



PROSPECTUS

2025-26



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WELCOME TO St Michael's C of E Primary School ~ Playden

We are delighted to welcome you to St. Michael's, our small and friendly school nestled in the beautiful village of Playden, on the edge of Rye. Our historic Victorian building, surrounded by woodland and farmland, provides a unique and inspiring setting for learning. Children enjoy a wonderful outdoor environment, including our playground, playing field, adventure play-frame, and Forest School - all of which support curiosity, creativity, and a love of the outdoors.

At St. Michael's, we pride ourselves on being a close-knit community where staff, pupils, and families work together to create a positive and nurturing atmosphere. Every child is valued for who they are, supported to discover their individual talents, and encouraged to grow into confident, thoughtful, and independent learners.

Our Christian foundation is at the heart of school life, shaping our caring ethos and commitment to supporting both the academic progress and the social and emotional wellbeing of every pupil.

I am proud to be part of such a dedicated and talented team here at St. Michael's, and we look forward to welcoming you and your family to our school.

Mrs Churchill



Fay Churchill
Head of School





Vision and Values

Our vision at St. Michael's is that every child receives an excellent education and feels valued for who they are. We want to lay a foundation of curiosity, tapping into children's natural inquisitiveness about the world around them, and to foster their ambition by recognising and responding to their talents and individuality. We seek to treat everyone in our community *with love, honesty, forgiveness and respect*, rooted in the principle of '**do to others as you would have them do to you**' (Luke 6:31)



Our Aims

- To provide a safe and caring environment supported by Christian values.
- For pupils to have a passion for learning and creativity.
- To understand the importance of teamwork, independence and friendship.
- To appreciate and enjoy the natural environment and the world around us.
- To enable pupils to become happy, successful citizens of the future.

"Pupils and adults know they are nurtured and encouraged to 'do to others as you would have them do to you'. This can be seen right from the start of the school day when there is a warm and personal welcome."

Our school prayer

Dear God ~ Thank you for our ears to listen, our minds to think, our friends to share and our hearts to care. *Amen*

SIAMS – December 2024



“ Welcome to Reception – the beginning of your child’s exciting journey through school.

Here, children learn through play, exploration and carefully planned activities, both indoors and in our outdoor spaces, from the covered playground to the forest school garden.

We share books and stories that spark imagination, explore phonics and early writing through play, and enjoy hands-on activities with number, shape and problem-solving. Learning is fun and full of creativity – from building and role play to music, dance and adventure. Along the way, we build children’s confidence in speaking and listening, encouraging them to share ideas, ask questions and develop a rich vocabulary.

We work closely with parents, sharing updates and suggestions so you can celebrate your child’s achievements and support their learning at home. Above all, Reception is about nurturing confidence, curiosity and a love of learning that will last a lifetime, laying strong foundations for future success.

Joining Reception



Mrs Isted
Class Teacher

Transition to School

We recognise that the jump from pre-school or home is a big one for your child, that's why we aim to make it as easy as possible through a well thought out transition programme. This typically includes:

- 1:1 Parent meetings before you start to get to know you and your child.
- Stay and play sessions in the term before joining to get familiar with the environment and meet new friends.
- An invitation to social events such as the summer fair to get to know our school community before you join.
- A gradually increasing timetable over the first week, allowing your child to get used to their time at school and the different stages of the school day.



“Staff in early years explain learning clearly and model communication accurately. This helps children to develop the skills and knowledge they need. Children in early years are well prepared for Year 1. They learn important skills of communication that allow them to express their ideas and can apply them accurately.

***Early Years Provision ‘Good’ –
Ofsted 2025***





Our children are well supported by our school community. From parents and volunteers to churches and local organisations - helping them grow into confident, well-rounded individuals ready to play their part as citizens of the wider world.

