

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: St Michael's CofE Primary School, Sunninghill

School Road, Sunninghill, Ascot, Berkshire SL5 7AD

Inspection dates:

17 and 18 June 2025

Outcome

St Michael's CofE Primary School, Sunninghill has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils at St Michael's take great pride in embodying the school's values of respect, kindness, curiosity and faith. The school ensures that pupils' well-being is paramount. Pupils have trusting and warm relationships with staff. Staff know all the pupils very well and greet them warmly at the start of the day. The genuine community feel enhances this positive and welcoming atmosphere. As a result, there is a calm and purposeful atmosphere where pupils feel safe and well cared for.

The school has high expectations for pupils' conduct and academic achievement. Pupils rise to meet these. Children in the early years settle quickly, because of the care and support that they receive. Pupils through the school develop secure learning. They enjoy the varied curriculum.

Pupils experience a wide range of activities that enhance their learning. This helps them to understand the world around them. For example, pupils enjoy the frequent day trips, visitors and residential trip in Year 6, as well as being involved in many local community events. They visit different places of worship and learn about different cultures through immersing themselves into 'Black History Month'. As a result, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.

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

The school has successfully implemented a broad and balanced curriculum that is well-sequenced from Reception to Year 6. This has increased teachers' understanding of

exactly what to teach and in what order in all subjects. This ensures that pupils learn the most important knowledge, skills and vocabulary that they need to.

Reading is a priority, right from the Reception Year. Staff ensure that pupils develop a deep love of reading. Skilled and well-trained teachers deliver the phonics programme well, ensuring that all pupils are supported to learn the letters and sounds they need to know for early reading. Staff act quickly to support all pupils and to close any gaps in phonics knowledge. Catch-up activities give pupils the valuable practice they need. As a result, pupils become fluent and confident readers. This robust approach to pupils' reading development continues throughout the school.

Staff have strong subject knowledge and during lessons they ensure that pupils understand the most important facts. Teachers use the school's agreed approaches when introducing content very clearly. In many subjects, pupils' learning is routinely checked for any gaps or misconceptions. This ensures that teachers know what pupils can remember. However, occasionally, pupils do not learn as well as they could. This is because the learning tasks are not always appropriately challenging. For some pupils they are too easy, while for others they are too hard. This means not all pupils make the progress they should.

The school swiftly identifies the needs of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Staff adapt their teaching to provide carefully planned support. This enables pupils with SEND to successfully achieve their individual targets as well as access the curriculum fully.

Pupils' behaviour is a strength. From the beginning of the school day, lessons are calm and purposeful, with incidents of low-level disruption being very rare. Pupils follow appropriate routines, such as during lunchtime, or when moving from the carpet to tables during transitions in lessons. Pupils know that if there are any behaviour incidents, these are resolved quickly by staff. Pupils' regular attendance at school is a key focus. The school's proactive approach includes regular checks and effective communication with parents. As a result, pupils attend well.

Pupils' personal development is a priority. Through a carefully planned personal, social and health education curriculum, pupils are clear in their view that everyone should be respected for who they are. Pupils have a very strong sense of right and wrong. They have a secure understanding of prejudice and diversity. Pupils learn how to stay safe when online. They also learn about healthy relationships and know there are different types of loving families. There is a very carefully organised programme of activities to enhance pupils' interests and talents, such as clubs and musical opportunities.

Leaders, including governors, have taken decisions to strengthen the school's provision across all areas. As a result, pupils generally achieve well academically and conduct themselves well. Parents and carers are overwhelmingly positive about the school. However, leaders know there is even more to do. Currently some of the school's key strategic thinking is not precise enough in driving the school further forward. As a result,

the school cannot evaluate their success fully. Leaders, including governors, are aware of this and are already acting determinedly to make further improvements.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The teaching and tasks set do not always challenge pupils effectively, for some it is too easy while for others it is too hard. This means that, in some subjects, pupils could achieve more. The school should ensure that teachers have the expertise to set appropriately challenging tasks so that all pupils learn as well as they should.
- The strategies for school improvement are not defined precisely or quickly enough. Consequently, governors do not always have the information they need to effectively hold leaders to account for driving further school improvement. The school should ensure that processes and procedures for school improvement are systematically implemented so all leaders have an accurate oversight of the school's strengths and areas for further development.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in July 2016.

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	110019
Local authority	Windsor and Maidenhead
Inspection number	10379726
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	200
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Sally Coneron
Headteacher	Matthew Thompson
Website	www.stmichaelsce.org.uk
Dates of previous inspection	3 and 4 March 2020, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The new headteacher took up post in April 2022. The new chair of governors was elected in September 2024.
- This school is a voluntary-aided Church of England school in the Diocese of Oxford. Its last Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) took place in January 2019. The school's next SIAMS inspection is due to take place by January 2027.
- The school does not currently use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation 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 inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The inspector met with the headteacher and other leaders within the school. The inspector also met with the chair of governors and three other members of governing board, as well as educational representatives from the local authority and the diocese.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: 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 inspector reviewed a range of the school's documentation including self-evaluation reports, minutes of governing body meetings and behaviour incident logs.
- The inspector considered the views of parents shared through Ofsted Parent View. The inspector also spoke with some parents on the first day of the inspection.
- The views of staff were gathered through interviews and discussions conducted throughout the inspection, as well as the staff survey.
- The inspector gathered pupils' views throughout the inspection, including through the classroom visits, group discussions, pupil survey as well as at lunchtime.

Inspection team

Chris Parker, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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