



## QUALITY ASSURANCE REVIEW

### REVIEW REPORT FOR ST MICHAEL'S ACADEMY

<b>Name of School:</b>	St Michael's Academy
<b>Head teacher/Principal:</b>	Matthew Vella
<b>Hub:</b>	Somerset
<b>School type:</b>	Academy
<b>MAT (if applicable):</b>	Not applicable

<b>Estimate at this QA Review:</b>	GOOD
<b>Date of this Review:</b>	26/11/2018
<b>Estimate at last QA Review</b>	Not applicable as this is the school's first review.
<b>Date of last QA Review</b>	Not applicable as this is the school's first review.
<b>Grade at last Ofsted inspection:</b>	REQUIRES IMPROVEMENT
<b>Date of last Ofsted inspection:</b>	19/09/2017



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#### Quality Assurance Review

The review team, comprising of host school leaders and visiting reviewers agree that evidence indicates these areas are evaluated as follows:

<b>School Improvement Strategies</b>	GOOD
<b>Outcomes for Pupils</b>	GOOD
<b>Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment</b>	GOOD
<b>Area of Excellence</b>	Not submitted
<b>Overall Estimate</b>	GOOD

*Please note that a Challenge Partners Quality Assurance Review is not equivalent to an Ofsted inspection, and agreed estimates from the review are not equivalent to Ofsted judgements.*

## **1. Context and character of the school**

- St. Michael's is a junior school on the eastern edge of Yeovil, Somerset. There are 275 pupils on roll, the majority of whom are of White British heritage. However, there has been a rise in the numbers of pupils for whom English is an additional language (EAL) and leaders have catered for this through a separate nurture group to address pupils' language needs. Mobility is high and unpredictable.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils is well above the national average at around 45%, as is the proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/ or disabilities (SEND). The school serves an area of significant deprivation. Leaders have put in a broad range of approaches to enable pupils to access learning such as a well-attended breakfast club and providing transport through the school car for those pupils whose families struggle to get their children to school.
- There have been significant changes in the leadership of the school in the last 18 months. The current headteacher and deputy headteacher took up their posts in March 2017 and appointed the other senior and middle leaders. The recent partnership with Pen Mill Infant School was dissolved in 2017; however, links are developing to smooth pupils' transition to Key Stage 2.

### **2.1 School Improvement Strategies - Progress from previous EBIs**

- Not applicable as this is the school's first review.

### **2.2 School Improvement Strategies - What went well**

- The headteacher and the senior leadership team (SLT) are relentless in setting high expectations for all members of the school community. They lead by example and drive the shared vision to ensure that all pupils at St Michael's gain the breadth of experience to equip them well for life beyond the school. Already pupils are showing that they are keen to do well and older pupils have ambitions for the future which involve further study.
- Leaders are very clear in their communication to all staff about the purpose and expectations of monitoring. As a result of the frequent monitoring and open dialogue, leaders know their school very well. Appropriate actions are taken accordingly.
- The school is calm and purposeful and pupils describe it as a 'happy place' to be. As a result of the unwavering focus on positive behaviour, pupils show respect for themselves, their peers and any adults. They are proud of their school and their achievements and speak passionately about the experiences they receive at St. Michael's. In the breakfast club, pupils managed their own breakfasts and, when finished, they led a series of games for other pupils.

- Leaders provide a secure and caring environment so that all pupils can learn without barriers. 'The Hive' offers a sanctuary for pupils with social and emotional problems and has been instrumental in the reduction of significant behaviour incidents. Consistency in the approach to managing behaviour has changed the culture of the school. Staff feel supported due to clear systems and support from the SLT.
- Curriculum provision is borne from a deep understanding of the needs of pupils and the context of the school. Pupils seize the enrichment opportunities. The 'St. Michael's experiences' and the 'University of St Michael's' are key components in increasing pupils' linguistic, artistic, cultural and sporting skills. Pupils consider it positive to be good at something.
- Leaders focus on key groups of pupils through the refined data systems and target underperformance. Small group coaching was a contributory factor, along with better pupil behaviour and high quality, in-class teaching, in the significant rise in attainment in 2018. Senior leaders use assessment data to hold middle leaders and teachers to account.
- Through becoming more outward looking, leaders are working well to improve the progress and attainment for disadvantaged pupils and new systems in SEND provision are securing better outcomes for these pupils.
- The school is strengthening links locally, regionally and nationally which is enhancing its practice. Leaders and teachers are open to external scrutiny to learn and showcase; this is a key factor in their successes.
- Targeted continuing professional development (CPD), such as middle leadership training, is assisting the driving up of standards in the quality of teaching, learning and assessment.

### **2.3 School Improvement Strategies - Even better if...**

- ...leaders ensured that strong tracking and monitoring showed and celebrated clearly the impact of the gains made in learning for SEND and disadvantaged pupils currently in the school.
- ...all stakeholders had a firm understanding of the changing profile of pupils' prior attainment upon entry to the school.
- ...staff worked collaboratively with other schools to develop a portfolio of exemplars for each year group to ensure that teachers' moderation is accurate across the school.

### **3.1 Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment - Progress from previous EBIs**

- Not applicable as this is the school's first review.

