

Inspection of St Michael's CofE Primary Academy, Handsworth

Piers Road, Handsworth, Birmingham, West Midlands B21 0UX

Inspection dates: 5 and 6 March 2024

Overall effectiveness

Outstanding

The quality of education

Outstanding

Behaviour and attitudes

Outstanding

Personal development

Outstanding

Leadership and management

Outstanding

Early years provision

Outstanding

Previous inspection grade

Requires improvement

The headteacher of this school is Philip Hynan. This school is part of Birmingham Diocesan Multi-Academy Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Christopher Mansell, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Sarah Smith.

What is it like to attend this school?

An abundance of love, care and ambition are evident across this school. Whether you are speaking to pupils, staff or parents and carers, the message is the same: 'We live, love and learn together as a family and as a community.'

The school is transforming the lives of families and pupils. Many pupils join the school at different times throughout the year. Some stay for a little while. Some stay for longer. But what is consistent is the school's determination that every pupil will, and does, do well.

There is a high level of care for every child. This includes family support, nurture and mentoring. Pupils who are new to school benefit from the exceptional care that all pupils receive. Home visits ensure that these pupils and their families get the help they need to settle in swiftly. Behaviour is notably praiseworthy. Not a moment of learning is wasted. All pupils achieve highly across the curriculum.

The raft of additional opportunities provided is a unique aspect of this school. Everyone enjoys this exciting offer. From biking to ballet, sailing to supper club, the urban farm to the food cupboard; nothing is too much trouble for the school. They spot, they seek and they successfully support so many people in so many ways.

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

St. Michael's is a vibrant and diverse school to work and learn in. Leaders create pathways for pupils to realise their potential. Staff give their best to help pupils to be their best. The trust, school leaders and families are committed and successfully working together to bring their vision for all pupils to fulfil their talents to life. This is what makes the school ethos so remarkable. Parents rightly say, 'We are two families united together to bring up our children.'

All pupils enjoy and gain from the vision and values of St. Michael's. The school successfully helps pupils to treasure their education. Pupils learn to attend regularly and to care deeply for themselves and others. They behave beautifully.

The school has thought deeply about what pupils should learn, both personally and academically, at any given time. The structure of the curriculum especially helps pupils who join the school at different points. A high proportion of these pupils are either new to the country or have not previously attended school regularly. They quickly gain the basic skills they need and catch up with their peers.

No matter the subject, pupils' work is detailed, superbly presented and of high-quality academic content. The way the school has developed feedback to pupils is short, focused and makes a very real, positive difference. Pupils can clearly tell you how they are improving in a subject. Staff appreciate the difference this approach has made to their workload.

The dedication and attention to detail in making sure that the curriculum educates about and celebrates the school's cultural diversity is impressive and effective. It sits within and across all subjects. Pupils show respect, understanding and appreciation of the distinct life experiences they bring from their families and their lives.

All pupils achieve exceptionally well. The school's highest expectations are evident from early years upwards. Reception children benefit from skilled staff who guide sensitively, support, model and play with the children. Not a moment passes by without a focus on either social skills or speaking and listening skills. These are interwoven through interesting topics that capture the children's imagination. The depth of learning and 'big words' that children use within their learning in Reception and beyond, is striking. Even more so, given that over half of pupils in the school speak English as an additional language.

This commitment to extending vocabulary and inspiring pupils grows and deepens throughout the school. Pupils' reading ability and understanding are deeply secure. The earliest sounds in phonics in Reception build onwards and upwards. Simple texts become increasingly complex and challenging. Any gaps in learning at any point in time are noted and addressed. Pupils discuss information they know; they recall and explain words from stories and poems in impressive detail and with great enthusiasm.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) achieve equally as well as their peers. There is swift and accurate identification of needs. This, coupled with regular comprehensive training of staff, makes a very real difference. Pupils with SEND receive a rich routine of effective targeted support. This means that they keep up and enjoy the same learning as all pupils. For most pupils with SEND, this is within their class. For a few, 'the Nest' is a calming space. The routine, the learning tasks and the care and support given in the Nest bring out the best for these pupils.

None of the above would be possible without the extensive offer for pupils and their families beyond the classroom. Pupils achieve scholarships in dance and sports. They exhibit their art. They sell produce raised on their allotment. They grow into active citizens who have a social responsibility. The school community knows that it is the combination of the littlest things that make the biggest difference.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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	138433
Local authority	Birmingham
Inspection number	10294583
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy sponsor-led
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	181
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Sarah Smith
Headteacher	Philip Hynan
Website	www.stmich21.bham.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	26 October 2023, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The school provides before-school childcare on site.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- The school is part of the Diocese of Birmingham. The last section 48 inspection took place in March 2018. Section 48 inspections were suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic. They restarted in September 2021. The next inspection will be within eight years of the last section 48 inspection.

Information about this inspection

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

- The inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading, history, science and, art and design. For each deep dive, the 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.

- The inspectors also considered mathematics, English, Latin and design and technology.
- Inspectors listened to pupils read to a familiar adult.
- The inspectors observed pupils' behaviour during lessons, around the school and at lunchtime. They also spoke to pupils about behaviour.
- The lead inspector held meetings with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the special educational needs team. The lead inspector also met with four members of the local academy board, including the chairperson. They also met with representatives of the trust board and Birmingham Diocese.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the lead inspector: 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.
- The inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, and the views of staff from Ofsted's online survey.
- The inspectors also spoke with pupils, parents and staff informally during the inspection.

Inspection team

Kirsty Foulkes, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Sarah Dukes

Ofsted Inspector

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