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Mr Robert Kennedy
Headteacher
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Somerville Road
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Dear Mr Kennedy

Short inspection of St Michael's Church of England Primary School

Following my visit to the school on 12 February 2019 with Non Davies, 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 predecessor school was judged to be good in June 2105.

This school continues to be good.

The leadership team has maintained the good quality of education in the school since the last inspection. St Michael's is a happy, vibrant, culturally diverse and harmonious community. You provide strong and much-respected leadership. Senior leaders and middle leaders work effectively with a united passion to secure good teaching, learning and assessment across the school. As a team, all staff implement the school's golden rule to help all the pupils with their widely different needs and backgrounds 'to be the best they can be'.

The school is highly valued by the local community. One parent wrote, 'Children come from many parts of the world with many different backgrounds and this is celebrated, giving our children not only the chance to flourish, but preparing them for their futures.' The school's highly inclusive atmosphere is shown in all parts of the school. It is especially evident when staff closely and warmly support pupils new to the school. These pupils clearly feel welcomed and settle quickly into enjoyable, productive learning. The pupils are a delight, well mannered, confident and happy. They express pride in their school and demonstrated exemplary behaviour throughout the inspection. You proudly celebrate the 54 different languages spoken in the school. Pupils from all cultures benefit from a motivating curriculum. Topics such as 'All About Me' and 'Trains, Planes and Automobiles' promote the interest and curiosity of boys as well as girls.

Governors make a strong contribution to the leadership of the school. They are highly skilled and well informed about all aspects of school life. Governors provide

good levels of challenge. They support staff leaders in driving improvement, as seen in their support of your strategic decision to take over responsibility for managing the pre-school. Your thorough evaluation of pupils' achievements, along with your accurate assessment of the quality of teaching, has led to the right priorities for improvement being identified. Staff morale is high. Staff feel empowered and encouraged to think and act proactively by adapting teaching and learning to more effectively meet pupils' needs. This is evident in the strong pastoral and emotional support given to all pupils. Leaders at all levels share and develop their expertise. They have sustained strong outcomes in pupils' writing and continue to deepen pupils' mathematical understanding. Your drive to bring further improvement is seen in your current actions to enhance pupils' progress in reading.

Safeguarding is effective.

The leadership team ensures that all safeguarding arrangements are fit for purpose. Leaders and staff work diligently together and have created a strong culture of safeguarding in the school. This is underpinned by the deep knowledge that all those who work in the school have of the complex and changing community they serve. Staff are well trained, understand school procedures and know how to respond to concerns about pupils' care and welfare.

Governors, along with staff, take their safeguarding duties very seriously. Together they undertake regular detailed health and safety checks to ensure that the school is a safe place to work and learn. Leaders monitor attendance effectively. They fulfil well-established procedures to check pupils' absence and to support families when the need arises. This sustains a rate of attendance that matches that found nationally.

When questioned, pupils said that they feel safe. They said that bullying does occur sometimes, but they do not worry because teachers deal with it quickly. Pupils know how to keep themselves and each other safe, for example how to text using e-safety guidance. Parents and carers expressed the view that children are in strong, caring hands at school.

Inspection findings

- The first line of enquiry considered the effectiveness of actions taken by leaders and teachers to improve pupils' progress in reading across key stage 2. Your recent actions are bearing fruit, particularly, but not exclusively, with boys. You use interesting texts and topics to extend pupils' vocabulary and enhance their ability to read. You have updated and widened the range of books available to the pupils. As a result, pupils have books that match their reading ability and which stimulate their interest. Adults hear pupils read frequently, which helps pupils develop confidence and fluency when reading.
- Teachers and other staff engage well in training and willingly share their expertise. Consequently, staff have a clear understanding of how to effectively develop skills such as inference and deduction when pupils are reading. Year 5 pupils supported pupils in Year 1 with their reading during the autumn term. This

was notably successful in improving the Year 1 pupils' progress. Similar tailored adult support for late-entry pupils who speak English as an additional language (EAL) is also extending their spoken vocabulary and word-recognition skills. Teachers and teaching assistants are skilled in the teaching of phonics. Pupils asked to read by an inspector read familiar and more complex words accurately. Currently, across the school, the increased interest in reading shown by boys is closing past gaps with girls.

- You work closely with parents, encouraging them to help children to read and learn at home. Standards are rising across the school, and you remain focused on helping more pupils to read at greater depth.
- The second line of enquiry examined how effectively leaders and teachers promote the achievement of pupils with different needs and abilities. You and your staff have a wealth of expertise in meeting pupils' needs. Staff assess pupils' starting points carefully and check their progress accurately.
- Observations of pupils' learning in class and work in books show the positive way that pupils respond to teachers' guidance and make good progress. Your detailed planning and rigorous checks make sure that additional funding for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and for disadvantaged pupils is spent effectively. This is typified by the swift identification and support of children's needs in early years classes. Pupils with emotional and sensory needs are well supported. Your specialist support of EAL pupils is a notable strength of the school.
- Pupils show confidence and gain a passion for learning. They enjoy excellent relationships with their classmates. Your efforts to ensure that pupils achieve to their potential is seen at its best in the development of pupils' writing. The proportions of pupils working at levels higher than those expected for their age across key stage 1 and 2 exceed those found nationally. This level of achievement is now seen equally in mathematics and increasingly in reading. Observations of reading and mathematics sessions, however, showed variation in the level of challenge in the work presented. On occasion, individual pupils had to wait to be moved on to harder work. A small number of pupils said that they would have liked to have been moved on to harder work earlier. This view was also expressed by some pupils in their questionnaire responses.
- My final line of enquiry considered how well leaders meet children's different needs in the early years. You and leaders of early years, including the pre-school facilities, have identified the need to raise boys' achievement. You are successfully adapting the curriculum to bring this about. Current topics such as 'Super Heroes' include an increased focus on developing children's fine and gross motor skills. Children, particularly boys, benefit from a stimulating range of outdoor materials which inspire them to learn both physically and imaginatively.
- Children were completely engaged as they responded to the teachers' and teaching assistants' challenging questions during phonic sessions in the Reception classes. Teachers model language accurately, set high expectations and promote fun in learning. They point out the breadth of supportive words and phonic information displayed consistently in the classrooms. Early years staff work effectively with parents so that they can support their children's learning at

home. Boys in particular are showing an increased interest in learning. This is supporting the drive to help more children achieve high standards for their age on entry to Year 1.

Next steps for the school

Leaders and those responsible for governance should ensure that:

- pupils' progress in reading in key stage 2 continues to improve so that it matches the progress they make in writing and mathematics
- teachers sustain the focus on providing appropriately high levels of challenge in the work they set for pupils, particularly for the most able, so that a greater proportion work at the higher standard.

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

Yours sincerely

Alexander Baxter
Ofsted Inspector

Information about the inspection

During the inspection, my inspection colleague and I held meetings with you and other staff who have leadership responsibilities. I met with the members of the school's governing body and the Bournemouth Septenary Umbrella Trust. Inspectors visited classrooms with you and the deputy headteacher and scrutinised samples of pupils' work in books. We talked with individual pupils during visits to classrooms and observed them reading and checking their work. The team inspector heard selected pupils reading and talked to them about their reading at home and school. I checked a range of documents relating to safeguarding with you and your administrative staff. I also examined details of pupils' attendance, pupils' progress and the school's self-evaluation and development plan. The team inspector spoke to several parents as they brought their children to school. Inspectors took account of 92 responses to the Ofsted online Parent View survey and 92 additional written comments from parents. The inspectors also took account of 30 responses to the staff survey and 114 responses to the pupils' survey.