### 3.2 Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment - What went well

- Teachers create learning which inspires pupils. One reviewer evaluated one lesson as 'a moment of learning that will last in the memory of the children', where pupils created butter by watching with wonder how the shaken jar went from liquid to solid. Pupils themselves describe learning at St Michael's as 'fun', 'brainworking' and 'memorable'. Enjoyment of learning is leading to high levels of engagement.
- The use of real life, tangible examples enable pupils to deepen and embed their knowledge, skills and understanding. In one Year 6 English lesson, the teacher's modelling built upon pupils' understanding of origami and Japan. 'Concrete to pictorial to abstract' resources in mathematics enabled pupils to complete calculations confidently.
- The use of resources to create interest is evident across the curriculum; for example, in pottery, the teacher showed artefacts he had collected at Hadrian's Wall which inspired pupils' creation of a Roman pot; an umbrella, scarves and other items hooked pupils' interests in talking about the weather in French.
- Strong relationships make a significant contribution to learning. Teachers understand pupils as individuals, resulting in confident learners who are keen to participate. There is a positive climate for learning in each classroom, routines are well established and pupils rise to high expectations. Teachers believe that pupils can do well which is infectious as pupils become resilient and determined. Teachers are prepared to take risks, such as in a mathematics lesson where pupils took their role as 'angle detectives' seriously.
- A variety of assessment tools ensures that lessons build upon pupils' prior learning. The challenge of misconceptions was seen at the start of one lesson due to the teacher's vigilance and 'next steps' in books leads to pupils making improvements. Differentiated, targeted questioning keeps pupils alert and their confidence in their teachers encourages them to 'have a go'.
- Pupils display a pride in their presentation and are eager to share their best pieces of work. Strategies such as 'DUMTUM', the non-negotiables, the 'match or better' piece of writing in the back of literacy books raise pupils' expectations.
- Books show evidence of writing for different purposes, as well as writing across the curriculum, such as in mathematics where pupils explain solutions to problems.
- 'Talk for writing' and frequent discussion between pupils and adults and with their peers are purposeful. Where teachers have high expectations of oracy, technical language and fluency improve. Pair work in mathematics is developing fluency and, in an ICT lesson, pupils devised strategies to get the creature to do a rainbow floss.
- Teachers are confident in their subjects. Scientific knowledge deepened pupils' understanding in one lesson and, in another, the teacher's confidence in French led to an insistence on pupils' use of the target language.

### 3.3 Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment - Even better if...

- ...all teachers ensured that modelling and prior learning secured pupils' understanding of how to deepen their learning.
- ...the school's positive reinforcement systems, including its language, were used consistently in lessons to reward pupils' learning and engagement.
- ...all teachers used the established strong climate for learning to identify and provide appropriate opportunities to extend challenge at all levels.

## 4. Outcomes for Pupils

- Almost all pupils enter St. Michael's from the neighbouring infant school. Prior attainment at transfer is consistently above the national average, with a few year groups below the national average. However, these pupils start in Reception with levels which are significantly below what is typically expected. Leaders have taken the decision to baseline pupils upon entry and this internal progress data reveals significant value added for most pupils as they make their way through the school. There remains work to be done in raising the progress and attainment of disadvantaged pupils.
- Attainment in Key Stage 2 improved significantly in 2018 as a result of intensive, targeted action and better quality teaching. The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in the combined outcome of reading, writing and mathematics was just above the national average. The average scaled score, whilst remaining just below the national average, showed significant improvement on that of 2017. A growing number of pupils reached the higher standard. When reviewed as separate subjects, pupils in 2018 made significant gains on their 2017 peers who entered the school with similar attainment.
- In 2018, the attainment of disadvantaged pupils did not reach the national average. Although the attainment and progress were higher for this group than in 2017, leaders realise that the gap that remains is wide. Leaders have joined a national programme to direct their efforts to raising the achievement of this group of pupils. They are clear that in 2018 it was a group of disadvantaged pupils with SEND that underperformed.
- Attainment and progress in mathematics in Key Stage 2 were high in 2018, showing a two-year improvement path. Attainment at the expected and higher standard in reading, writing and GPS was at the national average for 2018, a significant rise from well below national averages from 2017. This improvement has led to a rise in the progress measure although this still remains below the national average from pupils' Key Stage 1 starting points.
- Pupils with EAL, the most able and middle ability pupils performed more highly in 2018 than their lower ability and SEND peers.
- Current progress demonstrates improvements in pupils' progress across a range of subjects in Key Stage 2. Lessons and books show positive progress in writing in both literacy and 'topic' books. Science is also developing pupils' analytical and report writing skills well and pupils' visits to the local secondary school enable them to develop practical skills in the laboratories.

- School leaders are ambitious and work tirelessly to meet the needs of all pupils. They set aspirational targets, adjusted to any variations in attainment on entry, the high mobility and the changing nature of cohorts. There have been gains in learning for the bespoke nurture group of twenty EAL pupils who arrived together into Year 3 in 2017.

## **5. Area of Excellence**

Not submitted for this review.

## **6. What additional support would the school like from the Challenge Partners network, either locally or nationally?**

The school has no need for additional support currently.

**This review will support the school's continuing improvement. The main findings will be shared within the school's hub in order that it can inform future activities.**