

Inspection of St Michael's Church of England Primary School

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

Inspection dates: 10–11 March 2020

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

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are polite and well mannered. They enjoy coming to school and their attendance is good. The displays share a range of learning throughout the school.

Pupils have positive attitudes towards their learning. They understand the new behaviour policy. This is because staff understand it and use it appropriately. Pupils told us that they can now concentrate on their work. Pupils appreciate that staff reward their positive behaviour. While most parents and carers are happy with behaviour in school, some are not. Leaders have not communicated well enough with all parents about how behaviour is now being managed in school. Bullying is now rare, and staff deal with it quickly.

Pupils benefit from lots of exciting experiences. They enjoy outdoor den-building, visit the local library to choose reading books, and visit museums and a local theatre. They also take part in many clubs and go on residential trips to an adventure centre in Shropshire.

In some subjects, the curriculum is not well planned. Teachers do not build up pupils' knowledge well enough. Not all pupils remember enough of the things they have been taught. Children in early years do not get off to a good start in school.

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

The interim headteacher is determined for St Michael's Church of England Primary School to become a good school as rapidly as possible. Parents told us that there has already been a positive change in a matter of weeks. A parent said, 'I am in no doubt the school is being led by a safe pair of hands.' The multi-academy trust has been pivotal in supporting the school through a difficult time.

For the last three years, Year 6 pupils were not achieving as well as they should. Pupils were not prepared for the next stage of their education. This is changing. The newly appointed interim headteacher and newly formed senior leadership team are making a positive difference. They are helping staff to work together and share ideas. Staff morale is now much better than it was.

Children in early years enjoy a range of activities, both inside and outside the school building. Some children stay focused on the activities they are doing, whereas others do not. The curriculum is not shaped in a way that builds on children's interests and ideas. The curriculum is not ambitious enough. Learning journals indicate that adults do not always help children to know more and remember more over time.

Classrooms and outside space are organised to cover all areas of learning. However, adults are inconsistent in how they expect children to use the resources respectfully.

Most pupils learn to read well during key stage 1. Leaders want all pupils to love reading. We saw the lovely results of World Book Day celebrations, when pupils had

created a picture of their favourite book inside a jar. We also saw children in Reception hooked on the stories being read by their teachers. Teachers in key stage 2 use 'big read' and 'little read' sessions to help pupils to read fluently and to answer questions about the text. Pupils' progress in reading is improving, but is not yet good enough.

Some subjects are well led, for example mathematics, science and history. In these subjects, leaders have vision, passion and a strong expertise. As a result, teachers plan lessons in a logical way that enables pupils to build up their knowledge and develop their skills. However, this is not the case in other subjects, such as writing, geography and art. In these subjects, teachers are only now being given the help and training they need to understand the best way to plan and teach topics. Some teachers do not have sufficient subject knowledge to be able to deepen pupils' understanding.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are well supported. This area of the school's work is now well led. Staff now have the confidence and ability to support pupils with SEND effectively.

The arrangements for providing for pupils' personal development are a strength of the school. Pupils learn how to be good citizens. They told us that it is important to understand different religions because we are all equal but may worship different gods. Some pupils lead activities in school, for example caring for the environment in eco-council, and other pupils engage with fund-raising. Pupils have opportunities to follow their interests through a range of clubs.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Pupils feel safe. Parents who spoke to inspectors on the playground agreed. Leaders check on the suitability of staff to work with pupils. Staff attend regular safeguarding training. Pupils know that there is someone to talk to if they need it. Some told us about the 'E-club' and how this helps them if they are anxious.

Pupils understand about staying safe in a range of situations, including knowing the dangers of a nearby reservoir.

Pupils understand how to keep safe online. They know how to use technology wisely, saying, 'Choose when to go online carefully. We want to have a childhood and not start to grow up too quickly.'

Leaders check on the suitability of staff to work with pupils. Staff attend regular safeguarding training.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Some staff do not have the subject knowledge they need. Moreover, they plan lessons in a way that does not enable pupils to build their knowledge over time. This limits how well pupils build on their prior knowledge when they encounter a new concept. Leaders should ensure that all staff have the subject knowledge they need to successfully help pupils.
- Curriculum leaders who have responsibility for the foundation subjects do not yet have the subject knowledge, skills and expertise required to lead their curriculum areas well. Therefore, they are unable to support the whole-school development of their subject. Senior leaders should provide curriculum leaders with the training and support they need.
- Children in early years are not doing as well as they should. Adults across Nursery and Reception do not share an understanding of effective curriculum provision in the foundation stage. They do not interact with children well enough. As a result, children are not being supported to deepen their understanding across all areas of the curriculum. Leaders need to establish a shared vision of an effective early years curriculum and ensure that staff interact effectively with children so that they develop detailed knowledge and skills across the seven areas of learning in an age-appropriate way.
- Relationships across the school are typically strong. However, some parents are unclear about the new way that leaders are managing behaviour. Leaders should strengthen communication with parents so that they understand leaders' vision and plans for the 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 Ofsted Parent View information 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	139174
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10122474
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	444
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Julie Berrow
Headteacher	Jane Bruten
Website	www.stmicb32.bham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	27 February 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This school has a religious character. It received its section 48 inspection in March 2017, when this aspect of the school's work was judged as good.
- The interim headteacher took up her post in January 2020. Other recent leadership changes include the appointment of a new SENCo in September 2019 and a new chair of the local academy board in December 2019.

Information about this inspection

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

- This inspection focused on reading, mathematics, English, history and science. We visited lessons, looked at pupils' work, examined teachers' plans and talked with pupils and staff about the way these subjects are planned and taught.
- We also looked at work from other subjects, including geography, modern foreign languages and art, and spoke with pupils and staff about the school curriculum.
- We met with the interim headteacher, assistant headteachers, SENCo, office manager and senior administrator. An inspector also met with the school

improvement partner, a teaching and learning consultant for early years and the diocesan director of education with the Church of England, Birmingham. A telephone conversation was held with the chair of the local academy board.

- We reviewed the school's records of safeguarding checks and referrals to the local authority. We spoke with staff about how they keep pupils safe. We also asked pupils about how they keep themselves safe and what to do if they have concerns.
- We observed pupils playing at breaktime and lunchtime and spoke to them about their experiences of school.
- We observed the school's work and scrutinised school documents, including those relating to the school's self-evaluation, improvement plans and the school's information on pupils' recent attainment and progress.
- We considered behaviour and attendance information and policies and procedures relating to pupils with SEND, pupil premium funding, sports funding, safeguarding and child protection. We also reviewed the school's website.
- We spoke to parents at the beginning of the second day of inspection. We considered the 31 responses to Parent View and the 30 free-text responses.
- We considered the 33 responses to the staff questionnaire and the 63 responses to the pupil questionnaire.

Inspection team

Kirsty Foulkes, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Susan Helps	Ofsted Inspector
Tracy Stone	Ofsted Inspector

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