

Inspection of St Michael's Church of England VA Primary and Nursery School

School House Lane, Blickling Road, Aylsham, Norwich, Norfolk NR11 6EX

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 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	Requires improvement
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What is it like to attend this school?

Governors, leaders and staff have high expectations for what pupils should achieve. These are mostly realised. From Nursery to Year 6, pupils achieve well because leaders and teachers work together to ensure they do so.

Pupils are happy and safe at school. The school celebrates pupils' achievements and positive attitudes through rewards. Pupils value this and know it has a positive impact on how pupils behave. Pupils benefit from the work the school does to help them with their social and emotional needs. They are proud of their school.

Pupils know it is fine to be yourself and they have adults to talk to if they are worried about something. Children settle well in the early years and behaviour throughout the school is largely positive. Bullying is not common and, if it happens, staff work to resolve it, usually effectively.

Some pupils do not know as much about British values as they should. This is because, although they have been taught concepts such as different types of families, they do not remember this well.

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

In some subjects, such as mathematics, published outcomes do not reflect how well pupils in the school are now learning. Past outcomes have been affected by a range of factors, such as staff changes and COVID-19. These things are no longer hindering pupils' learning and they are achieving well.

The school has worked effectively to improve the quality of education since the school was last inspected. Leaders have put in place curriculums, from Nursery to Year 6, which set out what pupils need to learn and when they need to learn it. Staff have strong subject knowledge. They follow leaders' curriculums and teach the different subjects well.

The school is ambitious for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders provide staff with the information they need to support pupils with SEND. Staff adapt what they are teaching to meet pupils' needs. As a result of the effective curriculum design, skilful teaching and extra help for those who need it, pupils from Nursery to Year 6 achieve well across the curriculum.

There is still scope for improvement. Pupils remember more of what they have learned in mathematics and reading than they do in other subjects. This is because, in other subjects, teachers often do not revisit key concepts to make sure pupils remember them. While pupils do learn and progress in these subjects, they do not remember as much as they do in mathematics and reading.

The school has devoted time, money and energy to ensuring that pupils learn to read well. The school has introduced a phonics scheme that is validated by the

Department for Education. The school have trained staff in how to teach this. Pupils practise reading with books that closely match the sounds they have learned. Teachers adhere to the phonics programme and teach pupils well. If pupils fall behind, the school helps them to catch up quickly by giving them targeted extra help. Pupils learn to read fluently.

The school manages pupils' behaviour well. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and pupils largely adhere to these. On the occasions when pupils do not, teachers deal with this well. This ensures that pupils learn in a calm environment largely free from disruption.

The school has successfully improved levels of attendance. These have gone up markedly over the past two years and most pupils attend well.

The school ensures that pupils' personal development is largely well catered for. There are clubs and a variety of trips, such as singing in an old people's home and visiting places of religious worship. The school helps pupils to learn about different careers, such as marine biology, by inviting in people who work in those fields. However, there are some aspects, such as pupils' understanding of democracy, which are not as well developed. Pupils have been taught about this. However, as with some other subjects, the school does not make sure pupils revisit and securely learn these in the long term.

Leaders support staff well with their workload and well-being. There is a positive team spirit throughout the school. Governors know the school well. They check and challenge the information leaders provide. Collectively, governors, leaders and staff have moved the school forward and provide well for pupils.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school does not ensure that teachers revisit important concepts in subjects other than reading and mathematics. This includes personal, social and health education. Consequently, pupils remember less of what they are taught in these other subjects. The school should determine which key knowledge teachers should revisit with pupils, and when, to ensure that what pupils are taught is retained and used to learn more.

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	121027
Local authority	Norfolk
Inspection number	10288473
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	157
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Olivia Corfield
Headteacher	John Neenan (executive headteacher)
Website	www.stmichaelsaylsham.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	29 and 30 October 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the previous inspection, the school has restructured its senior leadership team.
- Since 5 June 2023, the headteacher has led Northrepps Primary School and Erpingham Voluntary Controlled Church of England Primary School as executive headteacher.
- The school uses one registered alternative provider.
- The school has a religious character: Church of England. Its most recent section 48 inspection took place in May 2022. Its next section 48 inspection will take place within eight school years.

Information about this inspection

The 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 COVID19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher, deputy headteacher and other school leaders. They spoke with a representative of the diocese and met with representatives of the governing body, including the chair, and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, design technology and history. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. They visited a sample of lessons in each of these subjects except history, as no history lessons were taking place.
- Inspectors also spoke with pupils about their learning of art and science.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of documentation, including the school development plan, minutes of a governing body meeting and behaviour records.
- The lead inspector spoke with a representative of the alternative provision used by the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record of recruitment checks; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors spoke with staff and reviewed their responses to Ofsted's survey of staff views. They spoke with pupils, and reviewed the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses.

Inspection team

Andrew Hemmings, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Bridget Harrison	His Majesty's Inspector

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