

Inspection of a good school: St Michael's Church of England Voluntary Aided Junior School

Barnard Road, Galleywood, Chelmsford, Essex CM2 8RR

Inspection dates:

2 and 3 November 2022

Outcome

St Michael's Church of England Voluntary Aided Junior School continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to attend St Michael's and enjoy coming to school. The school is calm and welcoming. Pupils are kind, caring and friendly towards each other. Pupils say they feel safe, and they know who to speak to if they need help.

Staff have high expectations for pupils. This is seen through pupils' work and behaviour. Pupils want to do their best and are keen to share their success. They enjoy celebration assemblies.

Pupils behave well in lessons and around the school. Pupils say that staff are firm but fair. Leaders take bullying seriously. If it happens, it is dealt with effectively. Pupils say that bullying does not happen here.

Pupils value a range of extra-curricular clubs that take place at lunchtime and after school. Clubs such as choir, chess and community club allow pupils to develop their talents and try new things. Pupils take part in a range of community events including intergenerational activities. Pupils enjoy a range of responsibilities within the school, including those of worship leaders, school councillors, librarians, community club ambassadors and house captains.

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

Leaders have high expectations for the pupils they teach. The well-designed curriculum ensures that pupils gain important subject knowledge and skills over time. Staff use assessment to identify and target gaps in learning. When pupils who join the school find learning challenging, they are well supported and achieve well by the time they leave in Year 6. As a result, pupils are well prepared for secondary school and become confident learners.

Leaders have developed a culture of reading in the school for all pupils. Pupils are encouraged to read widely. Those developing their reading are supported to become fluent readers. Leaders are ambitious and expose pupils to a range of carefully chosen texts. For a few pupils, reading books are not always matched to their reading stage or phonetic knowledge. Some pupils who struggle to decode find it a challenge to access parts of the curriculum. Leaders must support these pupils to decode and catch up quickly so that they become fluent readers.

Disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported in the school. Pupils with SEND access the same curriculum as their peers. Adults support pupils with SEND to be successful in their learning. Leaders strive to ensure that the right support is in place for pupils to succeed. Adaptations to the curriculum support pupils with SEND to achieve well and engage in the whole of school life.

Pupils have high expectations of their own and others' behaviour. During lessons pupils focus on their learning. Pupils are excited by their learning. Pupils move sensibly around the school. They are trusted by adults to behave well. Pupils rise to this expectation. Younger pupils are well supported when they join the school and adapt to behaviour expectations quickly. Pupils have clear routines for breaktime and lunchtime and enjoy purchasing a snack and selecting their own lunch. Pupils especially enjoy sitting with their friends to eat.

Leaders provide a range of opportunities to promote pupils' wider development. These include community club, where pupils plan activities that will make a difference to their community, such as support for local and national charities, including Anti-Bullying Alliance and Alzheimer's Society. Pupils help to run clubs and have pupil leadership responsibilities that they are proud of.

Leaders carefully consider staff well-being and workload when making decisions. Staff feel supported by leaders and changes made have been positive for both pupils and staff. For example, the live marking and feedback approach allows staff to focus on moving pupils on with their learning quickly.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong safeguarding culture of 'it could happen here'. Staff use clear processes for identifying concerns. Staff identify concerns quickly and leaders put support in place promptly to keep pupils safe. Leaders have robust systems for tracking concerns and use them to support families. Leaders ensure that staff have regular training on contextual issues for the school and the community it serves. Leaders create strong relationships with parents. Leaders engage with a variety of external agencies to support pupils' and families' needs. The school's pastoral care manager provides valuable in-house support for pupils and families.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A small group of pupils cannot decode well. Pupils who cannot decode struggle to access the full curriculum offer. Leaders must support pupils to decode text and increase fluency in their reading. Staff must ensure that books match all pupils' reading stage to develop fluency and confidence in reading. This will help these pupils to catch up quickly with their peers and benefit from the ambitious curriculum.

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 an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in October 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.

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	115197
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10211391
Type of school	Junior
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	7 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	227
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Jane Cregan-Bird
Headteacher	Rowen Prigg
Website	www.st-michaels-jun.essex.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	8 February 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.
- There has been a change in headteacher since the last inspection.
- This is a Church of England primary school. The school's most recent section 48 Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools took place in June 2015.

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 met with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, subject leaders and the special educational needs coordinator. The inspector met with five governors, including the chair of the governing body.
- The inspector spoke to staff to discuss workload, well-being and safeguarding.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, and geography. For each deep dive the inspector discussed the curriculum 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.

- The inspector spoke with pupils about their learning, safety and behaviour.
- Documentation relating to safeguarding and behaviour was scrutinised by inspectors.
- The inspector took account of the 39 responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.

Inspection team

Nerrissa Bear, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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