



## **SCHOOL INSPECTION SERVICE**

### **INSPECTION REPORT FOR ST MICHAEL STEINER SCHOOL**

**DfE No: 313/6002**

#### **The key inspection judgements for this school are:**

|                                                       |                             |          |
|-------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------|
| <b>The quality of education</b>                       | <b>Good</b>                 | <b>2</b> |
| <b>Pupils' personal development</b>                   | <b>Outstanding</b>          | <b>1</b> |
| <b>Safeguarding pupils' welfare health and safety</b> | <b>Requires improvement</b> | <b>3</b> |
| <b>Leadership, management and governance</b>          | <b>Inadequate</b>           | <b>4</b> |
| <b>Effectiveness of the Early Years' provision</b>    | <b>Outstanding</b>          | <b>1</b> |

#### **Compliance with the Independent School Standards:**

The school does not meet the regulatory requirements of schedule 1 of The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014 ('the independent school standards') and associated requirements.

#### **Compliance with the Equality Act 2010:**

The school meets the requirements of the Equality Act.

#### **Compliance with the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage:**

The school meets the requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage.

**Date of inspection: 15 - 17 November 2016**

## **SECTION A: SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS**

The quality of education provided by St Michael Steiner School is good, but there are serious weaknesses in the school's leadership, management and governance. Pupils' learning and achievement are good. All pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) make good progress from a range of different starting points. The quality of work produced by pupils of all ages is very high. The quality of teaching and assessment is good. Teaching is securely and successfully rooted in the Steiner methodology, and most lessons are interesting, engaging and proceed at a brisk pace. Assessment is good and gives pupils good advice on the quality of their work. Marking of work acknowledges pupils' achievements although guidance on how to improve could be clearer. The curriculum is of good quality with some outstanding features. It is firmly based on Steiner principles. The curriculum for older pupils is suitably extended to allow them to work towards the Steiner School Certificate (SSC), an externally moderated, internationally recognised qualification. Pupils' personal development is outstanding. They enjoy coming to school and grow into articulate confident young people. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is excellent and they are committed to the values of British society including democracy and respect. Safeguarding pupils' welfare, health and safety requires improvement. Although pupils say they feel safe, secure and happy in school, there are significant weaknesses in the management and oversight of health and safety issues and new trustees were not appropriately vetted prior to appointment. Thus, although senior leaders provide clear educational direction for the school, the leadership, management and governance overall are inadequate. Trustees and senior leaders do not monitor closely enough the implementation of school policies to ensure that independent school standards are consistently met, and some are not. There is no appropriate plan in place to address these issues within a suitable timescale.

The provision for the children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and Year 1 in the Early Years department is outstanding and their personal development, behaviour and welfare are significant strengths. Management of this area of the school's work is excellent and focused on ensuring children are safe, secure, enjoy their education and make consistent progress.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT:**

To meet the independent school standards, the proprietor must:

- ensure that relevant health and safety statutory requirements are complied with by effectively implementing the written health and safety policy (paragraph 11);
- ensure that risk assessments are implemented effectively to reduce risks to pupils' health and safety (paragraphs 16 (a) and (b));
- ensure that the Chair makes the following checks on trustees where relevant to the individual:
  - an enhanced criminal record check (paragraph 20 (6)(b)(i));
  - checks confirming the individual's identity and right to work in the United Kingdom, (paragraph 20(6)(b)(ii)); and

- ensure that these checks on the trustees are carried out before or as soon as practical after the trustees resume their roles, (paragraph 20(8)(b));
- ensure that the single central record shows when the above checks were made, the date they were made, and the date on which the resulting certificate was obtained, (paragraph 21(6));
- ensure that leaders and managers demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently (paragraph 34 (1)(a)); and
- ensure that leaders and managers fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent school standards are met consistently (paragraph 34 (1)(b)).

## **SECTION B: INFORMATION**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION:**

This inspection was carried out by the School Inspection Service (SIS) in accordance with Section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008. It follows the inspection framework agreed by SIS and the Department for Education (DfE). It was conducted by three independent professional inspectors, who looked at all aspects of the school's provision as required by the current regulations, accompanied by a consultant from the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship.

