

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: St Michael's Catholic Primary Academy and Nursery

Telford Gardens, Merry Hill, Wolverhampton, West Midlands WV3 7LE

Inspection dates:

19 and 20 November 2024

Outcome

St Michael's Catholic Primary Academy and Nursery has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The head of school of this school is Hayley Connolly. This school is part of St Francis and St Clare Catholic Multi-Academy Company, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the Catholic Senior Executive Leader, Toni Ellis, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Christopher Walker. There is also an executive principal of this school, Adam Jewkes, who is responsible for this school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils enjoy school life at St Michael's Catholic Primary Academy and Nursery. They arrive at school on time and ready to learn each day. Pupils are well behaved. In lessons, they listen attentively and want to do their best. Pupils consistently follow the school's 'good to be green' behaviour approach. At social times, pupils are kind to one another. Older pupils enjoy helping younger pupils play kindly together. Staff are on hand to listen to any worries or concerns pupils have. Pupils are safe.

The school is aspirational for all pupils. Reading, writing and mathematics are prioritised from the start. Most pupils achieve well and meet the high expectations the school sets. Wider opportunities, including trips, visitors and clubs, help pupils broaden their interests. Workshops and visits to museums give pupils opportunities to be historians. Art and craft, football, fashion and illustration, and gymnastics clubs are popular with pupils. They enjoy learning new skills. The school makes sure that all pupils benefit from this offer.

Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities in school. Eco-warriors, prayer leaders, school councillors and play leaders develop leadership skills. Older pupils enjoy residential, which help them to develop independence and teamwork skills.

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

The school has designed an ambitious curriculum for its pupils. It sets out the knowledge and skills pupils need to know to be successful in school. Teachers have the subject knowledge they need to deliver the curriculum. They present new learning well. Teachers regularly check pupils' learning in lessons and over time. However, some pupils do not always get opportunities that enable them to learn key knowledge in the depth they should.

Early years staff work effectively with parents to make sure learning builds on what children know and can do. Adults are highly skilled at encouraging and developing language and communication. They encourage children to join in when singing songs and rhymes. This helps children learn to count and learn new words. Adults encourage children to talk about favourite nursery rhymes. Adults encourage conversation such as describing snow when outdoors. Children are kind to one another. They take turns and share. They self-select boots and waterproof clothes for outdoor learning. Children get off to a great start.

Pupils read and are read to regularly in school. Younger pupils enjoy phonics lessons. They practise the new sounds they learn when reading books that match these sounds. Pupils who fall behind are identified quickly and supported to catch up. However, at times, misconceptions are not always picked up and addressed quickly enough such as incorrect pronunciation of letter sounds. This means some pupils who have fallen behind in reading do not catch up to be fluent, confident readers quickly enough.

Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are identified swiftly. Recent work has had a positive impact. Most pupils with SEND now get the help and support they need to be successful in school, for example dyslexia support from external agencies. However, some pupils with SEND rely too much on adult support. This is because work is not sufficiently adapted to meet their needs. This impacts how well some pupils with SEND achieve in school.

The school's personal development offer is a strength. It has been carefully thought through and builds on the school's values. By learning about the value of honesty and the school's rules, pupils understand right and wrong. Opportunities to vote and debate in school help pupils to understand democracy. Pupils learn about different religions, including their own. They know the importance of celebrations such as Diwali, Holi and Christmas to different faiths. Pupils learn to be active citizens by fundraising for local and national charities. They recently enjoyed taking part in a running event to raise money for The Catholic Agency For Overseas Development (CAFOD). Pupils know the qualities of a good friend. Police workshops help pupils to keep safe when out and about. Pupils are very well prepared for life in modern Britain.

Leaders prioritise the education and safety of pupils. They do all they can to ensure pupils attend school regularly and on time. The trust holds leaders to account effectively for the performance of the school. Staff value the strong support they receive from leaders. This helps them manage their workload and well-being. Most parents are positive about the school. They are happy with the quality of education their child receives.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- Teachers do not consistently adapt work the way the school intends so it meets the needs of some pupils. This means some pupils, including those with SEND, struggle to access the curriculum or learn the important knowledge the school intends. The school should ensure teachers are able to adapt their teaching to provide learning activities that enable all pupils to learn and consistently achieve well.
- Misconceptions in early reading are not always identified and acted on. This means some pupils who have fallen behind in their reading do not catch up quickly enough. The school should ensure all staff identify and act on misconceptions pupils make in early reading, so all pupils learn to read with the confidence and fluency expected for their age.

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 to be good 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 second ungraded inspection since we judged the school to be good for overall effectiveness in March 2015.

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	139892
Local authority	Wolverhampton
Inspection number	10344015
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	215
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Christopher Walker
CEO of the trust	Toni Ellis
Principal	Adam Jewkes (Executive Principal)
Website	www.stmichaels-academy.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	7 March 2019, under section 8 of the Education Act 2005

Information about this school

- The executive principal and head of school are new to role since the last inspection.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The school's last section 48 inspection was in June 2023. The next section 48 inspection will be within five years.

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 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 observed informal times of the day as part of their evaluation of safeguarding and pupils' behaviour.
- The inspector held meetings with the executive principal, the head of school and other leaders. The inspector met with members of the St Francis and St Clare Catholic Multi-Academy Company and held a telephone conversation with a representative from the Archdiocese of Birmingham. The inspector also talked to pupils, staff and parents to gather information about school life.
- The inspector considered responses to Ofsted Parent View and the free-text comments. The inspector also considered the responses to Ofsted's staff survey.

Inspection team

Lorraine Lord, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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