

Inspection of St Michael's Church of England (Aided) Primary School

The Grove, Flixton, Manchester M41 6JB

Inspection dates: 21 and 22 November 2023

Overall effectiveness	Good
The quality of education	Good
Behaviour and attitudes	Good
Personal development	Good
Leadership and management	Good
Early years provision	Good
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

This school was last inspected under section 5 of the Education Act 2005 16 years ago and judged 'Outstanding' under a previous inspection framework. This reflected the school's overall effectiveness under the inspection framework in use at the time.

From then until November 2020, the school was exempted by law from routine inspection, so there has been a longer gap than usual between graded inspections under section 5 of the Act. Judgements in this report are based on the current inspection framework and also reflect changes that may have happened at any point since the last graded inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are happy to be at this school. They take great pride in showing care to each other. Older pupils place a high value on being able to serve as 'buddies' to those in the Reception class. This helps the younger children to feel secure and well looked after.

Pupils play nicely together and behave well. There are plenty of activities for them to participate in at lunchtimes. These activities are well organised throughout the week, and some are led by pupils who are play leaders. Pupils particularly look forward to their turn on the trim trail and football pitch. The majority of pupils show positive attitudes towards their education. They are focused during lessons and love to learn.

The school has high expectations for what pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), should achieve. In subjects such as English and mathematics, pupils achieve remarkably well by the end of key stage 2. Although this high achievement is not mirrored in some other areas of the curriculum, pupils still achieve well in most subjects.

Pupils appreciate the clubs that are available to them. They spoke positively about the many sports clubs on offer, as well as the craft and gardening clubs.

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

The school has ensured that there is a broad and balanced curriculum in place. It has recently adopted many subject curriculums that clearly outline what pupils are expected to learn by the end of each year. These curriculums identify the crucial knowledge that pupils need to learn and the order in which it will be taught throughout key stages 1 and 2. That said, the school has not been as thorough in breaking down exactly what children in early years need to learn into a logical order. In some areas of learning, it is not clear enough to staff what children in early years need to know, and by when, in order to be fully prepared for Year 1.

In English and mathematics, the curriculum is well thought through and is delivered consistently across the school. As a result, pupils achieve exceptionally well in these subjects. In a minority of other subjects, the curriculum is not fully embedded. In these subjects, pupils do not achieve as well as they could.

In some subjects, the systems that the school uses to evaluate the curriculum are not as robust as they could be. This means that some of the new curriculums are not delivered as the school intends them to be. At times, the school is therefore not aware of some weaknesses in the delivery of these new curriculums, or how well pupils are learning.

Staff use appropriate strategies to check on pupils' achievement in lessons. They provide effective guidance to help pupils to correct any errors or misconceptions.

The school identifies any pupils who might have SEND early. It is particularly adept at identifying any additional needs of children when they join early years. The school ensures that pupils with SEND receive effective support to access the same curriculum as their classmates. This helps pupils with SEND to achieve well.

The school promotes a love of reading through various initiatives. These include the daily story time that takes place in every class. Staff are well trained to teach the school's chosen phonics curriculum. This curriculum is delivered consistently well in all classes. The school has a sharp focus on helping those who struggle with phonics to catch up quickly. It uses assessment information to pinpoint any aspect of the phonics curriculum that pupils are struggling with. Pupils who need extra help are given plenty of support to close any gaps that they have in their knowledge. This helps pupils to develop into increasingly confident and fluent readers.

Pupils conduct themselves well throughout the school day. Most lessons provide calm and purposeful environments in which to learn. Pupils and staff form positive relationships that are built on mutual respect. Children in early years learn class routines quickly, which helps them to make a positive start to their schooling.

The school prepares pupils well for life in modern Britain. Pupils learn about the diverse world in which they live. They are respectful of others, regardless of any differences. They benefit from curriculum trips that enhance their learning. Pupils engage with their wider community through various projects and charitable events. Recently, pupils formed a partnership with a nearby special school to perform a joint musical concert for their respective parents and carers and families. Pupils develop a secure knowledge of healthy relationships and how their bodies will change over time. They know how to stay safe when online.

Staff are overwhelmingly positive about working at this school. Those who are new to teaching appreciate the support that they receive. The school takes thoughtful action to help staff to manage their workload, such as by providing additional time to complete tasks when new initiatives or systems are introduced. Governors understand their role and carry out their duties effectively.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- The school's oversight of curriculum implementation in some subjects is not as robust as it could be. This means that the school is not assured that some subject curriculums are being delivered as intended and that they are having the expected impact on pupils' learning. The school should review its approaches to

evaluating the effectiveness of curriculum implementation in these subjects and its impact on what pupils know and remember over time.

- In some parts of the early years curriculum, the school has not made clear its expectations of what children should learn. This means that, in these few areas, staff do not have the guidance that they need to help children to build a secure foundation of knowledge in preparation for future learning. The school should complete the design of its early years curriculum so that it is clear to staff the precise knowledge that children need to learn and in what order.

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' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	106350
Local authority	Trafford
Inspection number	10226124
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	245
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Samuel Martin
Headteacher	Alison Drayton
Website	www.smepsflixton.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	26 and 27 November 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- This is a Church of England school. Its most recent section 48 inspection for schools of a religious character took place in January 2018.
- Leaders do not make use of alternative provision.
- There is a before- and after-school club at the school, which the governing body oversees.

Information about this inspection

The inspectors carried out this graded inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

- Inspections are a point-in-time judgement about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school had received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors conducted deep dives in these subjects: early reading, physical education and mathematics. They met with subject leaders and teachers. They visited lessons, looked at examples of pupils' work and talked with groups of pupils about their learning. The lead inspector observed pupils reading to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors also considered the curriculum, spoke with pupils about their learning and evaluated their work in some other subjects.
- The lead inspector spoke with a group of governors. Inspectors also talked to staff about their workload and well-being.
- The lead inspector spoke with a representative of the local authority and a representative of the diocese. The lead inspector also spoke with the school's external improvement partner.
- Inspectors met with the leaders who are responsible for attendance, behaviour and pupils' personal development.
- Inspectors spoke with pupils about their wider experience of school.
- Inspectors looked at a range of policies and documents related to pupils' welfare and education. They observed pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, inspectors: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- Inspectors took account of responses to Ofsted's online surveys for staff and for pupils.
- Inspectors met with parents at the start of the school day and took account of the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments.

Inspection team

David Spruce, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

James Marsh

Ofsted Inspector

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