In reaching their judgements, the inspectors observed a range of lessons and examined samples of pupils' work in all key stages. The school's curriculum documentation, policies and records were scrutinised. Interviews were held with a number of staff in key positions and the inspectors spoke to groups of pupils. They also took account of the questionnaires completed by pupils and parents before the inspection.

|                               |                                  |
|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Reporting Inspector:          | Dr Christine Jones               |
| Team inspectors:              | Mr Andrew Redpath<br>Mr Ted Cohn |
| Steiner Community Consultant: | Mrs Sally Jenkinson              |

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL:**

St Michael Steiner School is an independent co-educational school for pupils aged three to eighteen. It follows the international Steiner Waldorf curriculum developed by the Austrian philosopher Dr Rudolf Steiner. The school's stated aims are to provide a modern, urban school that addresses the needs of children who are growing up in London, but who are citizens of the world in the 21st century, able to respond to the challenges of modern life.

The school opened in 2001 and moved to its present site in 2012. It occupies a listed building in its own grounds on the edge of Hanworth Park in Hounslow. The school is planning to move to new accommodation in the near future. There are 107 pupils on roll including 33 in the Early Years department. Twelve of these children attend part time. There are fifteen pupils who have English as an additional language (EAL) and four pupils with a statement of special educational needs (SEN).

The trustees have management and oversight responsibilities similar to those of a governing body. The school has no headteacher and so the responsibilities of senior management are exercised by the administration manager and the chair of the college of teachers, in consultation with the trustees.

The school follows the Steiner Waldorf system for naming classes. The corresponding National Curriculum nomenclature for the classes in the school at the time of the inspection is as follows:

| <b>Steiner Class Names</b> | <b>National Curriculum</b> |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| Early Years department     | EYFS, Year 1               |
| Class 1                    | Year 2                     |
| Class 2                    | Year 3                     |
| Class 3                    | Year 4                     |
| Class 4                    | Year 5                     |
| Class 5                    | Year 6                     |
| Class 6                    | Year 7                     |
| Class 7                    | Year 8                     |
| Class 8                    | Year 9                     |
| Class 9                    | Year 10                    |
| Class 10                   | Year 11                    |
| Class 11                   | Year 12                    |

## **SECTION C: THE INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS**

### **1. THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The quality of education provided by the school is good.

#### **Pupils' learning and achievement**

Pupils' learning and achievement overall are good and they make good progress from a range of different starting points and individual needs. Pupils with EAL and SEN make good progress although their progress over time is not recorded systematically. Samples of pupils work show that, over time, pupils develop skills, knowledge and understanding that are appropriate to their age and ability. For example, technical writing skills develop rapidly as pupils progress through the school. This supports their creative, imaginative and descriptive writing and the production of high quality work. Similarly, numeracy skills develop appropriately over time as teachers' planning is effective in developing these skills in a wide range of contexts. For example, pupils' increasing familiarity with their times tables enables them to develop good calculating skills.

Pupils' speaking and listening skills develop well across the school. They are articulate and ready to voice their opinions as well as listening to and considering other points of view. Older pupils in particular read fluently, with confidence and understanding. Pupils can memorise and recite poems and verses and appreciate how this links to other areas of their studies.

The work pupils are given is well matched to their needs and interests so they develop effective learning skills. They can work independently or as part of a group and they can focus on their work for long periods. Classes are small and pupils receive well-targeted guidance and support which helps to correct misconceptions and improve their skills and understanding. Pupils in the Upper School do not take GCSE or 'A' level examinations. They are currently working towards the International Steiner School Certificate.

