

Inspection of St Michael's C of E Primary Academy, Handsworth

Piers Road, Handsworth, Birmingham, West Midlands B21 0UX

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 September 2021

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy attending this school. They are happy and feel safe. Staff provide high-quality care rooted in the school's values of 'community, aspiration, learning and love'. The school has a new headteacher and several new teachers this term. They have all settled into the school quickly and have made a great start to the year.

Pupils behave well in school. They want to learn. They are taught to treat others how they would like to be treated. Most do so. Bullying is rare in school. Pupils trust the school's adults to help them when they have problems or worries.

All staff want pupils to have the best possible education. Most pupils learn well in reading, writing and mathematics. Leaders have recently made big changes to how the other subjects are taught. Their plans are ambitious, but it is too soon to know how well they are being put into practice and how well pupils are learning in these subjects.

In the early years, leaders are still making plans for how children will learn. These plans have not yet been finalised or put in place.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

At the time of the inspection, the headteacher and deputy headteacher had been in post for only three weeks. In that short time, they have provided clear leadership and established consistent routines. Staff told inspectors that they 'know what they should do and why they are doing it'. The school's staff form a united team, committed to seeing the school improve.

Five teachers joined the school at the start of the year, in addition to the headteacher and his deputy. Because of this, the headteacher and deputy headteacher have taken on almost all responsibilities in the school. They know that this cannot continue in the long term. Other staff will take on responsibilities in due course.

Pupils learn well in English and mathematics. Reading has been a priority in the school for some time. Staff, including those new to the school, have good expertise in teaching phonics. Pupils read books that reflect their ability to sound out words. In mathematics, pupils learn the basic skills of arithmetic. Teachers are now encouraging them to think more deeply when solving mathematical problems.

Leaders have changed the way that subjects other than English and mathematics are taught in key stages 1 and 2. They have put in place ambitious and well-organised learning schemes. These include detailed guidance and support for staff about what pupils should learn and remember. Leaders have designed learning units that are based on the school's values and that will be relevant to pupils. For example, one history unit focuses the experiences of the Windrush generation.

However, teachers have only very recently started to teach these units. It is too soon to judge whether pupils are learning well in these subjects.

Staff from the Birmingham Diocesan Multi-Academy Trust (BDMAT) are supporting the school to put in place learning schemes in the Reception class. This work has been too slow, and plans were not ready for the start of the year. Leaders know that putting these plans into practice is their top priority. Children in Reception are happy and safe. They are learning, but their learning is not planned well enough.

Staff provide effective support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Teachers take pupils' needs into account when planning learning. Teaching assistants know pupils well. They skilfully help pupils with SEND to access the same learning as their classmates.

Pupils in all years, including Reception, behave well. They enjoy coming to school and they are keen to learn. They are kind to each other and respectful to adults. For example, they know that one of the school's values is love. Moreover, they know that this means they should 'forgive and forget' if they fall out with their friends.

Staff put great emphasis on pupils' personal development. It is planned throughout the curriculum. For example, pupils are taught 'oracy'. They learn how to express themselves well when constructing a spoken argument. This helps to improve pupils' confidence and self-esteem.

Members of the local academy board (LAB) possess considerable educational expertise. They are well placed to support and challenge the school's new leaders.

BDMAT provides the school with effective support in several areas. BDMAT staff have successfully supported the school with the transition to new leadership. However, their support has not proved successful in developing a strong curriculum in the early years. Leaders anticipate the curriculum being in place shortly.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

All staff know that keeping pupils safe is their top priority. Leaders have trained staff thoroughly, for example devoting a day to safeguarding before the start of term. As a result, staff are alert to the signs that pupils might need extra help. They pass on concerns to leaders who ensure that pupils get the support they need. Leaders make appropriate use of outside agencies.

BDMAT staff provide excellent advice and guidance to leaders about safeguarding. They also regularly check that safeguarding procedures are effective and up to date, reflecting the most recent statutory guidance.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders have put in place revised curriculum plans for all subjects in key stages 1 and 2, except English and mathematics. It is too soon to know if the revised curriculum is being taught well and whether pupils are knowing and remembering more as a result. Leaders should ensure that the revised curriculum is implemented effectively. Governors should also assure themselves of this fact.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have taken on almost all responsibilities in the school. Governors and leaders have not yet prioritised the areas in which the school needs to improve. There is a risk that senior leaders try to do too much at once and that key improvement areas do not get the attention they need. Leaders and governors should set out and focus on the school's improvement priorities. They should ensure that there is sufficient leadership capacity in the school to address these priorities.
- The early years curriculum is not as well planned as the curriculum in the rest of the school. Unless this is remedied, children will not make the progress that they should in their Reception year. Leaders, supported by BDMAT, should ensure that there is a strong curriculum in the early years so that children make the progress they need in order to be well prepared to start Year 1.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

If you are the school and you are not happy with the inspection or the report, you can [complain to Ofsted](#).

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	138433
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10201062
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	177
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair	Sarah Smith
Headteacher	Philip Hynan
Website	www.stmich21.bham.sch.uk
Dates of previous inspection	22 and 23 January 2019, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher joined the school on 1 September 2021. He is the school's fourth headteacher since its last inspection in January 2019.
- All teachers currently employed in the school have joined the school since its last inspection. The deputy headteacher and five teachers joined the school on 1 September 2021.
- The school is a Church of England primary school, within the Birmingham Diocese. Its most recent section 48 inspection took place in March 2018.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation.

- Inspectors met with the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. They also met with two governors, including the chair of the LAB, and one trustee. They held

discussions with the chief executive officer of BDMAT and with three other staff from BDMAT.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history and geography. For each deep dive, inspectors met with subject leaders, looked at curriculum plans, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors considered safeguarding by meeting with the headteacher, who is also the designated safeguarding lead, scrutinising policies and records relating to child protection and examining the safeguarding checks made on staff before they join the school.
- Inspectors spoke with several members of staff, including those who have recently joined the teaching profession. They considered the eight responses from staff to their online inspection questionnaire.
- Inspectors spoke informally with pupils at breaktime and lunchtime. They met more formally with two groups of pupils.
- Inspectors spoke with parents at the start of the day and considered the small number of written responses to Parent View, Ofsted's online inspection questionnaire.

Inspection team

Alun Williams, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Susan Ray

Ofsted Inspector

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