

Inspection of a school judged outstanding for overall effectiveness before September 2024: St Michael's Church of England Aided Primary School

Lower Street, Tettenhall, Wolverhampton, West Midlands WV6 9AF

Inspection dates:

8 and 9 October 2024

Outcome

St Michael's Church of England Aided Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

What is it like to attend this school?

This very well-led and governed school provides pupils with a high-quality education. Whatever pupils' experiences, backgrounds, aptitudes or difficulties, the school has high expectations for their achievement and behaviour. A broad curriculum provides many opportunities to learn new things, both during and beyond the school day. Pupils respond well to this. They engage fully in school life, grow in confidence and achieve well.

The school's commitment to inclusion and ambition for all shines out in many ways. In the special educational needs unit (SEN unit), 'Ark', pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive expert attention. This enables them to make the most of lessons.

Across the whole school, staff manage behaviour exceptionally well. Consistent expectations and routines, coupled with kind actions and encouraging words, support all to do their best. Pupils are taught how to spot bullying and what to do if they are worried about anything. The school's rules are simple and well understood and help to keep everyone safe. Staff deal with any poor behaviour calmly and promptly. This allows everyone to enjoy school. Indeed, pupils are well behaved, respectful and happy. Their attendance is high.

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

This inclusive school does many things well. It is a friendly and welcoming school that aims high.

Sitting at the heart of the school's success is leaders' ambition for all to succeed and

thrive. This is apparent from the start in the school's approach to early reading. There is a well-established systematic phonics scheme that is followed without fail. Staff keep up to date with training. They regularly refresh resources so there are plenty of books for reading in school and at home. If anyone falls behind, staff support them to catch up. In addition, teachers understand the importance of reading aloud to pupils and do so regularly. In short, there is a very healthy reading culture that enables pupils to enjoy books and access the full curriculum.

There is a similarly systematic approach to mathematics. In the early years, children get lots of practice that gives them a secure foundation. Teaching in key stage 1 and beyond builds securely on this. Staff check on learning as an integral part of lessons. They provide pupils with plenty of practice and make sure they are ready for their next steps. This builds pupils' confidence and sets them up to succeed.

The rest of the curriculum is equally well organised, and subject leaders do their jobs well. They have access to subject-specific training and are alert to ways to strengthen the curriculum further. This evaluative approach results in an optimistic team spirit that helps to drive ongoing school improvement.

The curriculum also supports pupils' personal development. In subjects such as physical education, art and design and music, for example, enrichment and extra-curricular activities enhance the core offer. Beyond lessons, pupils are encouraged to participate in a wealth of activities that broaden their interests and build self-esteem. Whether that be inter-school sport, singing in a choir, performing in a show or visiting a gallery, there is plenty going on. Staff check on participation rates and encourage pupils to try new things. Pupils benefit from opportunities to take on leadership roles and have a voice in school.

The school's values and a well-considered personal, social, health and economic education programme also serve pupils well. They are taught the difference between right and wrong and the importance of thinking of others.

The school's support for pupils with SEND is a notable aspect of its work. Staff work closely with a range of other services to identify and meet needs. Recently, and as a result of leaders' outward-looking approach, the school increased its provision for pupils with SEND. This new provision is already showing success and having a positive impact on pupils' behaviour and learning. Looking ahead, leaders are examining ways to strengthen this specialist provision further so that early successes are sustainable.

Communication with parents is a strength. Leaders meet parents at the school gate each day and send out regular newsletters. On top of this, the school invites parents in to learn about the curriculum and to work alongside their children. Parents value this. In their comments to Ofsted, many praised the leadership, care, communication and quality of education provided. Staff express high levels of satisfaction with the workplace culture and the school's ambition for all.

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 SEN unit, 'Ark', is relatively new. Staff still need to adjust aspects of its work to make it stronger so that it meets the specific needs of pupils with greater precision. The school should continue to liaise with other professional services to refine practice. The school should do this in order to strengthen and develop this provision in sustainable ways.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged outstanding for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. 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's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection 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 for overall effectiveness in December 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' 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	104384
Local authority	Wolverhampton
Inspection number	10294513
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	221
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	Sarah Douglas
Headteacher	Kathryn Jackson
Website	www.stmichaelscofeprimary.co.uk
Dates of previous inspection	5 and 6 December 2017, under section 5 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- St Michael's Primary is a voluntary-aided Church of England school. The most recent diocesan section 48 inspection of the school took place in April 2023. The next inspection will be within five years of the previous section 48 inspection.
- The school provides childcare at a before-school breakfast club.
- The school has a SEN unit. It caters for 12 primary-age pupils with social, emotional and mental health needs.
- The school uses one unregistered alternative provision.
- The school plans to convert to an academy in early 2025.

Information about this inspection

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

- The inspector considered published performance data about the school. The inspector also looked at a range of school documents. These included information about pupils' behaviour, attendance, the curriculum, extra-curricular activities, school improvement planning, governance and documents published on the school's website.
- During the inspection, the inspector met with the headteacher, other leaders, school staff, pupils, governors and a local authority school improvement partner. The inspector spoke on the telephone with the chief executive officer of a local academy trust.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the 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 inspector talked with pupils, parents and staff to gather general information about school life. He took account of the responses to Ofsted's surveys of staff's and parents' views.
- The inspector observed pupils' behaviour in classrooms, at lunchtime, on the playground and at other times during the school day.

Inspection team

Martin Pye, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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