#### **The quality of teaching and assessment**

The quality of teaching and assessment is good. Teaching is well informed, confident and engaging. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and they are secure in their understanding and delivery of the Steiner Waldorf curriculum. Teachers know their pupils very well and plan strategies that engage all of them in their learning. Lessons are usually interesting and promote a thirst for learning especially where the pace of teaching is brisk and pupils are given good opportunities to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding. On the few occasions where the pace of teaching is too slow and tasks are less demanding, pupils lose interest and sometimes drift off task, and this reduces progress. For younger pupils good planning ensures a flow of activities throughout the lesson that motivate and interest them while reinforcing learning. In many cases teachers are reflective about the outcomes of their lesson planning, but there is sometimes too great a focus on how the lesson was taught rather than on what the pupils have learnt. Resources are used well to support teaching and promote learning.

Assessment is good as teachers give good quality feedback to their pupils, and this enables them to make progress. Books show examples of constructive and effective marking although the advice given is often about what has not been completed rather than what should be done next or could be done to improve. Pupils' work is often assessed at several stages especially where it goes through a series of drafts. Teachers know their pupils well and verbal feedback is a frequent feature throughout many lessons. For the oldest pupils marking and assessment is related to the International Steiner School Certificate (SSC) and this will be subject to rigorous moderation and assessment both internally and externally in New Zealand.

Regular college meetings provide teachers with opportunities to discuss the progress made by all pupils or to seek guidance from colleagues. The annual teachers' retreat also gives opportunities for them to think about their practice and how it could be improved.

### **Quality of the curriculum**

The quality of the curriculum is good overall with some outstanding features, especially where Steiner values are strongly integrated into lesson planning. The curriculum follows the Steiner principles of intellectual, physical and spiritual development faithfully, especially through the main lessons, which combine a variety of subjects and activities. For example, the focus of a main lesson was astronomy, but poetry and song were integrated effectively into it. In other classes main lesson topics ranged from mathematics and Bible stories to ancient history and geology. As a result, pupils receive a broad education and are highly motivated and engaged in their learning. This enables them to make good progress. The curriculum is well supported by a range of external visits and activities that broaden pupils' knowledge and experience by setting the subject matter in relevant and interesting contexts.

Curriculum provision has improved since the last inspection and provides a broad, balanced and coherent experience for all its pupils. This ensures that they have good learning opportunities that meet the aims of the school and Steiner education very well. Music, eurythmy (an art of movement) and crafts make an important and significant contribution to the pupils' intellectual, physical and spiritual development. The school rightly identifies the integration of practical and artistic with intellectual development as a strength of the curriculum. Health and economic education is also covered thoroughly and threads through the curriculum. Curriculum planning supports pupils with SEN and EAL very well as it meets their needs and allows them to make good progress.

Older pupils are working towards the International Steiner School certificate (SSC). This originates from Steiner Waldorf schools in New Zealand and is now increasingly offered by Steiner schools in other countries. It operates over two years with three levels representing increasing challenge and demand. The highest level three is intended to prepare pupils for further study at university level. Pupils gain points through completing a range of compulsory and elective course and units of work. Both internal and external moderation ensure consistency and robustness of outcomes. Some facilities and resources, for

example in science, are restricted and will not be adequate to support pupils working towards the higher levels of the SSC. The school has plans in place to remedy this situation when they move to their new accommodation.

## **2. THE QUALITY OF PUPILS' PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**

The quality of pupils' personal development is outstanding. Pupils speak proudly of their school and enjoy attending regularly. Pupils grow into very articulate and confident young people during their time at the school. They show respect for each other in accordance with the school's aim, that pupils should be considerate and not hurt others, either physically or emotionally. Their behaviour is outstanding. The school is very effective in encouraging pupils to take the initiative in their learning. For example, where pupils choose topics for extended study, such as, 'Japanese folklore in the media' or learning to play the melodium and researching its history. They learn to make presentations to the school and to wider audiences, such as the annual Steiner conference. They also show perseverance. As one pupil commented following the successful participation in a drama production, 'It was hard but really good.'

Pupils' spiritual awareness and self-esteem are promoted very effectively through the creative use of music, dance and movement. These activities often provide opportunities to develop a sense of fun while pupils learn. Eurythmy is especially successful in this area.

