

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: St Michael's Church of England Primary School

Penberthy Road, Helston, Cornwall TR13 8AR

Inspection dates:

11 and 12 February 2025

Outcome

St Michael's Church of England Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Sarah Luff. This school is part of The Rainbow 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 (CEO), Samantha Jones, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Dr Pat McGovern.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending this warm and friendly school. They settle quickly in the early years and develop strong relationships with staff. This enables pupils to feel safe and trust the adults around them to help whenever they have any worries.

The school has an inclusive culture that supports pupils well, including those who are disadvantaged. This creates an environment where pupils feel valued members of the school community.

The school has high expectations for all pupils' achievement. Pupils work hard to meet them. Pupils achieve well. They leave the school well equipped for secondary education.

The school has successfully addressed historic behaviour issues. Now, pupils behave very well. They are kind, considerate and polite. From the moment they start in Reception, children quickly learn the routines of the school. This has created a school with a calm, orderly atmosphere where pupils can flourish.

Pupils appreciate the broad range of wider activities, including trips and visits. They hold positions of responsibility such as school councillors and reading ambassadors. This helps pupils develop leadership skills.

There is a strong sense of community, praised by parents and carers. Pupils who come from service families receive high-quality support, which helps them to settle quickly.

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

Since the previous inspection, there have been significant changes in leadership. Despite these challenges, leaders have been effective in sustaining the performance of the school.

The school has developed a well-structured curriculum, starting from the early years. Each subject area identifies key concepts and essential vocabulary, enabling pupils to progress through the curriculum by sequentially building their skills and knowledge. Teachers check pupils' understanding effectively to find out how well they are learning. This helps them to identify and address pupils' misconceptions as they happen.

In most subjects, the learning activities are designed effectively to support pupils in developing their knowledge. This approach helps pupils master new skills and secure their understanding, allowing them to successfully complete more complex tasks. For instance, in art, pupils learn about shade, tint and tone before applying these concepts to their work in the style of a renowned artist. They then use these aspects of colour theory to create different moods and atmospheres in their artwork. Pupils can clearly explain how their use of colour influences the impact of their picture.

In some subjects, staff do not always select the most effective activities to help pupils deepen their knowledge. As a result, some pupils do not achieve the depth of understanding needed to complete more complex tasks successfully.

Reading is a priority in the school. Children learn phonics from the start of Reception. They are quickly able to sound out and blend words. The books pupils read at home match the sounds they learn in class. The school supports pupils who struggle with their reading to catch up. High-quality training helps staff to deliver the phonics programme consistently well. The focus on reading continues as pupils move through the school.

Pupils with SEND are well supported. The school identifies individual needs. In class, staff have the expertise needed to adjust activities. The support enables them to overcome challenges and work alongside their peers. For example, many staff use British Sign Language to enable deaf pupils to access the full curriculum.

The school's provision for pupils' wider development is well considered. Support for pupils' mental health and well-being is a priority. Well-trained staff help pupils to understand their emotions and how these impact their lives. At lunchtime, a mindfulness club is available for pupils who need extra support. A range of trips, visitors to school, clubs and events help expand pupils' horizons. They also help develop pupils' confidence and personal skills, such as independence and resilience. This prepares pupils well for later life.

The school's work to promote attendance is effective. Leaders ensure that parents are

clear on the expectations of the school. Staff build excellent, trusting relationships with the families they serve. This enables the school to take swift action to support pupils and their families for whom attendance is an issue.

Trustees and members of the local governing board have a perceptive understanding of the strengths and areas for development in the school. They work purposefully with the school. All decisions taken are very clearly in the best interests of the pupils. Staff appreciate the consideration given by leaders to their workload and well-being. They are proud to be members of the school community.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Occasionally, some staff do not choose the most appropriate activities to help pupils gain secure subject knowledge. This prevents some pupils from successfully moving on to more complex tasks. The school should ensure that teachers make the most appropriate teaching choices to support pupils to develop a secure understanding of each subject.

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 first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in June 2019.

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	140027
Local authority	Cornwall
Inspection number	10344665
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	325
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Dr Pat McGovern
CEO of the trust	Samantha Jones
Headteacher	Sarah Luff
Website	www.st-michaels.cornwall.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	5 and 6 June 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school is part of The Rainbow Multi-Academy Trust.
- The school is in the Diocese of Truro. The last section 48 inspection of the school's religious character took place in July 2023.
- The headteacher was appointed in September 2022.
- There is a before- and after-school club managed by the school.
- The school uses one registered alternative provision and one unregistered 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 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 his evaluation of the school.

- The inspector met with the headteacher, trust leaders, the chair of the board of trustees, the chair of governors and a representative from the diocese.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- 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 observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and at social times. He spoke with different groups of pupils to discuss their views of the school, their learning, their behaviour and safety.
- The inspector considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey, Ofsted Parent View and also took into consideration the responses to the staff survey.

Inspection team

Mark Burgess, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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