



**INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE**

**ST MICHAEL'S SCHOOL**

**EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE**

**INTERMEDIATE INSPECTION**

# INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS INSPECTORATE

## St Michael's School

Full Name of School	<b>St Michael's School</b>
DfE Number	<b>886/6016</b>
EYFS Number	<b>EY377954</b>
Registered Charity Number	<b>307924</b>
Address	<b>St Michael's School Otford Court Otford Sevenoaks Kent TN14 5SA</b>
Telephone Number	<b>01959 522137</b>
Fax Number	<b>01959 526044</b>
Email Address	<b>office@stmichaels.kent.sch.uk</b>
Head	<b>Mrs Jill Aisher</b>
Chair of Governors	<b>Ms Paula Carter</b>
Age Range	<b>2 to 13</b>
Total Number of Pupils	<b>460</b>
Gender of Pupils	<b>Mixed (266 boys; 194 girls)</b>
Numbers by Age	<b>0-2 (EYFS): 0      5-11: 300 2-5 (EYFS): 115    11-13: 45</b>
Head of EYFS Setting	<b>Mrs Mary Stephens</b>
EYFS Gender	<b>Mixed (61 boys; 54 girls)</b>
Inspection dates	<b>25 Mar 2014 to 26 Mar 2014</b>

## PREFACE

This inspection report follows the *ISI schedule* for intermediate inspections, focusing on the Early Years Foundation Stage. The inspection occurs over a period of two continuous days in the school. The previous ISI inspection was in March 2011.

The Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) is the body approved by the Secretary of State for the purpose of inspecting schools belonging to the Independent Schools Council (ISC) Associations and reporting on compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2010. ISI is also approved to inspect the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), which was introduced in September 2008 and applies to all children in England from birth to 31 August following their fifth birthday. This report evaluates the extent to which the setting fulfils the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage Statutory Framework published by the Department for Education (DfE) and follows the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 as subsequently amended.

The inspection of the school is from an educational perspective and provides limited inspection of other aspects, although inspectors comment on any significant hazards or problems they encounter which have an adverse impact on children. The inspection does not include:

- (i) an exhaustive health and safety audit
- (ii) an in-depth examination of the structural condition of the school, its services or other physical features
- (iii) an investigation of the financial viability of the school or its accounting procedures
- (iv) an in-depth investigation of the school's compliance with employment law.

Inspectors may be aware of individual safeguarding concerns, allegations and complaints as part of the inspection process. Such matters will not usually be referred to in the published report but will have been considered by the team in reaching their judgements.

## **INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

The inspectors observed lessons, conducted informal discussions with children and examined samples of work. They held discussions with senior members of staff and with the chair of governors and attended registration sessions and assembly. The responses of parents to pre-inspection questionnaires were analysed, and the inspectors examined regulatory documentation made available by the school.

### **Inspectors**

Mrs Anne McConway

Early Years Lead Inspector

Mrs Susan West

Team Inspector for Early Years ((Head of Early Years, IAPS school)

# CONTENTS

	Page
<b>1 THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2 SUMMARY</b>	<b>2</b>
(i) Compliance with regulatory requirements	2
(ii) Recommendation for further improvement	2
<b>3 THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE</b>	<b>3</b>
(a) How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend	3
(b) The contribution of the early years provision to children's well-being	3
(c) The leadership and management of the early years provision	4
(d) The overall quality and standards of the early years provision	4

## 1. THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

- 1.1 St Michael's is a non-selective, co-educational school for pupils from two to thirteen years. Founded in 1872 in Croydon, it moved to its present site in Otford near Sevenoaks in Kent in 1925. The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) is in the purpose-built and self-contained Pre-Prep, which opened in 2013. It has access to an outdoor learning environment including woodland. The youngest children have dedicated play areas that have been designed to be used in all weathers. As an integral part of the school, the Nursery children make full use of the Pre-Prep facilities, such as the music room and hall, as well as the EYFS garden. The school has a single governing body.
- 1.2 The school aims to promote a rich, varied, broad and balanced education within a Christian context, to challenge and stimulate pupils to achieve their best and strive for excellence in all that they do, and to foster a sense of wonder and joy in learning, so that pupils take real pride in their accomplishments. It also aims to help children to understand themselves as individuals, their feelings and emotions, and how they can affect others, and to show tolerance and respect for the diversity of the world.
- 1.3 Since the previous inspection, the Pre-Prep have moved into new premises with access to an increased range of information and communication technology (ICT). Staff have been appointed to increase co-ordination across different age groups and to lead outdoor learning across the Pre-Prep. Additional covered areas for Nursery and Kindergarten have been provided and dedicated EYFS artificial surfaces are accessed by children from Nursery to Reception. A new head was appointed in 2013.
- 1.4 The EYFS caters for 115 children aged from two to five years of whom 39 attend full-time and 76 attend on a part-time basis. Forty children are under three years of age and 75 attend the Kindergarten and Reception classes. The ability profile of the setting is above the national average. The setting has identified ten children as having special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and three with English as an additional language (EAL). No pupil has a statement of special educational needs. All children from the Pre-Prep automatically join the Prep school. The vast majority of pupils are from a European background, from professional families.
- 1.5 National Curriculum (NC) nomenclature is used throughout this report to refer to year groups in the school. The year group nomenclature used by the school for the EYFS and its National Curriculum equivalence are shown in the following table.

### ***Early Years Foundation Stage Setting***

School	NC name
Nursery	Under 3
Kindergarten	Nursery
Reception	Reception

## **2. SUMMARY**

### **(i) Compliance with statutory requirements**

- 2.1 The school's registered provision for childcare meets the requirements of the Childcare Act 2006 and no action is required.

