

# Inspection of a good school: Michaelchurch Escley Primary School

Michaelchurch Escley, Hereford, Herefordshire HR2 0PT

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Inspection date:

2 December 2022

## **Outcome**

Michaelchurch Escley Primary School continues to be a good school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Pupils enjoy their time at school. 'It's as good as it gets,' said one pupil about mathematics lessons, reflecting the views of other classmates. The school lives up to its belief in 'a happy childhood at its core'. Leaders want all pupils to do as well as they can in their work. They have successfully designed a curriculum to stretch and challenge pupils of all abilities, so that they achieve well.

Behaviour in lessons and around school is of a high standard. Pupils look out for each other at playtime. The 'walk tall' ambassadors help them to feel safe in school. They know there is someone to talk to who, if a rare incident of bullying occurs, will get it sorted. Pupils respect others from different backgrounds. This is exemplified in how they have befriended Ukrainian refugees new to the school.

Leaders make much of their beautiful rural setting to enable pupils to develop a curiosity of their local environment. Trips to London and Birmingham help pupils to experience life in culturally diverse Britain. Despite the small size of the school, pupils have competed successfully in tournaments with larger settings, and are proud of the sports trophy they have won.

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

Leaders have introduced a suitably ambitious curriculum which covers a broad range of subjects. A promotion of the love of reading lies at the heart of this. Leaders prioritise reading for all, including a daily one-to-one reading session for those who need to keep up with their peers. This helps them gain the knowledge and skills they need to be confident and fluent readers. The teaching of phonics is consistent, ensuring that the books pupils read are well matched to the sounds and letters they know. Pupils make good use of the library to read books at home. Children get off to a rapid start in learning to read early on in Reception.

In mathematics, the curriculum is designed well to develop pupils' mastery through regular revision and revisiting of topics. Pupils are familiar with mathematical technical terms and use these confidently. They are developing greater fluency in learning their times tables.

Leaders have designed a curriculum that is well sequenced. They ensure that teachers deliver the full curriculum successfully. Pupils can recall their previous learning and memorise key vocabulary and concepts, such as 'tributaries' in geography and 'denominators' in mathematics. In the early years, children learn numbers and shape through themes, such as a Norwegian Christmas. Children were able to count numbers on the advent calendar and make Christmas trees made of triangles. The early years setting encourages children's curiosity and independence.

Suitable adaptations to the curriculum for pupils who speak English as an additional language include electronic translators and bilingual instructions on display. This supports their good progress. When pupils are working at home, leaders ensure that pupils continue to learn effectively.

Leaders accurately identify pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), who have their individual needs met well in reading and mathematics. However, the extent to which the delivery of the wider curriculum is adapted to achieve this for all pupils is not yet as consistent in all subjects as it is in reading and mathematics. Some aspects of the wider curriculum have been revised more recently, for example switching from teaching Spanish to French, so are not as fully embedded as other subjects.

Teachers provide pupils with helpful feedback that helps them to progress in their learning. Teachers check regularly on how pupils are progressing in lessons, before moving on to the next stage in learning.

Lessons are largely free of any low-level disruption. Pupils are excited about their learning and are eager to support each other.

The wider curriculum enables pupils to engage in sports tournaments in football, hockey and netball. These events encourage pupils to engage in sport enthusiastically. There is a high take-up of the many clubs on offer, such as fencing and craftwork. Pupils have special responsibilities, such as on the school council, where they are democratically elected, or as monitors helping to look after school equipment.

This is a very harmonious community where pupil, staff and parental surveys were unanimous in their praise for the work of the school. Leaders are very mindful of workload, which teaching staff fully appreciate. Governors have a detailed knowledge of the school, including the curriculum, and provide a high degree of support and challenge.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders are quick to identify any pupils at risk. They record any concerns, however small they may appear. When needed, leaders are able to secure prompt early help for pupils. Leaders are well trained for their safeguarding role and are closely scrutinised by the governing body. Leaders ensure that recruitment checks on staff are carried out thoroughly. Systems and policies are in place should there be any allegations. Staff are acutely aware to look for the signs, should there be any sexual harassment in school. Pupils know how to keep themselves safe, including when on the internet or when swimming.

## **What does the school need to do to improve?**

### **(Information for the school and appropriate authority)**

- Revisions to the curriculum in some subjects have been introduced more recently than others. As a result, they have not been as securely embedded as other subjects in taking account of the needs of all pupils, including those with SEND. Leaders should ensure that the curriculum is implemented effectively in all subjects to take account of the needs of all pupils.

## **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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good on 21 and 22 June 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.

## **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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	116714
<b>Local authority</b>	Herefordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	10199875
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	63
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair of governing body</b>	Rhiannon Taylor
<b>Headteacher</b>	Louise Crocker
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://michaelchurchprimary.co.uk">http://michaelchurchprimary.co.uk</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	21 and 22 June 2016, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The chair of the governing body was appointed after the last inspection, as were a number of other governors.
- The number of pupils on the school roll has increased by almost 50% since the last inspection.
- The school has no pupils currently in alternative provision.

## 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 held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders and other members of staff.
- Inspectors spoke to several groups of pupils.
- An inspector met the five members of the governing body, including the chair and vice chair.

- Inspectors took account of responses to the Ofsted Parent View free-text service, the online questionnaire, as well as the pupil and staff surveys.
- Inspectors considered information on pupils' behaviour, attendance, personal development, safeguarding and child protection.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, geography and mathematics. They also looked at work in a number of other subjects, including in the early years foundation stage. 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. An inspector also listened to pupils reading.

### **Inspection team**

Mark Sims, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Stuart Clarkson

His Majesty's Inspector

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