Pupils are able to form their own opinions and develop an understanding of moral issues when they discuss such topics as: the abolition of slavery, communism and the use of advertising and propaganda. Pupils are very tolerant of each other's views. British values of democracy and the rule of law, tolerance and individual liberty are promoted effectively through the 'global studies' curriculum when they study such topics as human rights and the suffragette movement. Staff model British values effectively by always treating their pupils in a calm and respectful manner. These relationships are valued by the pupils especially when they have regular time with their individual tutors to discuss their work and future plans. As a result, pupils are well prepared for their future lives and are given good quality advice on their future studies and careers. As part of this process pupils complete work experience placements in local businesses, for example, a carpentry firm.

Pupils learn to respect their own and other cultural traditions when they cover in detail different cultures and traditions from around the world, often using fables and poetry 'which tell the passions and challenges of life.' Pupils choose their own charities and raise money through, for example, organising cake sales or washing cars and selling items at the school fairs.

## **3. SAFEGUARDING PUPILS' WELFARE, HEALTH AND SAFETY**

The school's provision and procedures to ensure pupils' safeguarding, welfare, health and safety requires improvement. There are deficiencies in the



implementation, management and oversight of health and safety issues. Pupils say that they feel happy and safe and a harmonious atmosphere prevails in classes and around the school. Pupils know how to keep safe both in school and beyond. Incidents of misbehaviour are rare and there have been no exclusions in the past year. The behaviour policy is based on a code of conduct. The code allows individual class teachers to adopt a flexible approach based on the knowledge of individual pupils in the class. There is an emphasis on mutual respect and pupils 'putting right' any mistakes. Pupils like the approach and report the code is implemented effectively. In their questionnaires, almost all pupils reported that teachers deal effectively with any poor behaviour.

Safeguarding arrangements and policies are up-to-date and meet the relevant standards. The designated safeguarding lead (DSL) is trained appropriately. Staff have also been trained recently and are able to identify when a pupil may be at risk of neglect, abuse or exploitation and know how to report concerns should this be necessary. The DSL works hard to maintain and complete the records of child protection concerns when they arise, following these up promptly.

The single central register (SCR) is completed appropriately for staff working in the school. No supply staff are used. New staff are subject to the necessary checks before appointment. However, the school's proprietors did not make the required checks on two new trustees who were appointed in April 2016 and they do not appear on the SCR. The College decided to ask them to stand down before the inspection and reinstated a retired trustee who had the appropriate checks in place in order that the Board of trustees should be quorate. However, the absence of timely checks on independent trustees who have been in post for over six months means that the independent school standards are not met.

Pupils are well supervised and the site is secure. Attendance is above the national average and admission and attendance registers are completed as required. The school has an appropriate anti-bullying policy. Pupils report there are no incidents of bullying and that they can discuss any concerns with their tutor should any incidents occur. Members of staff understand what needs to be done to safeguard pupils against extremism and radicalisation and this helps pupils to be aware of such dangers and how to avoid them. Pupils understand the risks associated with using information technology and the internet. Cyber-bullying is discussed incidentally as the topic arises but this is not systematically documented in curriculum planning, and the school should ensure that this is rectified.

Fire regulations are met. A risk assessment has recently been carried out by a commercial company. Fire safety equipment is checked regularly and fire drills are held each term. Staff have received recent training in health and safety. Appropriate health and safety policies such as a first aid policy are in place and meet requirements, and staff are trained in its use. However, implementation of the policies is not always consistent or secure.

Line management accountability and responsibilities for health and safety are unclear. Appropriate risk assessments are drawn up for practical activities and for off-site trips but they are not always implemented effectively. Checks of the site to identify potential hazards are not systematic or recorded and it is not clear who

has overall responsibility for this. For example, electrical safety checks are taking place but are not yet complete and there are no records available of where this has been completed or been managed by senior leaders or trustees. Accidents are not recorded in detail and much information is missing. Records of accidents and incidents do not contain details of follow up actions or indicate where future preventative measures have been put in place. There are examples of repeat incidents where pupils have been injured, such as falling when climbing trees at break time, and it is unclear whether such incidents are analysed to check trends, identify potential hazards and take remedial action. As a result, the independent school standards in paragraphs 11, 16 (a) and (b) are not met.

