

# St Michael's CE Academy

Flanshaw Lane, Wakefield, West Yorkshire, WF2 9JA

**Inspection dates** 11–12 March 2015

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Not previously inspected as an academy
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b> <b>3</b>
Leadership and management		Requires improvement 3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good 2
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement 3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement 3
Early years provision		Good 2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Not enough pupils make consistently good progress in their reading and mathematical skills and knowledge as they move through the academy.
- Teaching is not consistently good enough. This is because pupils, particularly the more able, are not always challenged at the level needed to secure their good progress.
- Teachers do not use information about pupils' attainment and progress well enough to plan work that always challenges them.
- Leaders do not check teaching with enough rigour. They do not focus closely enough in their lesson observations on the link between pupils' progress and the quality of teaching. Leaders do not give teachers enough sharply focused guidance and support to help them improve quickly.
- The good skills teachers have are not shared sufficiently well to improve the quality of teaching across the academy.
- Pupils are not challenged to respond to the guidance provided by teachers in their marking as what to do next and what is expected of them to improve their work.
- Middle leaders, such as those in charge of subjects, do not play a big enough part in driving improvement. Middle leaders do not do enough to ensure that new approaches are having the desired effect and are sustained over time.
- Strengthened leadership, including by governors, has not been functioning long enough to secure consistently good or better teaching across the school.

### The school has the following strengths

- Children make good progress in the Reception class and they are well prepared for their next stage in their learning.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs are making good progress.
- The gaps in the attainment of disadvantaged pupils compared to other pupils in the academy are closing.
- The quality of teaching and learning is improving, especially in the upper years.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. Pupils behave well in the academy. They say they feel safe in the academy and that they are looked after well.
- The academy promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development well. Intolerance and discrimination are not accepted.
- The leadership, including governors, are committed to ensuring that pupils' progress and attainment continue to improve.

## Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in 18 lessons, two of which were seen together with the headteacher.
- Inspectors looked at work in pupils' books and records of the learning of children in the Nursery and the Reception classes.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, academy staff, the Chair of the Governing Body and other governors. The lead inspector had a meeting with School Improvement Advisers from representatives of the sponsors: Wakefield Diocesan Academies Trust and Wakefield City Academies Trust.
- Inspectors took account of the 47 responses to Ofsted's online parent questionnaire, Parent View, and the responses to a recent parent questionnaire undertaken by the academy. Inspectors also held informal discussions with parents at the start of the academy day.
- Inspectors observed the academy's work and looked at a number of documents, including: the academy's own information on pupils' current progress, planning and monitoring documentation, records relating to behaviour and attendance and documents relating to safeguarding.
- Inspectors also took account of the 23 responses to the staff questionnaire.

## Inspection team

Andrew Morley, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Lynda Johnson	Additional Inspector
Faheem Chishti	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a larger than average sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils, those eligible for funding through the pupil premium is well above average. The pupil premium is funding to support pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals or who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs is above average.
- The school became an academy in May 2013 following a period in which the predecessor school was in special measures.
- The academy meets the government's current floor standards, which are the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress by the end of Year 6.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching to good or better so pupils make consistently good progress in reading and mathematics by ensuring:
  - teaching, and the resources to support learning, enable all pupils, particularly the most able, to make good progress in all lessons
  - that teaching builds upon what has previously been taught, pupils have opportunity to practise skills, are clear about what they have to do and what they are expected to achieve
  - pupils follow the good advice given by their teachers and have the opportunity to correct mistakes in their work
  - teachers assess pupils' progress in reading frequently enough so that teachers can adapt work to match pupils' needs.
- Improve the impact of leadership and management by:
  - making sure that when leaders check the quality of teaching and learning there is a tight focus on the progress of all groups of pupils and on steps to improve classroom practice
  - further building the skills of middle leaders in driving improvement, especially in ensuring that new approaches are having the desired effect and are sustainable
  - using the good quality teaching in the academy as a resource from which others can learn.

