

Inspection of St Michael's Church of England Academy

Saddlebow Road, South Lynn, King's Lynn, Norfolk PE30 5BN

Inspection dates: 31 October and 1 November 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
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The quality of education	Good
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Behaviour and attitudes	Good
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Personal development	Good
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Leadership and management	Good
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Early years provision	Good
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Previous inspection grade	Good
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The headteacher of this school is Emma Scarisbrick. This school is part of the Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Oliver Burwood, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by William Crawshay.

What is it like to attend this school?

At St Michael's, the vision is that 'everyone counts at our school'. This is certainly true. Pupils and staff share a mutual respect. Relationships are warm and positive. The school provides a strong sense of community. Staff know pupils and their families well. Many pupils enjoy being at school. They say they feel safe and are well cared for.

Adults set high expectations for pupils' behaviour. Pupils rise to this challenge. In all classes, they behave well and learn happily together. Pupils know that when there are issues, such as bullying, adults will promptly deal with them.

Leaders are ambitious for all. Staff expect pupils to try hard and keep working even when it is a challenge. This starts in the Reception class. Here, children concentrate hard and stay on task when working on a range of appropriate activities.

The school provides a variety of opportunities to support learning and develop pupils' interests. This includes a range of sports, music and art clubs. A well-planned programme of visitors to the school, such as the recent meetings with the local MP and the mayor, further develops pupils' knowledge.

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

The school has created a carefully considered curriculum that is ambitious for all pupils. It has identified the key knowledge that it wants pupils to learn and how this will build year on year. However, the systems in place to check what pupils have learned are new. Not all staff are using these systems effectively. Therefore, not all gaps in pupils' knowledge are identified. Some pupils are, therefore, not progressing as well as they could.

Published outcomes do not reflect the good quality of education provided at St Michael's. This is because low attendance and high persistent absence over the last two years have led to some pupils having gaps in their knowledge and understanding. However, attendance is now much improved. Leaders have effective strategies in place to support those who struggle to attend frequently.

Reading is a school priority. Children in the early years get off to a strong start in learning to read. This is continued in Year 1. The quality of phonics teaching is strong. Adults make careful checks to ensure pupils learn and remember the sounds they are taught. Staff receive training to ensure they teach phonics well. Despite this, some staff do not have sufficient knowledge to precisely support pupils who need more help learning to read. This is preventing them from becoming confident and fluent readers.

In the early years, high-quality interactions take place between adults and children. These help children to improve their vocabulary and develop their use of language.

Children enjoy listening to stories. They look at, and read, age-appropriate books in a calm, well-planned environment.

Staff in the specialist resource base have high levels of skills and knowledge. They ensure that the curriculum mirrors that in the main school. Staff carefully consider what knowledge they want pupils to learn. They adapt lessons well so that this is achieved. Support is tailored to each pupil. Consequently, many pupils learn and achieve well.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are identified quickly. Leaders ensure that staff appropriately adapt their lessons to support pupils' learning. Leaders check that these adaptations are helping pupils to achieve and to do well.

The school provides a wide range of experiences that extend beyond the classroom. Each half term, activities include class trips and visitors to the school. These are linked to what pupils are learning in class. For example, Year 1 recently went on a trip to the zoo and Year 2 on a trip to study forests and habitats. Pupils contribute well to the community through their involvement with local churches. They collect food for the community and support a wide range of charities. Opportunities for responsibilities are varied, including being school council and eco-team members. They work hard to improve the environment. Pupils develop confidence and character through the leadership opportunities they are given in class and during acts of collective worship. They often take a role in planning and delivering these sessions.

Staff are proud to work in school. They value the support given and the kind, respectful environment that has been created. The trust and local governing body are committed to supporting the school's improvement journey. The trust provides a wide range of effective support for leaders and staff.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There are inconsistencies in the way staff support pupils in the early stages of learning to read. This means that not all pupils catch up as quickly as they might. The school should ensure that all staff have the necessary knowledge and skills required to teach early reading effectively.
- Assessment information has not always been used well enough to help teachers identify the next steps in pupils' learning. This means that gaps in pupils' knowledge have developed, particularly for those with low attendance. The school

should ensure that all staff follow the school's assessment systems fully so that they identify and address the gaps in pupils' knowledge quickly and effectively.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	141360
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10287124
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	199
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	William Crawshay
CEO of the trust	Oliver Burwood
Headteacher	Emma Scarisbrick
Website	www.stmichaelskingslynn.norfolk.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	27 and 28 February 2018, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust.
- This school has a specially resourced provision for pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs.
- The school uses two unregistered alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

Inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

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