

Ofsted
Piccadilly Gate
Store Street
Manchester
M1 2WD

T 0300 123 4234
www.gov.uk/ofsted



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Mrs Louise Fitzpatrick
Interim Executive Headteacher
Micheldever CofE Primary School
Church Street
Micheldever
Winchester
Hampshire
SO21 3DB

Dear Mrs Fitzpatrick

Short inspection of Micheldever CofE Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 9 May 2017, I write on behalf of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills to report the inspection findings. The visit was the first short inspection carried out since the school was judged to be good in February 2013.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. The strong strategic leadership of the governing body has ensured that the school continues to improve during a period of significant change. Not all parents are aware of the work of the governing body to secure the long-term success of the school. As a result, some have concerns about the impact of recent changes in the school. However, decisions such as the move to federate with a local school and the appointment of a talented interim executive headteacher are securing the continued improvement of the school.

As interim executive headteacher, you have ensured that the school continues to improve. Rightly, you have been sharply focused on making sure that pupils are safe and that they learn well. You have moved quickly when you have identified a problem. For example, you took prompt action when you became aware that the attendance of some pupils required attention. The school sees children as individuals and has high expectations of all of them, not just in behaviour but also in their work. As a result, pupils enjoy school, feel safe and do well. They are enthusiastic learners who are proud of their work.

With your senior team, you have successfully continued the work of previous leaders to increase rates of progress for all pupils in English. By making sure that pupils understand what they need to learn, that phonics is taught well and by increasing opportunities for pupils to use English skills across the curriculum,

standards in reading and writing have improved since the last inspection. You, with other leaders, have taken effective action to maintain and build on the strengths identified in the last inspection and address the recommendation to improve the quality of teaching so that a greater proportion is outstanding.

As part of the school's determination to improve further, you have rightly identified the need to improve rates of attendance and accelerate rates of progress in mathematics. Rates of attendance are lower than the national average for primary schools. The determined focus of the governing body and continued actions of leaders are having some impact but you are aware that more needs to be done. The good progress that pupils make in mathematics is not as good as the progress that pupils make in English. You have started to improve further the quality of teaching of mathematics and this is leading to improved outcomes for pupils.

Parents recognise and appreciate everything that the school does for their children. The vast majority of parents who responded to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, said that their children were safe, happy and well cared for. Many commented favourably on the quality of teaching and the wide range of activities available to their children. Some parents responding to the Ofsted Parent View questionnaire had concerns about how effectively the school dealt with bullying. Most parents who responded to the questionnaire, and that I spoke to during the inspection, felt that the school dealt with bullying well. Pupils told me that bullying was extremely rare and that, when it does happen, adults deal with it promptly and effectively.

Safeguarding is effective.

The safety and well-being of every child lies at the heart of all that the school does. As a result, there is a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. Leaders have ensured that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose and records are detailed and of high quality. Governors have a robust and well-planned approach to monitoring the culture of safeguarding to ensure it remains strong. Thorough checks are carried out on all who work or volunteer in the school. Staff and governors receive appropriate training in keeping pupils safe, including from extremism.

Pupils say that they feel safe in school and are confident that adults will always sort out any concerns or problems they may have. Pupils behave well in class and play together well outside. Younger pupils enjoy and value the buddy support that they receive from older pupils.

Inspection findings

- At the start of the inspection, we agreed to look in particular at the following aspects of the school's work:
 - the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements
 - how well leaders have addressed the recommendations of the previous inspection report to improve the quality of teaching
 - how effectively leaders ensure that more able pupils make good progress

- in English
 - how well the teaching, learning and assessment of mathematics enables all pupils to make good progress
 - how well the wider curriculum meets the needs of all pupils and prepares them for the next steps in their education.
- Since the last inspection, leaders at all levels have maintained an effective focus on improving further the quality of teaching, learning and assessment in the school. Consequently, the above-average achievement identified in the last inspection has been maintained in mathematics, and enhanced in English.
- Positive developments in how teachers assess pupils' work and let them know what they need to do next are leading to faster progress for all pupils. Appropriate developments in the systems used to assess pupils' work have improved teachers' subject knowledge. This has enabled teachers to more closely identify and address gaps in learning and have higher expectations of what pupils can do. Pupils are enthusiastic about the increased the level of challenge in their work.
- Standards in English have risen since the last inspection. Improvements in the teaching of phonics are enabling pupils to read more fluently and write with greater accuracy. Pupils' writing is of a high quality and pupils are increasingly accurate in their basic skills of spelling, grammar and punctuation. The school takes every opportunity to give the pupils real opportunities to write. The range of writing across the curriculum is impressive. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 used powerful descriptive language when they imagined they had been passengers on the Titanic. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 developed a range of higher-level skills through their work in history.
- Disadvantaged pupils and those who have special educational needs and/ or disabilities make as good progress as other pupils as a result of the close attention given to individual progress.
- Leaders and governors have ensured that staff receive the training that they need to continually improve outcomes for pupils. A range of relevant training and professional development opportunities for teachers in mathematics, including work with the federation partner school, has improved the subject knowledge of teachers and enabled them to provide more challenging activities than previously, leading to better outcomes.
- The curriculum is broad and offers pupils a wide range of activities within the school. Pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development, including their understanding of British values, is an intrinsic part of the curriculum. A wide variety of valuable trips and activities are used to engage pupils further in their learning. Pupils are enthusiastic about the wider curriculum and particularly enjoy the off-site visits. Parents recognise the broad curriculum on offer and value the extra-curricular sport activities available to the pupils.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- rates of attendance, in particular for pupils from vulnerable groups, match or exceed national averages for primary schools
- more pupils make better than expected progress in mathematics.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the governing body, the director of education for the Diocese of Winchester, the regional schools commissioner and the director of children's services for Hampshire. This letter will be published on the Ofsted website.

Yours sincerely

Phil Minns
Her Majesty's Inspector

Information about the inspection

During this inspection, I held meetings with you and members of your leadership team to discuss a range of issues including safeguarding, pupils' progress and attendance. Together, you and I carried out visits to all classrooms and looked at pupils' work. I spoke to parents at the start of the day and talked to pupils at playtime and during their lessons. I met a group of pupils and looked at their work. I reviewed school documentation, including the school's policies and procedures for safeguarding. I took account of 45 responses to Ofsted's online questionnaire, Parent View, including 28 written comments, and one letter received during the inspection. I also considered 10 responses to Ofsted's staff survey.