

Inspection of St Michael's CofE Voluntary Aided Primary School

North Road, Highgate, London N6 4BG

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 June 2023

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Early years provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, including children in the early years, flourish at this exceptional school. All staff have the highest expectations of pupils. They enable pupils to treat those around them with the utmost respect. Leaders have shaped a highly welcoming school culture where pupils are proud to attend. This is a very happy and safe place for pupils.

Leaders place no limits on pupils' academic development. Staff have established a curriculum that helps pupils to secure a deep knowledge of each subject. Pupils achieve highly in all areas of the curriculum. Alongside a broad curriculum, leaders make sure that pupils have access to an impressive variety of clubs and cultural visits.

Behaviour in lessons and all around the school is exemplary. Pupils behave with maturity towards each other and staff. They are polite and welcoming. Working relationships are positive and strong in this school. If anything worries pupils, then staff manage this quickly. Adults' high expectations for pupils' behaviour are realised consistently across the school. Lessons are calm and pupils remain focused.

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

Leaders provide an exceptional quality of education for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They have made sure that all staff are skilled in teaching pupils with SEND. Staff receive excellent professional development to know the needs of pupils very well. This enables pupils with SEND to flourish.

Leaders have embedded a highly ambitious curriculum, often exceeding the expectations of the national curriculum. Subject leaders have identified the knowledge, skills and key vocabulary that all pupils need. All pupils achieve consistently well across the curriculum. For instance, in music, staff helped pupils to discuss a range of classical composers, such as Holst and Stravinsky, confidently.

Teachers have strong subject knowledge. They ensure that pupils learn content in a well-considered order. Teachers use pupils' assessment information well. They check what pupils know and can do through skilful questioning. Teachers address any gaps in pupils' understanding quickly. Pupils have lots of opportunities to revisit and build on their prior learning. This helps them to develop their subject-specific knowledge excellently.

Pupils in this school love reading. Children in early years get off to a very strong start, quickly becoming fluent readers and writers. Staff are expertly trained in teaching them to read. All children receive high-quality support to help them to become strong in both reading and early writing. Standards of writing in the early years are exceptional. Books that pupils read are closely matched to the sounds that they know. This supports children in learning to read with confidence. Throughout

the school, leaders provide pupils with a wide range of literature. This inspires pupils to talk in detail about their favourite authors, novels and books.

Pupils' attitudes to learning are exemplary. They focus very well on their learning. Low-level disruption in lessons is rare. Pupils take great pride in their work and produce work of a high quality, for instance in their art sketchbooks, in music journals and in displays of work around the school.

Pupils take their positions of responsibility seriously, particularly as sports ambassadors. Playtimes are well organised, and enjoyed thoroughly by pupils in the school's well-maintained grounds.

Leaders enable pupils to develop an impressive understanding of relationships, health and well-being. They provide superb opportunities to enhance pupils' personal development. Staff teach pupils in detail about a range of different faiths, beliefs and cultures. This knowledge informs the deep respect with which pupils treat everyone around them. Pupils contribute positively to the school and to the local community. They take part in regular fundraising activities for their chosen charities. The school develops pupils' interests and talents very successfully. Pupils have opportunities to attend a wide range of clubs, such as chess, gymnastics, choir and multisports events. Leaders make sure that all pupils receive a wide range of cultural and sporting experiences.

Those responsible for governance are highly committed, and knowledgeable about the school. They use their knowledge of the school very well to challenge and support leaders. Leaders deliver effective professional development for all staff. This helps staff to become experts across the curriculum. The workload and well-being of all staff are carefully considered. Leaders listen to staff and make appropriate changes to support their work-life balance. Staff are very proud to work at this thriving school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders have created a strong culture of safeguarding. They ensure that staff have the training they need to recognise the signs that indicate a pupil needs help and support. Staff record any concerns, and leaders act on these promptly. Leaders work very closely with external agencies to achieve the best outcomes for families.

Pupils are taught about how to keep safe through the curriculum, including when they are online. They can identify a trusted adult to share any worries or concerns with. This helps them to feel safe.

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	102135
Local authority	Haringey
Inspection number	10240873
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	430
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Cordelia Brown
Headteacher	Geraldine Gallagher (Executive Headteacher), Fran Sorapure (Head of School)
Website	www.stmichaelsn6.com
Date of previous inspection	5 February 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The executive headteacher started in this school in April 2013. She is currently executive headteacher of one other primary school.
- The school is in a long-term partnership with another Church of England primary school in the same London borough.
- The most recent section 48 inspection, which is an inspection of the school's religious character, took place in March 2018.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with the executive headteacher, the head of school and other school leaders. They held discussions with members of the governing body, including the chair. Inspectors spoke with a representative of the local authority and also spoke with a representative from the London Diocesan Board.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: reading, mathematics, science, geography and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, considered the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers and pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also considered the curriculum in other subjects.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of documentation related to safeguarding. This included the record of pre-employment checks.
- Inspectors met with parents at the start of the school day and considered the views of parents, pupils and staff, including through responses to Ofsted's online surveys.

Inspection team

Sean Flood, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Paul Jackson	Ofsted Inspector
Sarah Bailey	Ofsted Inspector

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