#### **4. LEADERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE**

The leadership, management and governance of the school are inadequate. While the day-to-day management of the pupils' education works well, the lack of effective governance does not support the school adequately as the trustees do not hold senior leaders closely to account for all aspects of the school's performance. The proprietors, leaders and managers have not ensured that all the independent schools standards are met.

The senior leadership provides clear educational direction in their approaches to ethos, care and pedagogy. This is illustrated by the good practice and relationships observed in the classes. The day-to-day management of the school rests with the College of Teachers. They are skilled in developing educational aspects of the school's work and are able to secure improvements in pupils' progress through innovative approaches such as the introduction of the SSC. Through leading by example, the College creates a culture of respect and tolerance which results in positive relationships within the school community. Individual teachers are supported through a system of mutual peer observations and analysis of their work. This process encourages teachers to review their own practice and look for development and improvement. As a result teaching is mostly good across the school.

The school meets the Independent School Standards for premises and accommodation as well those related to the provision of information to parents. The policy for handling complaints meets requirements although the lines of responsibility that would lead to setting up the final stage panel (if required) require clarification. Parents are very supportive of the school and relationships with parents are effective. There is currently no parents' association although some have expressed a wish to make a bigger contribution to school life.

##### **Governance**

The quality and effectiveness of governance are inadequate. Despite this, the trustees are fully in sympathy with the educational ethos of the school. They are thoroughly conversant with the Steiner way of teaching and appreciate the efforts the teachers make to deliver a Steiner based education of good quality. However, this year there have been considerable changes in personnel amongst the

trustees and two new trustees were appointed without appropriate safeguarding checks being made.

There are a small number of trustees. Between them, they assume a heavy burden of responsibility and cannot cover all roles effectively. The roles and responsibilities of the trustees and the Chair of Trustees are not made clear. This has a significant impact on their ability to take a full and active part in the governance of the school. They do not ensure that the school's health and safety policy is implemented effectively and that risk assessment informs practice. Trustees rely on the College of Teachers to devise, implement and monitor policies and procedures rather than informing themselves independently, as the statutorily responsible body, of the implementation and impact of those policies. As a result, while policies are up-to-date, oversight of the effective implementation of these policies is not secure. Lines of accountability and responsibility are not clear as too often it is not obvious who retains the overall responsibility for following up on issues that may arise, for example those linked to health and safety. Thus, trustees do not ensure that the independent school regulations are consistently met.

## **5. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE EARLY YEARS' PROVISION**

The provision for all the children in the Early Years department is outstandingly effective. The personal development, behaviour and welfare of the children are significant strengths of the provision enabling them to feel safe, secure and happy.. Staff form strong bonds with individual children and their families, as shown by the responses from parents to the parental inspection questionnaires. All the regulations are fully met, including those for safeguarding. All staff recognise, understand and carry their personal and shared responsibilities for safeguarding very effectively and children feel safe, secure and happy at school. Any safeguarding issues are quickly recognised, relevant advice and support is given and pertinent action is taken, with its effects monitored carefully.

The leadership and management of the Early Years department are outstanding. The manager works very closely with her colleagues in continuing collaborative dialogue founded on a deep professional understanding of the principles of Steiner Waldorf. They understand how this can be delivered very effectively in practice, to ensure the continuing personal development and intellectual progress of children within an ethos of continual professional improvement practice. The Early Years department does not currently have a trustee with a specific brief for its oversight who can give an external unbiased opinion of the department

The curriculum for the children in the EYFS has appropriate range and depth and meets all the statutory requirements whilst remaining true to the Steiner Waldorf philosophy. It provides experiences that children find interesting and satisfying, as does the curriculum for five to six year olds. These activities are well organised. They allow progress in learning in many areas, notably speaking and listening, individual and collaborative and imaginative and creative skills, whilst including a judicious mix of adult and child initiated activities.