Church Links & Christian Ethos

Our school has a caring and inclusive Christian ethos. We have strong links with our local churches in Playden & Iden. We enjoy going to the churches for special services, especially Christmas, Easter and our Year 6 Leavers' service. We are supported by the Rector of Rye, Revd. Paul White and regularly in school by Deacon Michael and the Open Book team.

The Genesis Federation

St Michael's CE Primary is part of The Genesis Federation, with Peasmarch and Beckley CE Primary Schools. Each school maintains its own identity while sharing expertise, resources and training. Together, we support every child's learning and wellbeing.

We are also part of the Rye Alliance, working together to drive school improvement across the local area.



Our School Community

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Playden School Association (PSA)

Our PSA, a voluntary group of parents forming a registered charity, works together with staff to enrich school life. The PSA welcomes volunteers at any time, however much or little support you can provide – this is a lovely way to get to know our school community and feel part of something special at the same time as creating opportunities for the children.

Thanks to their dedication, the PSA has recently funded class trips, gifted Christmas books to every child, provided equipment and much more. They also organise family centred events throughout the year from fundraisers to activities and social events that build community spirit and create memories our children will treasure for a lifetime.



Our Wider Community

From emergency services to local authors, drama groups and charities, our pupils benefit from rich links with the local community. These experiences broaden horizons, encourage curiosity and show children the value of belonging to something bigger than themselves. In return, our children work hard to support their community too – for example collecting donations for the local food bank as part of our harvest festival celebrations, taking part in charity fundraisers and learning the importance of giving back.



Our Classes

With our small class sizes, every child is known and supported as an individual. Class structures may be varied year-on-year as we create a bespoke learning environment that is specifically tailored to the cohorts at the time.

Explorers: Reception

It is here that our youngest children start their school journey. We have a lot of fun while we are learning – **exploring** ideas, books, words and the world around us to lay the foundations for our future learning.

Enquirers: Year 1 & 2

In Years 1 and 2, our young **enquirers** build on the strong foundations of the Early Years, beginning to apply their developing core skills across a broad and balanced curriculum while gaining confidence and curiosity as independent learners.

Investigators: Year 3 & 4

In Investigators we build on our learning from KS1, taking what we already know and **investigating** more deeply and widely. We answer the Big Questions in our curriculum through hands-on activities, research, discussion and debate, developing our knowledge and understanding along the way.

Year 5&6 – “Innovators”

In Innovators our learning builds on prior knowledge, **innovating** with new ideas linked to our termly ‘big question’. Children develop independence by taking responsibility for their own learning through self-assessment and target setting. They also take on roles such as house or sports captains and librarians, and support younger ‘buddies’ across the school. In Year 6 teachers support students through the National Curriculum tests, while also making time for fun, including residential visits that build resilience, teamwork and lasting memories.



Our Learning Environment

Learning in different environments helps keep children curious, excited and inspired. At St Michael's, we take every opportunity to take learning outdoors and beyond the classroom.

Outdoor Learning

We are privileged to have a fantastic Forest School and outdoor learning space used by all pupils. These experiences nurture a lifelong love of the natural world while encouraging healthy risk-taking, problem-solving and self-discovery. Children gain valuable skills such as resilience, confidence, teamwork and self-regulation, as well as learning how to cope with setbacks and a sense of achievement.



Educational Visits

We make the most of our rich local environment with visits to places such as Rye Harbour Nature Reserve and local museums. Every class takes part in trips linked to their topics, providing fresh stimulus and deepening learning. Past visits have included Bedgebury Pinetum, Lullingstone Roman Villa, Greenwich Observatory and The Globe Theatre.



Year 5/6 Residential Trip

Every other year, pupils in Years 5 and 6 take part in a residential visit to an adventure activities centre. Away from home, they experience a wide range of physical and team-building challenges in a safe, supportive environment.

These trips are a fantastic opportunity to develop confidence, independence and self-esteem. Children practise important social skills, learn to work collaboratively and build lasting memories while trying new outdoor and physical activities and hands-on learning experiences.



