

St Michael's School

An independent traditional
Catholic School run by
the Society of St Pius X

“The school’s work to promote pupils’ personal development and welfare is outstanding.”

“Pupils conduct themselves impeccably. They are unanimous in their confidence that adults will listen to and help them.”

Ofsted Report, May 2019



Message from the Headmaster



We are given but one lifetime to merit our heavenly reward. Eternity tomorrow depends on life today. In worldly terms we can say that a child only has one shot at success.

In a world of intellectual, moral and spiritual confusion, a child's education is of paramount importance. The years of childhood and adolescence are decisive in setting the soul on a firm path to the fulfilment of its vocation: to know, love and serve God in this world, in order to be happy with Him in the next.

Here at St. Michael's School, we are proud of our Catholic Faith. We endeavour to create an environment favourable to the practice of virtue and learning, according to the doctrinal and liturgical traditions of the Roman Catholic Church.

The Society of St. Pius X operates its schools in order to protect and nurture not only natural virtue, but also the supernatural life of the soul. These two goals form the purpose of our work. A strong curriculum ensures the development of the mind in line with Church doctrine. Pastoral care seeks to instil awareness and care in the performance of duty.

St. Michael's strives hard for academic achievement. Good examination results and good manners are not, however, the benchmark whereby we measure our success. We wish more for our pupils, in line with their parents' wishes. We measure our success from the standpoint of the soul's relationship with God. If our pupils continue in the practice of their Faith and in the service of their neighbour, the school will have achieved its goal.

A child is a mind to teach, a will to strengthen, a heart to love, a soul to save. We make no secret of Jesus Christ as our model and motive in the quest for our pupils' achievement and wellbeing.

Rev. John Brucciani, Headmaster





St Michael's School is owned and operated by the Society of St Pius X, which is a congregation of Catholic priests and religious dedicated to the preservation and promulgation of the traditional teachings and liturgy of the Roman Catholic Church.

Our facilities are situated in the beautiful countryside of North Hampshire in the rural village of Burghclere, about four miles from Newbury, Berkshire. The school property extends over more than ten acres of land, which includes open fields and woods in addition to the school and chapel grounds, recreation areas and sports fields.

The original school building, St Raphael's House, was opened on 29th September 1991, the Feast of St Michael.

St. Michael's School is a primary school for boys and girls and a secondary school for boys, which includes a boarding house.



Our Mission

The mission of St Michael's School is to provide children with a thorough Catholic formation and education, founded upon the traditional doctrines of the Catholic Faith and upon the traditional principles of education.

The concept of Catholic education is summarized by Pope Pius XI in his encyclical on Christian Education: "Since education consists essentially in preparing man for what he must be and for what he must do here below, in order to attain the sublime end for which he was created, it is clear that there can be no true education which is not wholly directed to man's last end, and that in the present order of Providence, since God has revealed Himself to us in the Person of His Only Begotten Son, who alone is "the way, the truth and the life," there can be no ideally perfect education which is not Christian education." (Encyclical *Divini Illius Magistri*)

An organised mind, an understanding of duty and strength of will form the best soil in which the seed of eternal life, Divine Grace, is able to take root and develop.





Admissions

We admit children from Catholic families desirous of passing on a firm grasp and love of the Faith to their children in order to prepare them for adult life. We also welcome non-Catholic children who are attracted to the Catholic Faith and wish to participate in collective instruction and worship side by side with their fellow pupils and friends.

The cooperation between school and family in the formation of each child is of paramount importance. In order to be fruitful, this cooperation presupposes harmony in principles and a unity of outlook.

Thus it is expected that our families share the Catholic concept of education, and pledge their commitment to Catholic doctrine in faith and morals.

Tuition Fees

2023-24

Primary Phase: £2000/ term

Secondary Phase: £2450/term

Sixth Form: £2600/term

Bursaries available, subject to assessment.

Boarding Fees

£1000/term full board

£860term weekly board.



The Curriculum: Intellectual Formation

Intellectual formation at St. Michael's is founded on the understanding that human knowledge is a whole. Each curriculum subject addresses an aspect of human knowledge and is informed by all the other subjects. Teachers use the best pedagogical practice, traditional as well as modern, to impart knowledge and guide the learning of their pupils.

Religious Knowledge is an integral part of the curriculum. As pupils gain greater knowledge and understanding of nature and the world about them, through study of the humanities and sciences, they are encouraged to look beyond the visible order of things in order to contemplate the invisible.

Subjects are taught in harmony with the Faith, for it is impossible for faith and reason to be at variance with each other.

Both religious and secular knowledge are necessary for pupils to discern objective reality, in order to make responsible choices in adult life. Pupils assist at Mass each week and on major feast days. The weekly timetable includes two hours of Religious Instruction. Assembly, Form time, Catechism and sermons are the main channels through which PSHE is delivered to our pupils.



Primary phase - Key stage 1-2

The Primary Phase consists of three classes: Infants (Years 1 & 2), Junior 1 (Years 3 & 4) and Junior 2 (Years 5 & 6). Each class has a form teacher who teaches most of the subjects in order to gain a rounded picture of each child. Religious Education is taught every day.

