

Inspection of St Michael's Catholic Primary School

Guion Street, Off Boaler Street, Liverpool, Merseyside L6 9DU

Inspection dates: 11–12 February 2020

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Good

Personal development

Good

Leadership and management

Good

Early years provision

Good

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

'This is a school where it's easy to make friends', 'this is a caring school' and 'we feel safe here' are typical of the comments that the pupils we spoke to made during the inspection. Pupils at the school speak over 40 languages, come from all over the world and have a wide range of abilities and interests. In the school, they quickly become one large, happy family where they all get on well with each other and take care of each other. The pupils we spoke to said that there is sometimes some bullying but staff quickly sort this out.

Pupils are well behaved in lessons and around the school. They enjoy the range of sporting and other activities on offer, as well as the visits and residential in which they take part.

Leaders are ambitious for the pupils and want them to do well. They work closely with parents and carers, who told us how pleased they are with the school.

Pupils do not always learn as well as they should in some subjects. Pupils' attainment in reading has not been as high as it could be. Leaders are taking action to improve this situation.

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

The teaching of reading is very important within the school. From the time they enter the Nursery year, children learn to identify letters and their sounds. They quickly move on to reading and writing words and sentences. The books they read are carefully matched to the sounds they are learning. By the end of Year 1, most pupils reach the expected standard in the phonics screening check. Those who fall behind receive extra help. Teachers read to pupils regularly. They also encourage pupils to read at home. The number doing so is increasing. For the last three years, the proportions of eleven-year-olds reaching the expected standard in reading have been well below average. The school is using a number of well-thought-through strategies to tackle this but the impact of these has yet to be felt.

Pupils study every subject of the national curriculum. Staff are working hard to ensure that each subject is taught in a logical way so that pupils learn more and remember more. This process is at varying stages of development. In music, it is well established. In art, history and science, the changes are more recent and their impact is not yet consistent

Staff provide good pastoral support for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special needs and/or disabilities (SEND). These pupils take part in all subjects of the curriculum and in extra-curricular activities.

Under the strong leadership of the headteacher, staff work very well as a team. All staff know what is expected of them and are working well together to achieve the

school's aims. All those who completed the questionnaire said that the school is well led and managed and leaders take care of staff's well-being.

The governors are committed and well informed. They know the school's strengths and where improvements are needed. They support the leaders but also challenge them.

The school is rightly proud of the pupils' good behaviour. Pupils enjoy coming to school and attend regularly. They arrive on time and are keen to get started on the day.

Pupils have ample opportunities to contribute to the life of the school by performing roles such as prefects, monitors, anti-bullying ambassadors and 'helping hands'. They contribute to the local community through charitable work. Through their work on environmental issues, they also learn how to make the world a better place. Pupils have opportunities for prayer and reflection and to develop spiritually. They learn about the major world religions. They are taught the difference between right and wrong. Pupils also learn how to be resilient and not to give up when they find life hard.

Early years provision is well led. Children start the Nursery year with knowledge and skills below those typical for their age. Careful assessment ensures that the curriculum is planned to meet the needs of children. Staff also provide helpful advice on how parents can support their children's learning at home. The strong focus on talk helps children develop their vocabulary. The environment in and outside the classroom is very attractive. It provides children with the space and equipment to help them develop their physical skills. Careful planning also ensures that children make a good start in the early stages of reading, writing and counting.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

The pupils and parents we spoke to said that the school is a safe place to be. The site is secure and access to the buildings is carefully controlled. The school checks carefully on the suitability of adults to be with pupils. All staff are trained to recognise possible signs of abuse. They know what to do if they have any concerns about a pupil's welfare. The pupils know how to keep themselves safe in a range of situations, including when using the internet and social media. The school works well with external services to support families who need additional help.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- At the end of key stage 2, attainment in reading has been significantly below average and in the lowest 20% of maintained schools nationally for the last three years. This puts pupils at a disadvantage when they start their secondary

schooling. The school is using a number of strategies to address this issue. There is a need to monitor these carefully and, where necessary, revise them, to ensure that they have the intended impact on raising attainment.

- Some of the improvements to subjects other than English and mathematics are recent. They are not yet having a consistent impact on pupils' learning. There is a need to consolidate the changes to ensure that all pupils learn more and remember more in every subject of the curriculum.

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	104656
Local authority	Liverpool
Inspection number	10082043
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	439
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Jeanette Riley
Headteacher	Alyson Rigby
Website	www.stmichaelscatholicprimary.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	28–29 January 2015

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, a new deputy headteacher and three assistant headteachers have been appointed.
- The school received its last inspection, under section 48 of the Education Act 2005, in December 2017.

Information about this inspection

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

- During this inspection, we met with the headteacher and other senior leaders.
- We held meetings with teachers, support staff and subject leaders.
- The lead inspector held a meeting with seven governors, including the chair and vice-chair of the governing body. He also spoke to representatives of the local authority and the Archdiocese.
- We visited lessons in each key stage. We spoke to pupils from the lessons visited and viewed examples of their work. We spoke to pupils about behaviour and

expectations in the school and observed behaviour around the school and in lessons.

- We considered the 21 responses to Parent View and the 19 responses to the staff survey. The lead inspector also spoke to parents as they brought children to school.
- We examined records in relation to safeguarding and met with the designated safeguarding lead to discuss how pupils are kept safe in the school.
- As part of this inspection, we considered carefully how phonics and early reading are taught at the school. We also considered how the curriculum is planned in mathematics, science, history, art and music. During these activities, we met with subject leaders and visited lessons. We spoke to the teachers about the lessons they had taught and to the pupils about their learning. We also examined examples of pupils' work and listened to pupils read.

Inspection team

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