

Inspection of St Michael's Church of England Primary School

Nantmel Grove, Bartley Green, Birmingham, West Midlands B32 3JS

Inspection dates: 18 and 19 October 2022

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Requires improvement

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy and feel safe at St Michael's. They develop positive relationships with staff and each other. As one pupil said, 'we have lovely teachers who help us to learn'.

Leaders have woven the four 'R's of ready, responsible, respect and resilience into all aspects of school life. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' learning and their behaviour. Pupils rise to these expectations. They show positive attitudes to learning so lessons are rarely disrupted. Pupils behave well in class and around the school. Poor behaviour choices and incidents of bullying are rare. Pupils know that adults will deal with these if they happen.

Leaders and teachers encourage pupils to embrace diversity and difference across the community. Pupils learn to reflect on aspects of faith and equality with sensitivity and respect. They know that equality means 'accepting that everyone is different and treating everyone the same'. Pupils describe their school as being 'a school for everyone'.

Pupils like the words 'aspire' and 'courageous' in the school's vision because it helps them to be confident when trying new things. They have many opportunities to take on responsibilities such as becoming prefects, science ambassadors or eco-warriors. They work together to collect house points for their teams.

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

Leaders have designed a curriculum that is ambitious for all, including pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders have carefully planned the content and sequence of learning in most subjects. In these subjects, pupils gain the knowledge and skills they need to achieve well. For example, in history older pupils can remember facts from their previous study of the Romans. However, in a minority of subjects, the curriculum design is being redeveloped.

Teachers use a range of techniques to help pupils learn. Lessons regularly begin by reviewing pupils' previous learning. Teachers regularly check what pupils know, which helps them to spot mistakes quickly. For example, in physical education (PE), teachers often stop the activity to allow pupils to demonstrate to each other. This helps pupils to remember what they are learning. In history, pupils have chances to deepen their understanding by debating 'big' questions such as 'was Julius Caesar really inspirational?'

Leaders identify pupils with SEND quickly. These pupils receive carefully planned support. Teachers adapt materials for pupils with SEND and adults provide extra support in the classroom. This helps these pupils to learn the curriculum.

Reading is a high priority. Leaders recently introduced a new programme for teaching phonics and reading. This is making a positive difference to how well children read. All staff have the training they need to deliver the phonics programme well. Children in Reception begin to learn sounds early in the autumn term. These children and older pupils practise their learning before moving on to new sounds. They read books that match their knowledge and understanding. Teachers enjoy reading to pupils every day. Pupils enjoy the wide range of texts that are read to them.

Children get off to a good start in Nursery and Reception. Leaders have planned a curriculum that meets the children's needs and prepares them successfully for Year 1. Adults focus on ensuring that children learn and use new words every day. This helps the children to develop better communication skills. The children love exploring their exciting environment. They take turns and play happily. The children learn that 'happy minds and healthy bodies' help them to learn.

Pupils have many opportunities to learn more about the world. Leaders plan trips that link to school values and to what pupils learn in class. For example, a day trip to an outdoor adventure centre developed teamwork and resilience, but also taught pupils PE skills and enabled them to enhance their geographical learning about survival in different environments. All pupils learn to play a brass instrument. Pupils can attend clubs such as sports, drama, 'light the candle' and choir. Each year group raises funds for a charity and older pupils regularly visit a local care home to meet residents. Pupils value these experiences which prepare them well as citizens of the future.

Many parents and carers speak highly of the school. They say that they value the approachable staff and the pastoral care for the pupils and their families. However, some parents have concerns about the way that leaders respond to their concerns and the effectiveness of communication.

The trust and governors provide valuable support and challenge. This helps leaders to improve the school further. Leaders consider the workload and well-being of staff. Staff are highly positive about working at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff are committed to keeping pupils safe. Leaders work with parents and external agencies effectively to ensure that the right help is provided when needed. Staff receive regular safeguarding training and updates. They know how to identify potential concerns and what to do if this happens. Leaders work closely with external professionals to help keep pupils safe. Safeguarding records are well maintained and organised. The curriculum teaches pupils how to stay safe. For example, pupils learn about online safety and how to keep physically and mentally healthy. Pupils are confident to report any worries to a trusted adult in school.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- A small number of subjects are in the early stages of redevelopment. Pupils' learning does not always build on what they already know. Leaders should consider the design and sequencing of the curriculum in these subjects so that pupils know and remember more.
- Many parents appreciate the communication they receive from leaders. However some parents feel that communication between home and school is not always as effective as it could be. Some parents are concerned that leaders do not respond to issues they raise in a timely manner and do not feel fully informed. Leaders, including governors, should ensure that they improve communication between home and school.

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.

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	139174
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10201066
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	443
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Sarah Smith
Headteacher	Jane Bruten
Website	www.stmicb32.bham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	10 and 11 March 2020, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Section 48 inspections were suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic. They restarted in September 2021. The next section 48 inspection of this school will be within eight years of the last inspection that took place in 2017.
- The school is part of the Birmingham Diocese Multi Academy Trust.
- Leaders do not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

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

- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- Inspectors held meetings with the headteacher, senior leaders, curriculum leaders and the SEND coordinator. Inspectors met representatives from the board of trustees and the local academy board.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics, history and PE. For the deep dives, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited lessons, spoke to teachers and pupils and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors listened to a sample of pupils read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors met with the designated leader for safeguarding to discuss the actions taken to keep children safe. The lead inspector reviewed a range of documents, including the school's single central record.
- Inspectors spoke to groups of staff and took account of views shared through the staff survey.
- During the inspection, inspectors met with groups of pupils both formally and during less structured parts of the day.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation on the school's website. They also examined a range of documents including records of governance and documentation relating to pupils' attendance and behaviour.
- Inspectors took account of responses to Ofsted Parent View. They also spoke informally to parents at the school gates and at parent events in school.

Inspection team

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