### **(ii) Recommendation for further improvement**

The school is advised to make the following improvement.

1. Increase the daily choice of vegetables for lunch to promote healthy eating.

### **3. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE**

#### **3.(a) How well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend**

- 3.1 The setting makes outstanding provision in meeting the needs of the range of children who attend. Consistently high standards are achieved through educational programmes which demonstrate outstanding planning and ensure that children reach or exceed age appropriate levels of development. Specialist teaching in physical development and music across the EYFS, and French in Nursery and Reception, enrich the children's learning experience.
- 3.2 Staff provide a well thought-out balance of adult-led and child-initiated tasks which enable children to benefit from high-quality teaching and to make independent choices in all age groups. Adults encourage children to discuss their progress and contribute to the next steps in their learning from Nursery onwards and they become increasingly confident in setting their own targets. In Reception, children have individual challenges and receive an 'I can' sticker in their workbooks when they achieve these. Learning objectives are routinely shared with the children through similar statements. A strong focus on personal, social and emotional development as well as physical, language and communication growth, provides a robust foundation for the children under three years. Staff ensure that children of all ages and abilities are well prepared for the next step in their learning.
- 3.3 The motivation levels of the children are high in response to similarly high expectations from staff; children are eager to join in all activities and are proud of their achievements. Staff observations ensure that, within each age group, each child's progress against the Early Learning Goals is accurately mapped, retained in individual records and shared during transition stages.
- 3.4 The outstanding quality of teaching in Nursery and Reception enables children over three years to progress effectively in the seven areas of development, particularly in phonics and mathematical development. Staff use their knowledge of each child's needs to plan appropriate open-ended challenges. All the children have exceptionally good listening skills and are confident in asking questions.
- 3.5 Staff share what they know about the children with parents when they bring and collect them and offer guidance on how their child may be helped at home.

#### **3.(b) The contribution of the early years provision to children's well-being**

- 3.6 The contribution of the early years provision to children's well-being is outstanding. Caring and committed staff help all children, including those who need additional support, to form appropriate bonds and secure emotional attachments with their key person. Children know that staff will readily help them and so feel safe and secure. Staff know the children very well, have excellent relationships with them and value their questions. The staff model their clear expectations for good behaviour so that even the youngest children respect and care for one another and play happily together. Staff promote self-help skills, for example, encouraging children to dress independently.

- 3.7 New, stimulating, richly resourced classrooms provide children with excellent opportunities to explore, learn and play creatively. Staff encourage all children to manage their own personal hygiene and children understand the importance of cleaning tables and hand-washing before eating a healthy snack. Water is freely available at all times. In Nursery, children carry their own plates of food to a table at lunch time. Food is cooked on the school premises but the lack of choice of vegetables hinders the promotion of healthy eating habits. Children understand that going outdoors for physical exercise is good for them and enables them to learn new skills and become healthy.
- 3.8 An innovative, well-planned environment with extensive facilities supports the children's overall development and emotional well-being and develops their confidence and co-operation. Children are well prepared for the next stage in their learning because practitioners provide good support through effective transition procedures.

### **3.(c) The leadership and management of the early years provision**

- 3.9 The leadership and management of the early years provision are outstanding. The governors provide effective oversight. The setting fulfils the school's responsibilities in meeting the learning and development requirements of the EYFS. The progress check at the age of two identifies learning priorities which are shared with parents and indicate how the child may be supported at home.
- 3.10 A strategy is in place to ensure the regular review of policies. Systems to meet the safeguarding and welfare requirements of the EYFS at all times are in place, creating a warm, welcoming, stimulating learning environment both indoors and out.
- 3.11 Regular self-evaluation provides a continuous review of practice and the setting of challenging targets for improvement. Recruitment procedures are rigorous with all required checks completed and carefully recorded. Induction for new staff is comprehensively recorded. Regular supervision sessions enable staff to discuss their concerns. Staff have undertaken first aid and child protection training. Accessible training for staff has a significant impact on teaching quality and hence on the learning and development of the children. The recommendations of the previous inspection have been fully met. Strong partnerships are in place with both parents and external agencies to identify and meet the needs of children with SEND. Parents' responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire are exceedingly appreciative of the regular feedback on their children's progress and the care taken by key persons to help their children settle quickly.

### **3.(d) The overall quality and standards of the early years provision**

- 3.12 The overall quality and standards of the early years provision are outstanding. Most children make excellent progress relative to their starting points. Children aged three to five years are learning to use their phonic knowledge to write words and spell irregular common words. They count reliably to 20, and use quantities and objects to add and subtract, and to solve problems. Children under three years of age are learning phonics, numerals, action songs and counting as well as beginning to understand 'how' and 'why' questions.
- 3.13 Children's personal and emotional development is outstanding. The children have learnt age appropriate independent skills in dressing for outdoor play, in toileting and in having snack. They feel safe, secure and happy, enabling them to make progress

and be ready for the next stage of their learning. The excellent learning and care provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend, particularly those with SEND. As the teaching is thoroughly planned based on children's progress it is matched closely to their needs.

- 3.14 All the requirements for children's safeguarding and welfare have been met and there is a shared understanding and responsibility of how to protect children. Staff are knowledgeable about how to deal with safeguarding issues. Highly effective self-evaluation and excellent leadership and management underpin the school's capacity for continued improvement for the benefit of the children. Since the previous inspection systems for assessing and tracking progress have been significantly improved.