

St. Michael's School: Annual report to St. Michael's Church APCM – April 2025

We are privileged in having at St. Michael's School a caring, experienced and dedicated team of people who create a positive and supportive environment for the children and parents of our school community. This was recognised by Ofsted when they visited in January 2025 and found that *'pupils are proud to attend this school and they show self-assurance that stems from feeling happy and secure'*. The inspector considered that the school had effectively maintained standards and that pupils can *'make the most of their learning opportunities'* and *'achieve well'*. The inspector noted that the children showed a *'consideration for others'* which, *'combined with the caring staff, fosters a strong sense of community. When new pupils arrive, they are warmly welcomed and treated with kindness.'* The school's emphasis on phonics and reading was welcomed and recognised as *'vital for pupils' academic achievement later'*. Furthermore, the inspector noted that *'pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported by skilled staff'*.

Of course, school is not just about learning and at St. Michael's *'pupils behave well at social times'* and in the playground the inspector found they *'play organised games, which keeps them active and allows them to enjoy the competitive elements.'* Sporting success has been achieved in many fields and in July 2024, St Michael's was awarded the Platinum School Games Mark Award, building on the Gold Award that was awarded the year previously. The School Games Organiser noted *'Your commitment to fostering an inclusive and vibrant sporting culture is truly exemplary.... Your innovative approaches to engaging all pupils, regardless of ability, and your strong emphasis on sportsmanship and fair play set a standard for excellence.'*

The last year has also seen the launch of the school's new website which is far more 'user friendly' and geared to modern communications methods such as mobile phones. This is a very successful partnership of a professional company and the school team and has been funded by the Governing Body. One of the aims was to promote the school to new parents and over the last year the number of pupils has moved in a very positive direction.

The 'wrap-around' childcare operation has proved very popular as it offers a much-needed service to parents and carers. The clubs use the school's facilities and staff and offer fun activities for children alongside healthy meals.

The staff team has been very stable over the last year with the addition of Emily Robshaw, a past pupil who joined in September 2024 as the full-time year 5 class teacher. The governing body has also experienced a period of stability and although we were very sad to see Val Ashwood leave us, we were delighted that she is prepared to stay on as an associate governor supporting the church school committee. We would like to thank her for many years of exemplary service.

Continuing national press coverage of the stresses facing the education sector and teachers accurately reflects issues which affect our school and balancing our budget becomes ever more difficult. We are currently facing very high costs relating to extensive roof repairs to the over 60 years old building as well as the need to update the computers to ensure they are fully functional and able to meet the level of safeguarding requirements needed for the children's online safety. The lack of outside support agencies such as those focused on special educational needs and families in social difficulties creates a huge amount of extra work for the Senior leadership team (SLT) and class teachers as well as costs in having to fund support for children who are unable to work to their full potential without a guiding hand.

Please keep the school and its community in your thoughts and prayers as they strive to do their best at this challenging time for the field of education.