

Inspection of St Michael's Easthampstead Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

Crowthorne Road, Easthampstead, Bracknell, Berkshire RG12 7EH

Inspection dates:	22 and 23 October 2024
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are positive and enthusiastic about their time in school. They enjoy learning within and beyond the classroom. Pupils connect their learning with life outside of school. For example, by role playing in the school's 'French café' or taking part in a workshop about life in the Stone Age.

In class, pupils focus well. They understand the school's expectations of how they should behave. Their achievements are recognised and celebrated, such as in assemblies or with postcards home. Older pupils act as 'buddies' for children in the early years. This helps to create a caring and welcoming ethos throughout the school. Pupils feel confident that there is always someone they can turn to if they are worried.

The school has undergone a number of significant changes in the last two years. These include a more consistent approach to behaviour, changes to the curriculum, and greater opportunities for pupils' wider development. All of these have led to a raising of expectations for what pupils can achieve here. As a result, pupils are prepared well for the next stage in their learning. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) benefit strongly from the support that the school offers.

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

Reading is at the heart of the school's ongoing improvements. From the outset of the Reception Year, children begin reading and listening to stories frequently. Weaker readers become more confident thanks to the support the school provides. Pupils with SEND benefit strongly from the consistency of the phonics provision. As pupils' reading develops, this provides them with a secure foundation for future learning across the curriculum.

The school's curriculum sets out an organised sequence for learning in each subject. In reading and mathematics, programmes of learning are firmly established. Pupils revisit important knowledge and build on their understanding over time. In some other subjects, previous weaknesses in the curriculum have led to older pupils having gaps in their understanding. The school has not identified and addressed these fully. This means that pupils sometimes find it difficult to access the tasks set and to deepen their knowledge as well as they could.

Teachers explain topics well. They break complex ideas down into smaller chunks, such as when explaining the orbit of the earth around the sun. Pupils use resources that help them with important ideas, for example when working on number and measurement in mathematics. Tasks are focused on what pupils need to know next. In most instances, teachers check that pupils have understood the intended learning from these tasks. This helps pupils to develop their knowledge effectively. However, in some subjects, teachers do not check pupils' understanding with sufficient rigour. As a result, the learning of some pupils is not as secure as it could be.

The school uses assessment information purposefully, especially in English and mathematics. This helps staff to identify pupils with SEND, and to understand how best to support them. Pupils with SEND benefit from a bespoke curriculum and having their needs met well. Consequently, they achieve well, as reflected in published outcome data.

The school's work on attendance is highly effective, particularly for disadvantaged pupils. Staff consistently reinforce the importance of attending well. The school works sensitively with parents and carers to understand and address the causes of absence. As a result, persistent absence is low, and pupils benefit from the increased learning that comes with higher attendance. Pupils report that the school's approach to behaviour is fair and consistent. If pupils find it hard to make the right choices, the school provides effective support. As a consequence, learning is not interrupted by disruptive behaviour.

Pupils take time for contemplation, both of the school's core values, and of their own thoughts and feelings. The school provides opportunities to explore and discuss current affairs. This helps pupils to develop an awareness and understanding of different perspectives. Children in the early years learn about what positive friendships and relationships look like. Through key stage 1 and 2, the school's personal, social and health education programme fosters a culture of respect amongst pupils. Older pupils enjoy the leadership roles that the school provides for them. This helps them to feel that their views are heard and understood by staff.

Leaders and governors have prioritised making high-impact changes within the school. They have created an open culture, in which staff and parents are engaged in the school's development. Workshops for parents help them to understand how to talk with their child about screen time or anxiety issues. The school continues to provide staff with purposeful professional learning. This helps to strengthen teachers' delivery of the curriculum.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Weaknesses in previous curriculums mean that some pupils in key stage 2 have not securely embedded aspects of their previous learning. This makes it difficult for these pupils to access the tasks set. The school should ensure that, as the new foundation subject curriculum is embedded, gaps in understanding for older pupils continue to close swiftly and fully.
- The school has not made sure that all teachers are systematic about checking that pupils understand the intended learning in each task or activity. As a result, the learning of some pupils is not as secure as it could be. The school should make sure that all staff have the necessary expertise to check for and address misconceptions as pupils are learning.

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	110010
Local authority	Bracknell Forest
Inspection number	10321770
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	201
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Louise Hodgkinson
Headteacher	Caroline Johnson
Website	www.stmichaelseasthampstead.com
Dates of previous inspection	6 and 7 June 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is a Church of England voluntary-aided school. The most recent section 48 inspection for schools of a religious character took place in September 2019. The next section 48 inspection is due to take place before September 2027.
- The school currently uses two registered alternative provisions.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. During a graded inspection, we grade the school for each of our key judgements (quality of education; behaviour and attitudes; personal development; and leadership and management) and for any relevant provision judgement (early years and/or sixth form provision). Schools receiving a graded inspection from September 2024 will not be given an overall effectiveness grade.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.

- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with school leaders including the headteacher and senior leaders. The inspectors also met representatives of the governing board, the local authority and the diocese.
- The inspectors considered the views of parents, including through Ofsted's Parent View.
- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, art and design, mathematics and geography. For each deep dive, the inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. The inspectors also discussed the curriculum and provision for pupils with SEND.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, governors, staff, parents and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts the pupils' interests first.
- As part of the inspection evidence, inspectors also considered responses to Ofsted's online survey for school staff.

Inspection team

Daniel Botting, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

James Everett

Ofsted Inspector

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