## Inspection judgements

### The leadership and management **requires improvement**

- The headteacher is encouraging all staff, pupils and, increasingly parents to support the academy's drive to secure more consistently good teaching, and to improve pupils' behaviour and their achievement. As a result the academy is now improving at a much faster pace.
- Senior leaders have demonstrated their capacity to improve the academy. They have a clear picture of the current priorities and steady improvement is already being seen in key aspects of the academy's work. Inadequate teaching has been eradicated. This is helping to raise attainment.
- While leaders make regular and systematic checks are made on the quality of teaching, there is a lack of emphasis on pupils' progress in lessons when gauging the quality of classroom practice. Judgements can be over generous at times.
- Leaders have improved the management of the performance of teachers. Training for staff is linked to the academy's most important areas for improvement and teaching has improved as a result. The academy recognises that further improvements to teaching are of the essence in order to eradicate inconsistencies in pupils' progress in different subjects and year groups.
- The academy's system for checking pupils' progress provides leaders with a whole-academy overview of the progress of different groups. However, the information gained is not always used well enough by teachers to ensure suitable tasks are provided to allow pupils to achieve their best or to target work for specific groups of learners, particularly for more-able pupils.
- The senior leadership team, supported by an adviser from the academy group, has taken on most of the responsibilities for reviewing the progress the pupils make and the quality of teaching in the academy. The headteacher is now developing a middle leadership team to share these responsibilities. The academy is providing support to key members of staff to develop in these roles. Some middle leaders check the quality of teaching in their particular areas, but middle leaders have not begin to check the progress different groups of pupils make across the academy.
- Training to improve the teaching of phonics (letters and the sounds they make) means that, in the early years and in Key Stage 1, children's skills in reading are improving much more quickly than in the past.
- Leaders have ensured that the strengths in supporting disabled pupils and those with special educational needs have been sustained. Staff work well in teams to provide good pastoral care for the pupils. All who work in the academy make sure pupils are treated equally, and that discrimination is not tolerated.
- The academy uses the pupil premium effectively to help disadvantaged pupils and this is raising their achievement so that it is much closer to that of other pupils in the school. A range of enrichment activities, including trips to places of interest, enables pupils' to see the relevance of what they are learning and boosts their interest.
- The curriculum is suitably broad and balanced and there is an effective emphasis on sports and the expressive arts. Clubs and visits are greatly enjoyed by pupils and help to promote positive attitudes and healthy lifestyles.
- The primary school sport funding successfully supports pupils' well-being and is increasing their involvement in sporting activities. Governors carefully check that funding is being used to good effect to improve the teacher's skills in teaching physical education and sport.
- The academy successfully promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are sensitive to the views of others and keenly take responsibility. Adults are good role models and help pupils to understand that cultural differences are to be celebrated rather than feared. Consequently, pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain.
- The Academy Group is giving extensive support to the academy leaders to help secure more rapid improvement. This is well focused on improving pupils' attainment and the quality of teaching across the academy. It is too soon to see the sustained impact of this help.
- Leaders are increasingly successful at fostering good relationships, tackling discrimination and creating an atmosphere where pupils begin to flourish both socially and academically. Pupils say that behaviour is markedly better since the opening of the academy.
- Parents are positive about the academy. The parents who met with an inspector said the academy is welcoming and that their children are well looked after and kept safe.
- Child protection and safeguarding arrangements are robust and meet statutory requirements.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - The governing body has welcomed new members and has updated training to widen and strengthen significantly the range of skills that now enables them to hold staff to account. For example, governors

- ensure that the pupil premium and the primary school sport funding are spent effectively.
- Governors have reorganised their procedures and fulfil all their statutory obligations, including safeguarding and child protection. They know how to examine and understand information about pupils' progress and are committed to ensuring pupils' progress and attainment continues to improve.
  - Governors visit the academy regularly to check its work rigorously and to talk to pupils and their parents to ascertain their views.
  - Governors manage and check the headteacher's performance accurately and also question staff carefully about the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' learning. Governors develop a good understanding of how underperformance is tackled and ensure that good teaching is rewarded. By these means, governors contribute effectively to the school's judgements on its own performance and assist well in identifying the right priorities and quickening the pace of improvement.

## **The behaviour and safety of pupils** are good

### **Behaviour**

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils behave well in class and their improved and willing contributions in lessons and positive attitudes to learning are playing a key role in quickening their progress.
- Pupils' behaviour in the playground and around the academy is good; they are friendly and polite, show respect, and relate well toward each other and to adults. The playground buddies show great maturity in their role and this is very much appreciated by the other children.
- Academy records show that the few pupils with behavioural and emotional needs are well supported and helped to improve quickly.
- Behaviour in class is good, but at times, when teaching fails to enthuse or challenge them sufficiently, a few pupils lose interest and need help from staff to pay more attention to their work.
- Pupils' attendance is average. This reflects the determined work of the headteacher in working supportively with parents and with pupils to promote the importance of regular attendance. The academy works hard to support families and to reduce absence and lateness as much as possible.

### **Safety**

- The academy's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Pupils feel very safe in the academy and believe that the adults around them take care and look after them well.
- Through activities in the academy and by working with outside groups, pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe near roads and when riding a bicycle. They understand and can go on to illustrate why they need to be careful about sharing personal information when playing games or using social media sites.
- Pupils are very aware of the type of unkind behaviour that constitutes bullying. They say that there is very little bullying in school; although pupils do fall out, they quickly make friends again.