The quality of teaching, learning and assessment is outstanding. The staff are very well qualified, experienced and have a good knowledge and strong commitment to Steiner principles and practice. They also have a deep understanding of the personal needs and intellectual capacities of the children they teach and this underpins all they do. Staff have high expectations of children, closely related to their current levels of development, and plan activities that are engaging and interesting. Assessment is of a high quality with good quality evidence gathered and used very well to adapt teaching and learning to the particular needs of individual children. The individual learning journey records contain good examples of this and these records are supported by collaborative case studies carried out by staff. Together with the clear identification of activities that are particularly pertinent to the learning needs of 5 to 6-year-olds in the Early Years department. Assessment has sharpened the focus on developing learning between the younger children and the older children. and has helped the 5 to 6 year olds to make better progress than at the time of the last inspection.

The personal development, behaviour and welfare of the children are outstanding and significant strengths of the provision. Staff provide excellent models for children to follow the courtesy and respect that extended to them. This is combined with a gentle firmness, a strong emphasis on children taking responsibility for their own behaviour, and their deep understanding of their children's personal needs. There is a strong emphasis on praise and celebration of achievement. These factors develop children's self-esteem and confidence as learners very effectively. Children come from a wide variety of cultural and religious backgrounds, which provide a rich resource for learning about, celebrating and respecting cultural and religious differences. There is a strong emphasis on good manners, fairness and justice support by respect for the law. This raises the children's awareness of intolerance and guards against radicalisation.

The children's outcomes are outstanding. By the time they are five they have become confident, articulate and self-aware children who are creative and imaginative and enjoy their work. By the end of Year 1 these skills have developed further. Children have the attitudes, knowledge and skills to make rapid progress in the lower school, as shown by their rapid progress in developing literacy and numeracy skills. The provision enables the children to establish an excellent foundation for continuing personal development, learning, achievement and cultural, moral and spiritual development.

## SCHOOL DETAILS

|                                                              |                                                                                                  |    |           |    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|-----------|----|
| Name of school:                                              | St Michael Steiner School                                                                        |    |           |    |
| Address of school:                                           | Park Road<br>Hanworth Park<br>TW13 6PN                                                           |    |           |    |
| Telephone number:                                            | 0208 893 1299                                                                                    |    |           |    |
| Email address:                                               | <a href="mailto:info@stmichaelsteiner.hounslow.sch.uk">info@stmichaelsteiner.hounslow.sch.uk</a> |    |           |    |
| Web address                                                  | <a href="http://www.stmichaelsteiner.hounslow.sch.uk">www.stmichaelsteiner.hounslow.sch.uk</a>   |    |           |    |
| DfE Number                                                   | 313/6002                                                                                         |    |           |    |
| Proprietor:                                                  | St Michael Steiner School Ltd                                                                    |    |           |    |
| Chair of Trustees:                                           | Not in place                                                                                     |    |           |    |
| Chair of College of Teachers                                 | Amanda Bell                                                                                      |    |           |    |
| Early Years Manager                                          | Katie Sharrock                                                                                   |    |           |    |
| Type of school                                               | Independent school                                                                               |    |           |    |
| Annual fees                                                  | £6,700 - £11,300                                                                                 |    |           |    |
| Age range of pupils                                          | 3 - 18                                                                                           |    |           |    |
| Gender of pupils                                             | Mixed                                                                                            |    |           |    |
| Total number on roll                                         | full-time                                                                                        | 95 | part-time | 12 |
| Number of children under-5                                   | Boys:                                                                                            | 7  | Girls:    | 8  |
| Number of compulsory school age pupils                       | Boys:                                                                                            | 46 | Girls:    | 46 |
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational need | Boys:                                                                                            | 1  | Girls:    | 3  |

|                           |                                                             |   |        |   |
|---------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|---|--------|---|
| Number of pupils with EAL | Boys:                                                       | 7 | Girls: | 8 |
| Type of inspection        | Section 109(1) and (2) of the Education and Skills Act 2008 |   |        |   |

**This report has been prepared by the School Inspection Service, which provides independent professional inspection of all schools affiliated to the Focus Learning Trust, and members of the Steiner Waldorf Schools Fellowship or Cognita group. The report is available from the School Inspection Service website: [www.schoolinspectionservice.co.uk](http://www.schoolinspectionservice.co.uk).**