In Key Stage 1 (Infants) phonics and reading are the key focus to learning, with early Maths, Science and topic work. Art, Music and PE complete the curriculum. In Key Stage 2, English, Maths and Science are the core subjects, with History, Geography, Art, French, Music and PE.

Secondary phase - Key stage 3-4

All pupils study for GCSEs in Maths, English, Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Geography, History and French, also known as the English Baccalaureate. Pupils also study Latin and Geography, Religious Knowledge and PE.

Teaching in KS3 focuses on remote and proximate preparation for GCSE examinations (KS4). In order to avoid “cramming” for exams, subject materials are spread over three years rather than two, in order to allow pupils to gain a deeper understanding of subject material.

The sciences are taught with reference to Church Teachings. The best literary materials are chosen through which pupils are able to gain a good mastery of the use of the English language and good insights into the play of human emotions and passions, with reference to true virtue which is the only source of real happiness.





Sixth Form

Sixth form A level studies are offered subject to demand. Mathematics and Biology are most commonly taught. Pupils can also subscribe to correspondence courses in particular subjects.

Sixth Form at St Michael's seeks to turn Catholic boys into Catholic men, ready to tackle a world that tests the Faith. To this end, catechism and a course in Catholic Philosophy is added to pupils' subject choices (five hours a week total).

The Sixth Form is open both to pupils who plan to apply for university and to those who wish to continue preparing themselves for life after school.



Homework

Homework is set daily and given emphasis as a means of consolidating learning in class work and developing independent study. Homework reinforces the lessons of the day and serves to create security in pupils' mind so that they may approach lessons with greater confidence. All homework is to be completed by the deadline set by the relevant teacher. Parents of day pupils should ensure that there is a quiet place and a regular time for homework each night.



Foreign Language Pupils

On entering St. Michael's, overseas students' English levels are formally tested using the Cambridge English Assessment Test. A plan of action is then drawn up to ensure that foreign pupils are able to progress in learning through the new medium of the English language.

EAL (English as an Additional Language) pupils may receive support sessions grouped according to language ability.

Special Educational Needs

The school has a SEN Coordinator who works closely with teachers to support for students with special educational needs. The SENCo helps to coordinate specialized intervention if needed, and monitors the child's progress in answer to the provisions put in place.

Personalized tuition and individualized help is also provided as needed, to help pupils progress through times of academic difficulty or stress.

Behaviour



The school merit system offers a measurable means of reward and encouragement. Pupils receive merit points for behaviour that reflects the ethos of the school - concern for others, diligence in service, excellent answers in class, producing very good work, etc. Pupils may also receive demerits for poor behaviour, such as poor appearance, lack of effort in studies, bad language, etc.

Merits and demerits (which cancel out merits) are logged electronically and pupils are appraised of running totals at assembly. When pupils reach key milestones, they are awarded bronze, silver and gold badges, book tokens or a voucher for the tuck shop.

Poor behaviour is sanctioned by detentions of variable length. Where a detention is not desirable, tidy tasks are common means of correcting or making up for misbehaviour in a quick and efficient manner.



Pastoral Care

Moral and Spiritual Formation

The principle around which our pastoral care of pupils revolves is that of Divine Grace. Good conduct and behaviour are encouraged not only to help pupils to live peacefully and happily together, but also so that they may learn to evaluate their lives in the light of Christ's injunction: "Be you therefore perfect, as also your heavenly Father is perfect." (Matt. 5:48)

Pastoral care seeks to facilitate the growth of natural and supernatural virtue. Good practice and behaviour are actively encouraged, promoted and rewarded. By reminding pupils of their duty to always contribute to the service and betterment of the institutions they are part of (family, school, club), pupils become aware of their civic obligations to the Common Good of society. Before we take, we must first give.

Conscious of the injury of Original Sin, and man's innate tendency to seek his own

good in opposition to the good of others, and against God's will, our pastoral care includes supernatural means that help to overcome selfishness and pride. Pupils assist at a weekly school Mass and Benediction. Boarders recite their daily Rosary in company with the religious community.

With four resident priests, pupils have easy access to everyday pastoral advice and support, and are able to receive sacramental absolution whenever they wish.

Daily routines are carried out under the supervision of priests and teachers, and under the loving gaze of the crucifix that hangs in every room. The constant availability and cheerful company of the priests and staff help pupils to integrate their Faith into every aspect of their daily lives. Relations are easy and outcomes happy.



Cadets



Saint Michael's Cadet Force is an important part of pupil formation. Cadets learn valuable skills such as drill, fieldcraft, navigation, first aid, team work, camping and community service." The school also hosts a Cadet Band. Saint Michael's Cadet Force helps to bolster the sense of order, duty, community and service so necessary to the formation of youth





Form Tutors

A Form Tutor supervises each year group and provides individualized care and support for each of their students. Form Tutors are the first point of call for pupils in need and also the first to address any issues that are affecting their pupils. They communicate with other staff where appropriate, to relay information about pupils in their form group that could affect them in their studies or relationships with others.

