

Inspection of a good school: The St Michael's Church of England Primary School, Thorpe on the Hill

School Lane, Thorpe-on-the-Hill, Lincoln, Lincolnshire LN6 9BN

Inspection dates:

18 and 19 July 2023

Outcome

The St Michael's Church of England Primary School, Thorpe on the Hill continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

'Believe and achieve to be the best that you can be' is the vision that underpins everything at St Michael's. Caring adults nurture pupils. Staff take the time to know the pupils well. They understand pupils' individual needs and know how to support them.

Pupils behave well. They are kind to each other. Pupils demonstrate the ten school values. Pupils know staff will help them if they have worries. Bullying is rare. Pupils know what different types of bullying may look like. Pupils show positive attitudes to their work and encourage others to do the same. The school is a calm and purposeful place.

Leaders provide a range of opportunities for pupils to develop their interests. This includes holding a talent show for pupils to share their talents. Pupils take part in extra-curricular clubs and residential visits. Leaders carefully consider how pupils will develop their self-esteem and independence. There is a thriving sense of community, where older pupils play alongside the younger ones.

The St Michael's curriculum allows for pupils to engage with stimulating activities in the outdoors. This includes creating an award-winning legacy garden recognised at the Lincolnshire Show.

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

Leaders have created an ambitious curriculum. It is coherently sequenced. Teachers use this to plan pupils' learning effectively. Staff skilfully support pupils to use the organised indoor and outdoor learning environments. This helps pupils learn the curriculum.

Children in the early years settle well into the school's routines. The curriculum for early reading is well established. Children are keen to participate in their phonics lessons. Fun

and purposeful routines help with this. Staff are early reading experts. They deliver high-quality phonics lessons. Pupils develop their knowledge of phonics securely. For example, pupils identify, say and write letter sounds correctly. Reading books match the sounds that pupils know. Pupils can segment and blend words with confidence as a result. Leaders plan extra help for those who need additional support through 'fast track' sessions. Leaders ensure that there are inviting spaces around the school, where pupils can read for pleasure. Older pupils read books that develop their understanding of different cultures.

Leaders have high academic expectations for pupils. They have identified the essential knowledge they want pupils to remember across most subjects. Teachers support pupils well to remember and use the knowledge, skills and vocabulary they have learned. Pupils gain the vocabulary they need to help them later. For example, pupils use mathematical language to describe the properties of shape. They apply mathematical knowledge to a range of problem-solving and reasoning questions successfully.

Although subject leaders have planned the essential knowledge pupils need to know, teachers do not yet, consistently across all subjects, check that this knowledge has been remembered by pupils.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) get the appropriate support they need. Staff identify their needs swiftly and accurately. Pupils use resources matched to their needs, so they can learn the curriculum. Leaders monitor both the targets for pupils with SEND and the support that pupils with SEND receive. This helps ensure that pupils with SEND learn the same curriculum as their peers. Pupils with SEND are also at the forefront of many extra-curricular activities.

There are clear routines and expectations for pupils' behaviour. This begins in the early years. Skilled teachers support pupils who need additional help to manage their emotions.

Pupils celebrate and appreciate difference. They show sensitivity to pupils who have different needs to their own. Pupils are keen to be involved in lessons about their own faith and enjoy learning about other pupils' faiths. Pupils feel this is an inclusive school, where everyone is valued.

Staff enjoy working at the school. They feel well supported by leaders. They recognise the ways in which leaders continue to improve the school. Staff say that leaders consider their workload and well-being when making decisions. Staff feel able to ask for help and guidance and are given time to embed new ideas.

The arrangements for governance serve the school well. Governors have a clear vision for the school. They have effective systems in place to monitor and evaluate the school accurately. Governors know and understand the school's strengths and areas for development. Leaders are determined to serve the school community well.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

There is a strong culture of safeguarding. Staff and leaders know how to identify if a pupil may be at risk. Leaders act in the best interests of the pupils. They make sure that pupils and families get the help they need by taking swift action.

Staff receive frequent and up-to-date safeguarding training. They understand what to do if they are concerned about a pupil.

The curriculum is designed to make sure that pupils can learn to keep themselves and others safe. For example, when riding a bike, water safety and staying safe online. Pupils learn the rules to stay safe when learning around a campfire and outdoor learning.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders do not have a consistent approach to assess if pupils know and remember the essential knowledge set out in the curriculum. In some subjects, pupils do not always remember the most important knowledge as well as they should. Leaders should ensure that teachers use assessment to check more precisely that all pupils know and remember the essential knowledge set out in the 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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good in February 2018.

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	120540
Local authority	Lincolnshire
Inspection number	10268956
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	198
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Rebecca Green
Headteacher	Naomi Weaver
Website	www.stmichaels.lincs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	6 February 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Leaders do not make use of any alternative provision.
- There is a new chair of the governing body.
- St. Michael's is a Church of England school with a Christian ethos. It received its last Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) in March 2019.

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, the special educational needs coordinator and governors.
- The inspector held telephone conversations with representatives of the local authority and diocese.
- The inspector carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics and history. The inspectors discussed the 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 leaders about the curriculum in other areas, including geography, personal, social and health education and the bespoke St. Michael's curriculum.
- The inspector listened to pupils read to a familiar adult.
- The inspector reviewed a range of documents, including the school's self-evaluation, the improvement plan and behaviour records.
- The inspector met with the designated safeguarding leader to discuss the actions taken to keep children safe. He reviewed a range of documents, including the single central record of staff.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Ian Toon, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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