

Inspection of a good school: St Michael's CofE Primary School

Bodenham, Hereford, Herefordshire HR1 3JU

Inspection date:

12 June 2024

Outcome

St Michael's CofE Primary School continues to be a good school.

The executive headteacher of the school is Michele Lewis. The head of school is Alison Chambers. This school is part of the Diocese of Hereford Multi-Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Canon Andrew Teale and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Will Finn.

What is it like to attend this school?

'Growing and learning together' is at the heart of St Michael's CofE Primary School. Pupils and staff show their 'togetherness' from the moment they enter the building. Pupils speak positively about the support they receive from staff and enjoy learning. There is a strong culture of well-being across the school. Pupils are safe and say they are happy in school. Staff and pupils talk about the school being a 'family'. Parents and carers agree. They are very supportive of the school's ethos.

There is a purposeful atmosphere around the school. Pupils focus on their learning well, work hard and want to learn. Teachers speak calmly with any pupil who loses concentration and offer support to regain focus. During social times, pupils mix with others in a calm and orderly manner. Pupils know who to talk to about any concerns they may have.

The school places a strong emphasis on pupils' personal development. Pupils learn about their health and well-being. Pupils also develop their leadership roles. Year 6 pupils enjoy the responsibility as online safety ambassadors, worship monitors and supporting new and younger pupils as buddies. Many pupils take part in a range of music and sports clubs including the recently victorious girls cricket club.

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

Since the last inspection, and following a period of development in the school, there have been significant and highly effective staffing changes. These include a new executive

headteacher and a new head of school. The school has successfully raised expectations around learning, behaviour and attendance. In all classes, including the early years, positive relationships between staff, pupils and parents help pupils to be confident and happy.

The school has successfully identified the important things that pupils need to know to succeed, particularly in reading, phonics and mathematics. Teachers present new subject matter clearly to pupils. Teachers use effective questions to check that pupils know and remember previous learning. All pupils, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), follow this ambitious curriculum. The school's actions to improve the curriculum have led to improving pupil outcomes, over time, by the end of key stage 1 and key stage 2. However, despite this ambitious curriculum, some aspects are not as developed as others. Within the mixed-age classes, the skills and knowledge the school wants pupils in each year group to develop are not as precisely identified as they could be.

In the early years, the children get off to a positive start. Teachers provide activities that are well matched to children's needs. Staff model effective communication, supporting children to develop language and independence. This results in high-quality interactions. The classroom and the outdoor environment are engaging. Children are happy and thriving.

The school quickly identifies pupils with SEND. Teachers receive precise information about pupils' individual needs. Teachers use this information effectively to adapt their teaching.

Reading is a priority at this school. Pupils become familiar with the sounds letters make and how to blend these into words and sentences. Teachers give extra support through 'keep up not catch up' interventions where needed. All pupils have access to a wide range of books to read and enjoy. This encourages all pupils to read regularly.

Pupils display excellent self-control and highly positive attitudes to learning. Staff and pupils share highly respectful relationships. This creates an open and encouraging culture, where everyone is equally valued. School attendance is high. The school has robust systems in place to support absent pupils to come back into school and to catch up missed work quickly.

Pupils' well-being is at the forefront of leaders' vision, including promoting pupils' positive mental health. The personal, social, health and economic curriculum is well planned and sequenced. Pupils learn about topics such as online safety and positive relationships well. Educational visits and experiences are in place to enhance the curriculum. Pupils enjoy their trips to local theatre events and their 'class 4' Malvern residential.

All leaders, including those responsible for governance, know this school well. They understand how the local context impacts on pupils' learning and attendance. Leaders review and develop all aspects of the school effectively. This includes their robust and rigorous focus on safeguarding. Trustees and governors support and hold leaders to account for the decisions taken. Trust leaders have supported the school effectively to make improvements in recent years. Leaders have implemented a well-thought-out

professional development programme for staff, which staff welcome. The school consults staff well about policy changes and carefully considers staff workload, which staff are appreciative of.

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 has not fully identified and developed the precise skills and knowledge each year group needs to know. This means that teachers do not always adapt the learning precisely enough for pupils, as they move year groups in the same mixed-age class. The school should further develop and embed the curriculum to meet the needs of each year group, to ensure that pupils learn the precise skills and knowledge they need to know.

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 December 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' 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	143455
Local authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	10322894
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	121
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Will Finn
Executive Headteacher and Head of School	Michele Lewis and Alison Chambers
Website	www.st-michaels.hereford.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	18 December 2018, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of the Diocese of Hereford Multi-Academy Trust which contains 16 schools. The school received its last section 48 inspection of church schools in May 2017.
- The executive headteacher was appointed in January 2022.
- The head of school was appointed in September 2021.
- The school does make use of any alternative providers.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school has received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors focused on the following deep dives: early reading, history and mathematics. The inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited lessons,

looked at pupils' work and talked with pupils about their learning. The inspectors listened to some pupils read to a familiar adult. The inspectors also looked at the curriculum in other subjects.

- The inspectors reviewed a range of school documents. These included information about pupils' behaviour, attendance, the school's curriculum and improvement planning. The school's website was also checked.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspectors: reviewed the single central record; 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.
- The inspectors observed informal times of the day as part of their evaluation of safeguarding and pupils' behaviour.
- The inspectors held meetings with a representative from the diocese; the chair and chief executive officer of the trust, and other trustees and governors, the executive headteacher, head of school and other senior leaders, administrative staff, teachers and pupils. The inspectors also talked informally to pupils, staff, parents and carers to gather information about school life.
- The inspectors considered responses to Ofsted Parent View and the free-text comments. The inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's staff survey and pupil questionnaires.

Inspection team

Stuart Clarkson, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

John Parr

Ofsted Inspector

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