

Inspection of St Michael's Church of England Primary School, Alkrington

Boardman Fold Road, Alkrington, Manchester M24 1GD

Inspection dates: 24 and 25 November 2021

Overall effectiveness

Requires improvement

The quality of education

Requires improvement

Behaviour and attitudes

Requires improvement

Personal development

Requires improvement

Leadership and management

Requires improvement

Early years provision

Requires improvement

Previous inspection grade

Good

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), said they are happy and feel safe at the school. They make friends. They trust the staff to help them in their learning.

Many pupils attend extra-curricular music tuition at the school. Pupils enjoy other valuable opportunities, such as the gardening club. Recently pupils from the gardening club helped to judge the quality of some local gardens in a community competition. However, leaders' planning for some of pupils' personal development should be better.

Leaders want pupils to learn more and remember more of the curriculum. Pupils said that they enjoy their learning. They achieve well in some subjects but do not learn as much as they should in all subjects.

Pupils said that leaders and staff take bullying seriously and resolve issues quickly and effectively. Pupils are thrilled that several of them have been given special training recently to be anti-bullying ambassadors to help other pupils. That said, low-level disruption by some pupils means that not all pupils can concentrate on their learning activities. This is because some leaders' and staff's expectations of behaviour are not high enough.

Pupils with SEND receive effective support from staff to help them in their work.

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

Senior leaders are clear what further work is required to improve the quality of pupils' education and behaviour. They are acting to improve the school's effectiveness, but it is too soon to see the impact of recent changes.

Governors know the school well. They challenge leaders, for instance asking questions of senior leaders about how the school's curriculum helps pupils to catch up in their learning. They are working closely with leaders to improve pupils' education further.

Leaders are revising the curriculum planning across subjects. In some subjects, this work is nearly complete, and pupils are learning well. They learn new vocabulary. For example, children in the Reception Year learn words such as icy, cold and frozen. However, in some subjects, leaders have not identified the essential small chunks of knowledge that staff will teach. Some assessments of pupils' knowledge by staff are not useful. This is because, sometimes, leaders and teachers are unclear about what knowledge to assess. On occasions, teachers select learning activities that do not develop pupils' knowledge and understanding sufficiently. These weaknesses do not help pupils to learn more and remember more of the planned curriculum.

Many pupils, but not all, learn to read fluently and accurately. The reading curriculum sets out knowledge in a clear, logical order. Staff use assessment well to support all pupils' reading, including those who find reading difficult. That said, inconsistencies in staff expertise mean that not all pupils learn phonics quickly enough to help them to read.

Sometimes, pupils do not stay focused on their learning. This happens when leaders and staff do not plan activities properly or when teachers do not fully understand how to manage low-level behaviour issues. These incidents affect the concentration of other pupils in the class and draw teachers away from teaching. Some pupils told inspectors how this stops them from learning.

Leaders identify pupils with SEND quickly and successfully, including in the early years. Leaders ensure that staff give pupils the individual support that they need, including how to develop their communication and language.

Leaders and staff support pupils to think about their feelings and consider their attitudes towards others. Pupils are polite. They are welcoming to visitors. Pupils contribute to the improvement of the school through meaningful roles, such as being members of the school council. Leaders and staff teach pupils to respect differences between themselves and others. Pupils recognise that families may be different from their own. They mix well with one another at the school. However, leaders' plans for how pupils mix and socialise with people from different backgrounds from outside of the school are less well developed.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders ensure that staff have access to up-to-date information, so they know how to spot the signs of neglect or abuse. Leaders keep careful records of safeguarding issues. Leaders work effectively with other agencies to support pupils and families. Leaders and staff are vigilant to keep the school site safe and secure. Pupils understand how to keep themselves safe, such as when out in the community or when using the internet.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Leaders do not identify all the curriculum knowledge that staff will teach and assess. Some learning activities chosen by teachers do not match what they want pupils to know. This means that children in the early years and pupils do not learn as well as they should in some subjects. Leaders should identify the important information that staff will teach and assess. This will ensure that pupils achieve well.

- Not all teachers of early reading have enough expertise in phonics to help pupils to learn to read fluently. This means that some pupils do not learn to read as well as they should. Leaders should ensure that all staff are fully trained so that they can teach early reading effectively.
- Leaders do not make certain that all staff have high expectations of pupils' behaviour. Some pupils' behaviour distracts other pupils from their learning. Leaders should ensure that all staff work to support pupils to improve their behaviour.
- Leaders do not plan thoroughly enough to develop pupils' experience of meeting with people from different backgrounds from outside of the school. Provision for this aspect of pupils' personal development is underdeveloped. Leaders should work with staff to plan a programme of work that gives pupils high-quality personal development.

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	105822
Local authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	10199631
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	207
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Ryan Lamey-McCarthur
Headteacher	Caroline McKeating
Website	www.stmichaelscemidd.rochdale.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	23 February 2016, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The headteacher and chair of governors are new to the school since the previous inspection.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The most recent section 48 inspection took place in April 2016.

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 pandemic began. The inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with school leaders and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors spoke with leaders, several staff, an officer of the local authority and a representative from the diocese.
- The lead inspector met with the chair of governors and three other governors.

- Inspectors spoke with pupils, including those with SEND, about their experiences of the school.
- Inspectors completed deep dives in these subjects: early reading, mathematics, history, and art and design. They met with subject leaders, visited lessons, reviewed pupils' work and spoke to teachers and pupils. The lead inspector also listened to pupils reading to staff.
- Inspectors also considered information about the school's curriculum in music, physical education and geography and spoke with pupils about their learning.
- Inspectors looked at a range of documentation for safeguarding, including leaders' record of checks of staff's suitability to work with pupils. They spoke with pupils about safeguarding. They also reviewed some of the leaders' safeguarding records. They met with the leaders for safeguarding to discuss how they and the staff work to keep pupils safe.
- Inspectors considered responses from parents to Ofsted's Parent View survey, including free-text responses. Inspectors considered information sent by parents to Ofsted by email. There were no responses to the staff's and pupils' surveys.

Inspection team

Tim Vaughan, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

Mike Tonge

Ofsted Inspector

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