

Inspection of St Michael's Church of England Primary School

Howling Lane, Alnwick, Northumberland NE66 1DJ

Inspection dates: 9 and 10 November 2022

Overall effectiveness **Good**

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?

St Michael's Church of England Primary is a caring, welcoming school. The values of respect and compassion are reflected in everything the school does. Everyone is expected to do their best. Pupils rise to this challenge.

Pupils are polite and kind. They are highly respectful of one another and the adults working with them. Pupils behave well throughout the day. They listen carefully to their teachers in lessons. Staff act swiftly to resolve any issues on the rare occasions that pupils fall out. This rebuilds relationships quickly.

The oldest pupils in school are exceptional role models to others. They are mature and sensible when talking to adults. They talked enthusiastically to inspectors about how much they enjoy coming to school and about the additional responsibilities they are given. They value being captains of the house teams. They talk with pride about recognising the achievements of others when giving speeches in the celebration assembly.

Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the support they receive from all staff. One parent represented the views of many in saying, 'super school, so pleased with the opportunities that are offered. My children enjoy going every day'.

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

Leaders have designed an ambitious curriculum for all pupils, including for children in early years. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), study a broad range of subjects. Leaders have ordered subject content carefully to enable pupils to build on what they know already. However, in some subjects the planned curriculum is not taught consistently well, leading to some gaps in pupils' knowledge.

Teachers and pupils use precise subject vocabulary in lessons. Teachers check that pupils have understood this before moving on to something new. Pupils talk confidently about what they have learned in mathematics and computing. Pupils can explain how commands in computing, such as inputs and outputs, can be used to create movements on screen.

Subject leaders receive training and support in their role. In some subjects, leaders do not check curriculum practice as well as in others. There are plans in place to make these checks more consistent.

Learning to read is central to the school's work. Early reading is taught well. Phonics sessions are delivered effectively by highly skilled staff. Pupils are introduced to and learn new sounds in a logical order. There is plenty of extra help for pupils who need it. Pupils use their phonics knowledge confidently to read unfamiliar words. They

persevere because they want to do well and know which strategies to use. Most pupils learn to read fluently by the end of key stage 1.

Leaders have invested heavily in suitable resources to promote a love of reading. Pupils practise reading every day. There are lots of interesting books to choose from. Teachers read to pupils every day. Pupils enjoy this.

Children in the early years, including those in the provision for two-year-olds, get off to a good start with their learning. Children behave well and enjoy playing together. Adults are excellent role models. They take every opportunity to model respectful behaviour. Leaders provide children with meaningful opportunities to develop their communication and language skills. Strong reading routines begin in the early years. Children learn to sing a wide range of nursery rhymes.

Pupils' personal development is very important in this school. Pupils learn about the British values of democracy and mutual respect. They show clear knowledge of these values. They are effusive when they talk about the rights of individuals. They told inspectors, 'It is more than equality, it's about equity, everyone deserves the same'.

Teachers prepare pupils to be good citizens. They recognise the positive contribution they make to the community by looking after the environment at ECO club and supporting the local foodbank.

Leaders ensure that school is inclusive. They are determined to provide the very best education for all pupils. They have a clear approach to achieve this. Pupils achieve the best they can in reading and mathematics, irrespective of any barriers they may face. This prepares them well for their next stage in education.

The school is well led. All staff are proud to work at the school. Governors are very supportive of the school. They hold leaders to account for the achievement of pupils and for the quality of the curriculum that pupils experience.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders make sure that pupils are safe. Staff receive regular training. They understand the importance of their role in keeping pupils safe. Adults know pupils and their families incredibly well. They are quick to identify and report any signs that may suggest a pupil is at risk of harm. Leaders work closely with relevant agencies so that all pupils receive the support they need. The governing body has strong oversight of the safeguarding procedures in school.

There is a proactive approach to keeping children safe through the curriculum. Pupils are aware of the risks when working online and using devices such as mobile phones. They are knowledgeable about how to manage these risks responsibly.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In some foundation subjects, the planned curriculum is not taught consistently well. This leads to gaps in the knowledge and skills that pupils acquire. Leaders should ensure that all staff receive the necessary training to ensure they teach the intended curriculum consistently well.
- In some subjects, leaders do not have a clear picture of how well their intended curriculum works in practice. This means that they are not aware of some gaps in pupils' knowledge. Leaders should develop better ways to check how well the curriculum is being taught. This will enable them to address any gaps more 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](#)' 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	122280
Local authority	Northumberland
Inspection number	10242051
Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	2 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	120
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Katja Purvis
Headteacher	Gavin Johnston
Website	www.stmichaelsalnwick.northumberland.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	3 October 2017, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- St Michael's Church of England Primary is a smaller than average sized school.

Information about this inspection

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

- Inspectors met with the headteacher, assistant headteacher and subject leaders. The lead inspector met with members of the governing body, a representative from the diocese and a representative from the local authority.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in early reading, mathematics, history and computing. For each deep dive, inspectors met 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 lead inspector also listened to pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors also looked at other subject curriculum plans and pupils' work.

- To inspect safeguarding, the lead inspector carried out a range of tasks, including meeting with the designated safeguarding lead, and reviewed safeguarding logs. An inspector reviewed the school's single central record.
- Inspectors spoke to pupils, both formally and informally, throughout the inspection, including pupils who had been supported by the school to improve their behaviour. Inspectors also observed breaktime and lunchtime.
- Inspectors reviewed a range of school documentation, including the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans.
- Inspectors considered the views of 40 pupils and 10 staff who responded to Ofsted's surveys. Inspectors also considered the responses from 17 parents to Ofsted's parent survey, Ofsted Parent View.

Inspection team

Melanie Maitland, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

Jane Wilson

Ofsted Inspector

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