## **The quality of teaching** requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement because it is not consistently good or better. Although there is an increasing proportion of good teaching, evidence in pupils' work indicates that teaching over time is inconsistent in its quality.
- Teachers do not always expect enough of pupils so that they can consistently achieve well. Work does not always provide the right level of challenge for pupils. Sometimes, it is too easy for the most-able pupils.
- The teaching of phonics in the early years and Key Stage 1 has improved greatly and this is helping to improve pupils' reading and spelling. However, the teaching of reading is not consistently good in Key Stage 2. Opportunities for pupils to develop reading skills are not systematic and teachers do not assess pupils' progress in reading frequently enough so that they can adapt work to match pupils' needs.
- Pupils' progress in mathematics is slow for some because they are not consistently given opportunities to apply their learning of new concepts within problems and to investigate more deeply.
- Teachers mark work diligently and are beginning to make better use of feedback to help pupils improve their work. Teachers congratulate pupils on something done well and provide guidance on how to make their work even better. However, teachers do not always give pupils the opportunity to respond to this good guidance.
- Although the quality of teaching is not consistently good, pupils' books show that learning is benefiting

from improved teaching in the current year, particularly in writing.

- Children in the early years make good progress because of good teaching and the range of activities that promote high levels of engagement and imaginative play.
- Teaching assistants are well directed and skilled at asking questions, especially when they are working with individuals or small groups. This provides good classroom support, especially for pupils with special educational needs and it allows these pupils to play a full part in lessons, ensuring that they have at least as much opportunity for success as others.

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Pupils' achievement requires improvement because progress across the academy is not consistently good.
- The proportion achieving a good level of development by the end of early years in all areas of learning is increasing and is now in line with the national average. This represents good progress during their time in the early years and prepares them well for the next stage of their education.
- Pupils make good progress in phonics (letters and the sounds that they make) in the early years. In 2014, pupils achieved an above average standard in the phonics check at the end of Year 1 and Year 2. However, this is not impacting fully on attainment in reading at Key Stage 2.
- At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics was below the national average in 2014. At the end of Key Stage 2, attainment showed a similar picture, particularly for the most able pupils. However, there are signs that pupils' progress is accelerating in all three subjects.
- The achievement of the most-able pupils requires improvement because they are not always challenged well enough. Not enough of them attain the higher levels at the end of Key Stage 1 or Key Stage 2. When they are given the same work as others, their skills, knowledge and understanding do not improve quickly enough.
- The progress made by disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is similar to others in the school. There are some pupils who make good progress. Test results and pupils' progress data show that effective support helps these pupils to do as well as others in the academy.
- The gap between the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and that of others in the academy is closing steadily. While the attainment of disadvantaged pupils is becoming similar to others in the school, their progress is uneven. These pupils make the best progress in Years 5 and 6 because the pupil premium is used to ensure additional support to accelerate their progress.
- However, in national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2014, disadvantaged pupils were around a year behind non-disadvantaged pupils nationally in reading, and writing and about a term and a half behind in mathematics. These pupils made slightly less progress than other pupils nationally in reading and writing but better progress than others nationally in mathematics. The in academy attainment gap was much smaller and disadvantaged pupils were around a term behind others in the academy in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Some aspects of pupils' achievement are good and there is an improving picture across the academy as the impact of recent initiatives begins to bite. Pupils' current workbooks show that progress in writing is already better this year than previously because there is no longer any inadequate teaching.

### The early years provision

### is good

- Children achieve well in the early years because the provision is led and managed well. Children make good progress from their starting points, which for a significant minority are below those typical for their age, especially in language and communication skills, and in their understanding of the world. Nursery children settle in well and quickly become used to the school's routines. They start the day happily and productively and enjoy sharing their learning with adults. Children's skills and knowledge are rising year on year and by the end of the early years children are prepared well for entry to Key Stage 1.
- Children are well motivated and become quickly engaged in learning, particularly in sessions led directly by adults. Children follow classroom routines without fuss and work together well, supporting each other in discussion or when working on activities. Adults check the progress the children make carefully. This information is used to plan activities that develop and extend their learning further. Children of different abilities are then targeted either to support them in their work or to move those higher-ability children on more quickly, for example, in phonics sessions.
- All adults focus on developing the children's language skills by being models of clear spoken English,

explaining new vocabulary carefully and providing an environment in which talk is valued. This, and the attention to children's social development, helps them to settle quickly and to make rapid strides in their development of communication and language.

- Children develop their understanding of phonics quickly because sessions are taught effectively and followed up by activities that enable children to build successfully on what they have learnt. The children have good opportunities to extend their learning in the Reception outdoor classroom.
- The academy works closely with parents, sharing information about how well their children are developing. Parents comment that there is good communication with the adults in the nursery and reception classes.
- The staff make sure that the children are well cared for and safe. The academy ensures the safeguarding procedures linked to the early years provision are in place and monitored carefully.

## What inspection judgements mean

School	Grade	Judgement	Description
	Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
	Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
	Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>



## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	139279
<b>Local authority</b>	Wakefield
<b>Inspection number</b>	449909

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Academy sponsor-led
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	448
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	John McLeod
<b>Headteacher</b>	Forhadul Islam
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	Not previously inspected as an academy
<b>Telephone number</b>	01924 303720
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