

# Inspection of an outstanding school: Michaela Community School

North End Road, Wembley, London HA9 0UU

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Inspection dates:

10 and 11 May 2023

## **Outcome**

Michaela Community School continues to be an outstanding school.

## **What is it like to attend this school?**

Leaders' expectations for pupils' behaviour, academic work and personal development are exceptionally high. Staff are driven by a shared commitment to giving pupils an excellent education. Pupils rise to the challenges set by leaders and take their education seriously.

Staff inspire pupils to 'work hard and be kind' in line with the school's values. Staff reinforce these standards at every opportunity. Personal responsibility, doing the right thing and duty to others are integral to the school's culture. At the daily 'family lunch', for example, pupils serve each other and tidy up afterwards. This also gives them the chance to develop their social skills as they discuss the 'lunchtime topic' together. Pupils are encouraged to be thankful through expressing their appreciation of those who have helped them.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary. 'Boot camp' in Year 7 teaches pupils about the school's expectations for their conduct and classroom routines. These procedures are embedded across the school. Pupils know, for example, that they are expected to arrive on time with the right equipment and to take part fully in lessons. They strive to do so. Pupils enjoy positive working relationships with staff. They feel safe and know that staff have pupils' best interests at heart.

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

Leaders are highly ambitious for all pupils. They plan a broad and exceptionally rich curriculum, which prepares pupils exceptionally well for the next steps in education. In the sixth form, students have a range of A-level courses to choose from. Leaders ensure that all pupils develop in-depth knowledge and skills across the curriculum. Pupils achieve exceptional outcomes as a result.

Leaders have given great thought to what is taught and when. In younger year groups, they provide pupils with a comprehensive grounding in each subject. For example, in history, staff teach the knowledge that pupils need for them to understand the 'big story'

of British history and world events. In music, pupils learn about music from different historical periods and genres. This includes the works of great composers and modern musicians. In English, pupils develop an appreciation of a rich variety of texts, including a body of high-culture literature as well as contemporary writing. Pupils draw on their foundational knowledge to help them with more complex learning as they progress through the school. For example, pupils in Year 9 used their learning about the Russian Revolution in Year 8 to understand opposing ideologies in the Cold War period.

Teachers are highly skilled here. They know their subjects well and how to get the best from their pupils. They carefully select the resources and learning activities which best support pupils' learning. Teachers help pupils to commit essential knowledge to their long-term memory through frequent recall and reinforcement of prior learning. They check pupils' understanding in class and through formal assessment tests. Teachers are rigorous in picking up and addressing any misconceptions.

Staff have high expectations of all pupils. Leaders have put robust systems in place to identify pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). They provide additional support if necessary. Teachers are adept at ensuring that all pupils achieve highly. Pupils read widely, with allocated time for reading each day and lessons in the school library. Sixth-form students help younger pupils with their reading. Weaker readers have suitable support in place to enable them to catch up quickly

No time is wasted in class. Teachers follow the same classroom routines, which help to create conditions in which pupils can learn, free from any disruption. Staff have an uncompromising approach to any behaviour, or academic work, which does not meet their expectations. Pupils are focused on learning and show resilience when faced with demanding academic challenge. They listen attentively to teachers and each other.

Pupils widen their interests through participation in a range of extra-curricular activities. These include musical and sporting clubs, Mandarin, chess and sign language. Activities such as 'Presentations Club' and debating help pupils to develop their self-confidence and spoken skills. Pupils contribute to school life through roles such as 'future leaders', 'guides' and librarians. They enjoy the various educational outings that leaders organise, including visits to museums, theatres and art galleries. The careers programme is well structured from Year 7 onwards. Pupils learn about different careers, including from the wide variety of speakers who visit the school.

The school is very well led and managed. Staff are proud and happy to work here. Leaders make sure that all staff feel valued and part of the school community. Staff said that the strong sense of teamwork helps to make the workload manageable. Trustees work closely with the school's leaders and provide them with strong support.

## **Safeguarding**

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders respond promptly to any concerns about pupils' well-being. They take appropriate action and are persistent in getting the right support for pupils. Staff are well trained to identify any signs that pupils may be at risk from harm.

Pupils have trusted adults at school that they can turn to if they need any help, including a trained counsellor. Pupils receive guidance in staying safe in different situations. They are taught about online safety and the importance of a healthy lifestyle. For example, pupils are encouraged to do a 'digital detox' to help with their emotional well-being.

## Background

When we have judged a school to be outstanding, we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains outstanding. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be outstanding in May 2017.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	140862
<b>Local authority</b>	Brent
<b>Inspection number</b>	10268005
<b>Type of school</b>	Secondary Comprehensive
<b>School category</b>	Academy free school
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	11 to 19
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Gender of pupils in sixth-form provision</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	698
<b>Of which, number on roll in the sixth form</b>	90
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	Board of trustees
<b>Chair of trust</b>	Chidi Amadi
<b>Headteacher</b>	Katharine Birbalsingh
<b>Website</b>	<a href="http://www.michaela.education">www.michaela.education</a>
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	23 and 24 May 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

## Information about this school

- The number on roll has increased since the previous inspection. The school now has pupils in all year groups from Year 7 to 13. The sixth form opened in 2019.
- Leaders currently use one registered alternative provider.

## Information about this inspection

- 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 met with the headteacher and other school leaders, including those responsible for safeguarding and for pupils with SEND. The lead inspector held a remote discussion with three trustees, including the chair of trustees.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: English, science, history and mathematics. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors also spoke to leaders about the curriculum in other subjects. Inspectors reviewed curriculum documentation in art, French, music and physical education, and visited lessons in a range of subjects.
- Inspectors spoke with leaders, pupils and staff about the arrangements for safeguarding and reviewed safeguarding documentation, including pre-recruitment checks and safeguarding records.
- Inspectors observed behaviour in lessons and around the school. Inspectors held formal and informal discussions with groups of pupils from different year groups.
- Inspectors considered responses to Ofsted's online survey of parents' views, Parent View, and to the online staff and pupil surveys.

### **Inspection team**

Jude Wilson, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Russell Bennett

His Majesty's Inspector

Bob Hamlyn

His Majesty's Inspector

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