Small numbers

Small class numbers allow teachers to tailor their lessons so that pupils are focused and engaged whatever their academic level and talent. The small size of the school allows for a family atmosphere where no pupil is ashamed of seeking or providing assistance.

Community Prayer

Community prayer, in particular Holy Mass and Rosary, and before each lesson, are a magnificent incentive for good. They are not mere formalities, but an illustration and enactment of the child's Faith that naturally pervades every aspect of their lives.

Priests

St. Michael's School is blessed with the presence of four priests in residence. They are available in and out of the classroom, and are in charge of the boarding house.

Clear Purpose

The corner stone of our pastoral care is Divine Grace. Examples, advice, counsel and encouragement from priests and teachers aim to push the child in the pursuit of good. Good is defined as love of God and devotion to the needs of others.

We seek to build up in pupils a true sense of purpose and resilience so that they will be faithful to the Gospel truths that have been entrusted to them. "You are the salt of the earth...you are the light of the world." (Math. 13-14)

Boarding House

St. Michael's operates a boarding house for senior boys (Years 7-11). The boarding house offers a very happy experience for all its occupants. It is a place where life long friendships are forged. Boarding life is divided between recreational activities, supervised study time, house duties and visits to places of interest. Boarders assist at Holy Mass on Saturdays and Sundays and pray the Rosary daily. The school offers a range of evening clubs according to availability: art classes, sport competitions, woodwork, STEM and computing. An important activity is St. Michael's Cadet Force and Cadet Band, which help to cultivate habits of order, discipline and camaraderie among peers. The small number of boarders allows for a strong family atmosphere. Meals, study,

prayer and recreation are taken in common with the priests, who are always present and accessible. Foreign pupils are able to integrate with ease.

The spacious grounds and surrounding countryside allow for outdoor games and walks.

Pupils have access to a school phone and to Skype in order to stay in touch with their families. Internet access is always supervised, and kept to a minimum. Weekends usually include an age-appropriate film and a documentary. The tuck shop is very popular!

Each half-term includes one or two exeat weekends.



Primary Timetable

8:30	Schools opens
8:50	Children to class for reading, Registration
9:00	Lesson 1
10:00	Assembly/Form
10:40	Lesson 2,3
11:20	School Mass (Wed)
12:30	Lunch, Recreation
13:30	Lessons 4,5
15:15	End of School Day
15:20	Benediction (Thurs)

Weekly Class Distribution

KS1-2

- English: 5 hours
- Maths: 5 hours
- R.K.: 3 hours
- History: 1 hour
- Geography: 1 hour
- Science: 2 hours
- French: 1 hour

Secondary Timetable

8:40	Registration
8:50	Classes
10:50	Break
11:20	Classes
13:20	Lunch
14:15	Classes Resume
15:15	End of School Day
School Mass on Wednesdays	

Weekly Class Distribution

KS3-4

- English: 3 hours (KS3) 4 hours (KS4)
- Maths: 3 hours (KS3) 4 hours (KS4)
- Religious Education: 3 hours
- History: 2 hours
- Geography: 1 hour
- Biology: 2 hours
- Physics: 2 hours
- Chemistry: 2 hours
- Latin: 2 hours (KS3 only)
- French: 2 hours (KS3) 3 hours (KS4)

Boarders' Schedule

8:00	Breakfast
8:35	Prayer, Registration
15:30	Tea
15:40	Bell
15:45	Activities
17:00	Recreation
18:10	Bell
18:15	Rosary
18:25	Supper
19:00	Recreation
19:30	Prep
21:15	Night Prayers
21:45	Lights out lower dorm
22:00	Lights out upper dorm

Journey Options: RG20 9JW



We are just 1 minute's exit off the A34



Trains to Newbury and Whitchurch, Hants.



Mrs Annalisa Webb
Head of Primary



Mr Malliff
Head of Secondary



“We chose St Michael’s school for our children for two main reasons. Firstly, to provide our children with a full Catholic education. Secondly, after meeting teachers and parents and finding out about the school ethos, we felt St Michael’s would provide an antidote for our family to some of the unwelcome demands and influences that modern life places upon children as they grow up in the social media age. We have been very pleased with the way that these two aspects have been fulfilled at St Michaels and also delighted by the care and quality of teaching provided by the staff. It has been very encouraging to see our children growing in their faith, learning and friendships at the school.”

(Parents, Primary School)

“We are very blessed to have the opportunity to send our children to St Michael’s. Classes are small and the education is personal and of a very high quality. Our children have flourished at the school; it has given them a wonderful foundation and prepared them well for further/higher education.”

(Parents, Primary and Secondary School)

“I wanted to write a huge thank you for all you’ve done for me over the years, I am very grateful to all the staff at St. Michael’s, for the huge efforts you’ve made for me, for utter dedication and, frankly, heroism in the selfless effort, sacrifice and constant patience you’ve shown all of us students, even the most trying. I cannot thank the priests enough for moulding a humble but resilient safety net and unique education for such a varied bundle of boys despite countless retaliations and obstacles from within and without the school gate. From cosy film nights to deep and lengthy philosophical conversations, and from the chapel to the football ground, you were always there to keep us in check gently but firmly.”

(Former Pupil)

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