it has not been sequenced clearly enough. In these subjects, learners do not retain the most important knowledge. Leaders should complete the work they have begun on developing the curriculum so that pupils learn well in all subjects.
- Teachers do not always use what they know from assessments sharply enough, including in the early years. This hinders some pupils, including those who are disadvantaged or need to catch up. Leaders should ensure that assessment is acted upon quickly so that all pupils are successful.

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 March 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	109228
Local authority	South Gloucestershire
Inspection number	10199978
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	624
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Malcolm Fiddler
Headteacher	Peter Barnard
Website	www.stmichaelssg.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	13 September 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher joined the school in January 2022. The deputy headteacher joined in September 2020.
- The school is a voluntary controlled Church of England school. The most recent section 48 inspection was in June 2017.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school operates a breakfast club for pupils at the school.

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, the senior leadership team, governors, including the chair of governors, and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors considered how well the school protects pupils and keeps them safe.
- Inspectors considered pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school. The lead

inspector spoke to pupils at lunchtime. Inspector gathered pupils' views of the school through discussion groups and the pupil survey.

- The lead inspector observed pupils in Year 1 reading with a member of staff.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, history and music. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also took account of pupils' learning in other subjects.
- Inspectors considered the responses to the questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View, including parents' comments. They gathered the views of staff through meetings and the staff survey.

Inspection team

Wendy Marriott, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Adam Matthews

Ofsted Inspector

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