PE & Sport

At St Michael's we believe every child has the right to enjoy physical activity and to develop the skills, confidence and motivation to stay active for life. Our PE curriculum aims to inspire pupils to succeed and excel in competitive sport and other physically demanding activities, while also helping them to become physically confident in ways that support their health and fitness. Alongside this, we place a strong emphasis on values such as fairness, respect and teamwork.



Sporting Opportunities at St Michael's

- A dedicated Sports Coach
- Multi-use games area, adventure play frame and bouldering climbing wall
- After-school clubs for football, rugby and multi-sports
- Inter-school team tournaments
- Swimming lessons
- Specialist sessions with visiting sports experts (recent highlights include skateboarding and martial arts)
- Excursions such as sailing, paddleboarding and windsurfing at Rye Watersports



We are proud to hold the **Platinum Activemark Award** for exceptional delivery of PE and sport.





Wraparound Care

Breakfast Club

We offer breakfast club Monday to Friday from 8am. Breakfast club is a safe and relaxed place to start the day with a healthy breakfast and time to play with friends. The fee is £4.50 per child, per session.

After School Clubs

Choose from a clubs to suit a range of interests, running from 3.30 to 4.30pm each day.

- Monday – Playden Youth Club*
- Tuesday – Drama Club
- Wednesday – Sports Club
- Thursday – Rugby Club
- Friday – Multi-sports Club

**there is a £4 fee for this session only. All other sessions are provided free of charge to parents either by volunteers or funded by the Sports Premium.*



Our Day

8.45 - 9am	Our Day Begins by greeting children at the gate before they join their class for early learning and registration.
9am	First Morning Lesson(s)
10.20	Break
10.35	Collective Worship
11am	Second Morning Lesson(s)
12.00	Lunch
1pm	Afternoon Lesson(s)
3.15 - 3.30	End of School Day



Support for all learners

At St Michael's, our curriculum and care is designed to help every child thrive.

Our learning is ambitious and aspirational for all students, providing opportunities to extend thinking, stretch abilities and explore individual talents, including those who may learn beyond age-related expectations. As a small school, we know our children well and celebrate diversity and individuality, encouraging respect, equality and inclusivity, and we believe that every child has the chance to shine.

For those with additional needs our SEND provision is led by our experienced SENDCO, Mrs Fay Churchill, who holds the National Award for SEND Co-ordination. She works closely with staff and families to ensure children receive personalised support through regular reviews, tailored provision, and, where appropriate, input from specialist agencies. Medical needs are also carefully supported, with individual health care plans, trained staff and bespoke arrangements where necessary.

**A place
where all
learners can
thrive**

“The school knows its pupils well. This helps them to identify the needs of pupils quickly, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND)”.

- Ofsted 2025

Further details of our SEND provision can be found in the SEND Information Report on our school website.

School uniform

At St. Michael's we take pride in our presentation and expect all children to wear the correct school uniform as follows:

- Burgundy jumper or cardigan (school badge preferred, but optional)
- Grey skirt, pinafore or culottes
- Grey trousers or shorts
- White polo shirt (school badge preferred, but optional)
- Black shoes with appropriate fastening. No trainers, sling-backs or boots.

Summer wear

- Red gingham dress
- White polo shirt (school badge preferred, but optional) and grey skirt or shorts

PE kit

- Coloured T-shirt according to the pupil's House - blue, green, yellow or red (with school badge preferred, but optional)
- Black shorts or black joggers (may be worn in winter)
- Black plimsolls or sports trainers

All pupils should have a school-book bag, colour of your choice (school badge preferred, but optional).



School Meals

Our school meals are cooked on site and are catered for by Chartwells. Children can choose whether to have a cooked midday meal or bring a packed lunch. A wide variety of fresh, seasonal, hot meals are prepared daily - from roast dinner to fish finger Friday! There is always a vegetarian option as well as baguette or wrap with a choice of fillings as well as a jacket potato option.

