

Inspection of St Michael's Church of England Primary School

Maple Road, Pelsall, Walsall, West Midlands WS3 4JJ

Inspection dates: 14 and 15 May 2024

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

What is it like to attend this school?

A strong, inclusive ethos is at the heart of St Michael's. Pupils provide a warm welcome to visitors. Many new parents and carers spoke of the welcome they received.

The school sets high expectations for behaviour, and pupils respond positively to these expectations. Pupils treat each other with consideration. They readily share in lessons and play together well on the playground. Relationships between staff and pupils are respectful. Most parents speak highly of staff, with some describing them as going 'the extra mile' to sort out any issues for their children. Pupils feel safe in school and know whom to talk to if they have concerns.

There are high expectations for the achievement of all pupils. These expectations, together with the recent improvements to the curriculum, ensure that pupils continue to achieve well.

The school communicates to parents the importance of pupils' regular attendance. A consultation with the school council ensured pupils understood and appreciated the attendance rewards. This has led to good attendance, which the school is determined to maintain.

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

Since September, the new headteacher has brought staff together to make a significant number of improvements to the school.

The school has designed an ambitious curriculum for all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Where subject curriculums have been in place for some time, teachers' subject knowledge is strong. Teachers usually present new information clearly and pupils achieve well. However, there are a few subjects that are less well established. Pupils' learning in these subjects is not as effective.

The school usually provides pupils with planned opportunities to deepen their knowledge across the curriculum. However, teachers' feedback to pupils about how they might improve their work is not always as helpful as it could be in some subjects. Guidance for pupils to improve their writing skills is less effective and does not consistently lead to better writing. This means that not all pupils develop their writing and editing skills to a standard of which they are capable.

Pupils with SEND are very well supported. Adults give the right amount of assistance so pupils with SEND can access the same curriculum as their classmates. Adults also give pupils time to work out things for themselves so that they become increasingly independent.

The school is ambitious for every pupil to develop a love of reading. This starts when they join the Nursery. Children learn songs and rhymes and enjoy having stories read to them. Phonics teaching begins as soon as children enter the Reception class. Staff are well trained and deliver these lessons well. Staff use assessments effectively to identify which pupils need additional support to keep up. Most pupils gain the knowledge and skills they need to read well. Key stage 2 pupils with SEND, who need further support, receive daily interventions and begin to read with increasing confidence and expression.

Children in the early years benefit from a recently revised, well-planned curriculum. The school prioritises developing children's vocabulary and communication. Children learn to use mathematical vocabulary accurately, which helps them to explain how they have solved number problems. However, not all activities that teachers design engage children well enough. This means some children choose to stay with their favourite activities rather than explore others. Consequently, children miss out on intended learning and do not develop the full breadth of wider knowledge and skills.

The school has planned for pupils' wider development across the curriculum effectively. Pupils know how to keep safe online. Music is a strength of the school. Pupils have the opportunity to learn a musical instrument. The school choir is active in the community and visits are organised to various musical events. Pupils also contribute to school life or the wider community in other positive ways.

Pupils know to treat others with respect. They understand that everyone should be treated equally, regardless of any differences. These are part of the school rules that pupils understand very well and that are evident in their relationships with one another.

Staff appreciate the school's consideration for their well-being and workload. Governors are knowledgeable and skilled. They help to keep the school at the heart of the community.

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 does not ensure that all children in the early years engage with, and therefore learn from, the full range of planned experiences. This means some children do not fully develop their social, emotional and academic knowledge and skills as intended. The school should ensure that teachers create a learning environment where children benefit from the planned curriculum to support their good development.

- Teachers do not consistently provide pupils with the information needed to improve their work. This is especially the case for writing, where pupils are not gaining the editing skills to develop their writing further. The school should ensure that pupils know how to improve their work and respond to teachers' feedback, particularly concerning their writing.

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	104227
Local authority	Walsall
Inspection number	10294510
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	453
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Megan Smylie
Headteacher	Amy Lane
Website	www.stmichaels-pelsall.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	6 and 7 December 2022, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- Since the last inspection, a new headteacher has been appointed and there is a revised management structure.
- The school does not use alternative providers.
- The school has a Christian ethos. It received its last section 48 inspection in 2017 and the next one is due within the next year.

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.
- Inspectors discussed any continued impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.
- The inspectors met with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and the assistant headteacher. The lead inspector spoke with representatives from the

diocese and the local authority and met with governors, including the chair of the governing body.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in these subjects: early reading and phonics, mathematics, science and physical education. For each deep dive, inspectors held discussions about the curriculum, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work. Inspectors also discussed the curriculum and looked at pupils' work in art and some other subjects.
- An inspector observed a selection of pupils reading to members of staff. Other pupils were heard reading during lessons.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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 met with groups of pupils from a range of year groups, including pupils with SEND.
- Inspectors considered pupils' behaviour at various times of the day, including in lessons, around the school and at breaktime and lunchtime.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text responses. Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted's staff survey and spoke to parents at the school gate.
- Inspectors considered a range of other documents, including leaders' plans for improvement, behaviour and attendance records, and governors' minutes.

Inspection team

Anne Potter, lead inspector	Ofsted Inspector
Nicola Price	Ofsted Inspector
Gill Turner	Ofsted Inspector

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