

Inspection of St Michael's Church of England High School

Astley Road, Chorley, Lancashire PR7 1RS

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 September 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Good
Previous inspection grade	Not previously inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud to be part of this welcoming and supportive school community. They accept and value each other's differences in a school which celebrates the uniqueness of each individual. Pupils said that they enjoy coming to school because it is a happy place where they make many friends.

Leaders and staff are dedicated in their commitment to ensure that pupils flourish, both personally and academically. Pupils respond positively to these high expectations. They live out the school's vision for growth in all that they do. Pupils enjoy learning and achieve well across a range of subjects. This includes those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and pupils who are disadvantaged.

Pupils feel safe at school. They reported that staff deal with rare incidents of bullying swiftly and effectively. Pupils know who to speak to if they are upset or worried about anything.

Staff have high standards which pupils live up to. Pupils are delightful. They behave exceptionally well both in lessons and during social times. Pupils are respectful and courteous towards each other and staff, treating others with dignity and respect.

Pupils benefit from regular, well-thought-out careers information, education, advice and guidance which enable them to make informed choices about the options available to them when they leave school. Pupils are well prepared for their next steps. Almost all pupils move on to further education, training or employment, including apprenticeships.

Pupils experience an exceptional, expertly designed programme of personal development. This encompasses living education, and a unique enrichment programme. Pupils participate in a wide range of activities which help to develop their confidence and resilience. They spoke with enthusiasm about the vast array of leadership, enrichment and charitable opportunities available to them.

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

Overall, leaders have designed the curriculum effectively. In key stage 3, pupils study the full range of national curriculum subjects. In key stage 4, all pupils choose freely from a wide range of predominantly academic subjects. Pupils achieve well.

In most subjects, curriculums help pupils to know, remember and build upon the essential information that they need to be successful in future learning. However, in a small number of subjects, leaders' curriculum thinking is not as well developed. In these subjects, leaders have not considered how to organise the curriculum so that pupils learn the breadth of knowledge that they need. On occasion, some pupils miss out on useful information and knowledge. Leaders are in the process of fine-tuning their curriculums to broaden the content in these subjects further.

Staff have a strong knowledge of the subjects that they teach. They typically select activities that help pupils to understand new learning. Teachers assess pupils' learning regularly in lessons. However, in a small number of subjects, some staff misjudge when pupils are ready to move on. This prevents pupils from building on their prior learning as well as they could. Some pupils' learning is less secure as a result.

Leaders have appropriate systems in place to identify the needs of pupils with SEND quickly and accurately. Leaders provide staff with high-quality information and training. This helps staff to support pupils with SEND effectively. Teachers use their knowledge and expertise to adapt how they deliver the curriculum, when necessary, so that pupils with SEND learn well.

Leaders have ensured a strong culture of reading in the school. Staff support pupils who find reading difficult to catch up quickly. This timely and appropriate support helps these pupils to access the curriculum confidently.

Pupils' behaviour is impeccable. Strong relationships between pupils and staff underpin the calm environment throughout the school. Pupils are highly motivated. They attend school regularly and learn without disruption. Pupils make an active contribution to the life of the wider community.

Leaders' promotion of pupils' personal development is exemplary. Pupils spoke articulately and confidently about their learning. They benefit from a diverse range of extra-curricular activities. Clubs such as sports, performing arts and computing are popular and well attended. All pupils have the opportunity to complete the Duke of Edinburgh's Bronze Award. They also learn how to develop healthy relationships and how to look after their physical and mental health. Pupils at this school celebrate diversity. They are fully prepared for life in modern Britain.

Staff told inspectors that they appreciate leaders' efforts to support their well-being and to ensure that they have a reasonable workload. Many staff said that they enjoy working at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and governors ensure a strong culture of safeguarding. Leaders make sure that all staff are trained well and kept up to date with any safeguarding risks that pupils may face. Staff are vigilant. They know how to spot the signs that pupils may be at risk of harm in or outside school.

Leaders ensure that they deal with safeguarding concerns thoroughly. Leaders with designated responsibility for safeguarding know pupils and their families well. They are tenacious in their work to secure appropriate and timely support for vulnerable pupils and their families.

Pupils have a strong understanding of how to keep themselves safe.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In a minority of subjects, leaders' organisation of the curriculum hampers pupils' learning. This is because pupils do not cover the breadth of essential knowledge that they need or learn this knowledge as securely as they should. Leaders should review the organisation of the curriculums in these subjects to ensure that they support pupils to develop a rich body of knowledge.
- On occasion, in a small number of subjects, some teachers do not use assessment strategies effectively to address pupils' misunderstandings before introducing new knowledge. As a result, some pupils do not learn as well as they should. Leaders should ensure that in these subjects, teachers understand how to check that pupils' knowledge is secure before moving on to new learning.

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	136893
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	10226381
Type of school	Secondary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	11 to 16
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	1140
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Chris Metcalfe
Headteacher	Jayne Jenks
Website	www.saint-michaels.com
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- St Michael's Church of England High School converted to become an academy school in February 2012. When its predecessor school, St Michael's Church of England High School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be outstanding overall.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Blackburn. The last section 48 inspection took place in November 2018.
- Leaders use three registered alternative providers for a very small number of pupils.
- The school meets the requirements of the Baker Clause, which requires schools to provide pupils in Years 8 to 13 with information about approved technical education qualifications and apprenticeships.

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 spoke with the headteacher, other senior leaders, subject leaders and members of staff. Inspectors also met with members of the governing body, including the chair of governors, a representative of the local authority and a representative of the Diocese of Blackburn.
- Inspectors spoke to groups of pupils from Years 7 to 11 about their experience of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. Inspectors also observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at breaktimes.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of evidence, including the school's self-evaluation document, improvement plans, minutes of governing body meetings and records of pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- Inspectors checked the school's safeguarding policies and procedures and the school's single central record. Inspectors met with leaders, staff and pupils to check how effective safeguarding is in the school.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in modern foreign languages, science, English, history, physical education and mathematics. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum 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.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. Inspectors also considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for pupils and the online survey for staff.

Inspection team

Rebecca Sharples, lead inspector	His Majesty's Inspector
Alison Stott	Ofsted Inspector
Geoff Baker	Ofsted Inspector
Nell Banfield	Ofsted Inspector
Christine Veitch	Ofsted Inspector
Michael Pennington	His Majesty's Inspector

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Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

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Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
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