All pupils in Reception and Key Stage 1 are entitled to a free school meal and healthy mid-morning snack every day through the Government's 'Universal Infants Free School Meals' initiative.

Please note: With a number of children having severe allergies, we want to keep our school safe therefore packed lunches should be free of nut products.



Wellbeing

Just as everyone has physical health needs, we also all have emotional needs, and we work hard to help children build resilience and develop a positive attitude to mental health.

Our nurture room, *The Snug*, provides a safe space for pupils to learn strategies to manage emotions and develop self-regulation. We also use the *Zones of Regulation* framework across the school, helping children recognise and regulate their emotions, with parents encouraged to use it at home too.

In addition, we hold dedicated *Wellbeing Days*, where pupils take part in workshops and activities designed to support their mental and emotional health.

We are committed to the safeguarding of all children, following the principle that “*it could happen here*”, and we make the safety and protection of every pupil our highest priority. If a disclosure is made or if a member of staff or student has a concern, we follow the East Sussex County Council advice which can be found in the Safeguarding Policy available to view on our website.



“Pupils enjoy learning at this warm and friendly school. They feel happy and safe. One pupil, reflecting the views of many, said, ‘**The best thing about the school is that we look after each other.**’ This is evident in the polite and courteous behaviour of pupils.”

Ofsted - 2025

Our Approach to Behaviour

At St Michael’s we believe that positive behaviour grows from strong relationships, consistency and respect for others. Rooted in our Christian values of love, honesty, forgiveness and respect, our **Therapeutic Thinking** approach focuses on helping children understand their feelings and make valued behaviour choices. Staff model positive behaviour, give clear expectations and use restorative practice when things go wrong. In this way, children develop self-discipline, resilience and the social skills needed to be successful learners and caring members of the community.



Working with Families

We believe children thrive when home and school work hand in hand.

We involve families in school life as much as possible from invitations to our church services, performances, workshop, weekly celebration assemblies and special events where learning and achievements can be shared.

We invite parents to regular celebration afternoons where they can come into the classroom to see their children's work and hear all about what they have been learning, as well as bi-annual 1:1 parents' evenings with the class teacher discuss progress. Our goal is free exchange of information at all times between staff and parents.

We know that children benefit greatly from the mutual support of parents and teachers, and we value the encouragement families give at home – particularly with daily home reading. We also provide home access to Apps that support maths and spelling practice. Together, these home-school links build confidence, reinforce key skills and strengthen the partnership that supports every child's progress.



Admission to School

Parents of prospective pupils are always welcome to visit our school with or without their children. Appointments can be made via the school office.

The closing date for applications for September 2026 starters is 15th January 2026.

We currently admit 15 children into the school. All admissions, including mid-year moves, are dealt with by a common application form submitted to the local authority. Typically, when selecting your choice of school, you are encouraged to select up to three preferences.

For further information please visit www.eastsussex.gov.uk/educationandlearning/schools/admissions/





Our Team

St. Michael's is a special place to work. Visitors often comment on the warmth and purposeful atmosphere they feel when they walk around the school. All of the staff are part of a dedicated team who are incredibly hard-working and committed to making a difference. The level of care they show to all our pupils is second to none.



Head of School
Executive Headteachers

Fay Churchill
Lison Smart & Simon Thurston

Class
Teachers

Reception & Year 1
Vicky Isted

Year 2
Abbe Whittle

Year 3 & 4
Rebecca Debrett &
Samantha Duly

Year 5 & 6
Kirstie Theobolds

Teaching Assistants
Sports Coach
Office Manager
Bursar

Claire Bennett, Tina Cooke, Yvette Foster, Clare Kirkham & Fran Rattray
Mr Leon Mendes
Denise Sheppard
Sam Holland

Get in Touch

Please do not hesitate to contact the school if you have any queries or require additional information. **We will be pleased to welcome you.**

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