

St Michael and All Angels Catholic Primary School

Address: New Hey Road, CH49 5LE

Unique reference number (URN): 105090

Inspection report: 25 November 2025

Exceptional	
Strong standard	● ● ● ● ●
Expected standard	● ●
Needs attention	
Urgent improvement	

✔ **Safeguarding standards met**

The safeguarding standards are met. This means that leaders and/or those responsible for governance and oversight fulfil their specific responsibilities and have established an open culture in which safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and concerns are actively identified, acted upon and managed. As a result, pupils are made safer and feel safe.

How we evaluate safeguarding

When we inspect schools for safeguarding, they can have the following outcomes:

- **Met:** The school has an open and positive culture of safeguarding. All legal requirements are met.
- **Not met:** The school has not created an open and positive culture of safeguarding. Not all legal requirements are met.

Strong standard ●

Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard ●

Leaders have set out clear steps for pupils' learning in subjects across the curriculum. Topics are designed to provide coverage of the national curriculum in a relevant and enjoyable way. Leaders continually check the quality of the curriculum. They constantly adapt and strengthen the school's offer. This is backed by comprehensive support and training for staff to develop their knowledge of the subjects they teach. As a result, staff deliver the curriculum well. They explain learning to pupils clearly and help them to deepen their understanding by correcting any misconceptions that they may have. Staff are skilled in their use of questioning. They ensure that pupils, including those who are disadvantaged and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), secure important foundational knowledge, especially in reading, writing and mathematics. For example, pupils learn to apply multiplication and division facts to check the accuracy of their own work. Leaders have made effective choices in developing the curriculum, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and those with SEND. For example, they place a high priority on the importance of developing children's vocabulary in the early years. They ensure that this essential knowledge underpins much of children's learning when they move into key stage 1.

Early years

Strong standard ●

No time is wasted in ensuring that children have the best start to their education in the early years. Staff check children's learning at an early stage to begin building on what children know and can do effectively. The addition of the provision for 2-year-old children since the last inspection has helped more children be ready to learn as they enter the Reception Year. As a result, the proportion of children attaining well by the end of the Reception Year is increasing. Skilled staff use every interaction they have with children to develop children's learning. Well-thought-out curriculum activities allow children to put their new knowledge into practice. Children make positive progress through the curriculum, often from low starting points. Staff are adept at developing children's communication and language to successfully lay the foundations for their acquisition of phonics and reading knowledge. This helps children to read and write with greater confidence. Staff work in partnership with parents and carers. Leaders ensure that parents' views are considered and support meaningful changes to the school's provision.

Inclusion

Strong standard ●

The school accurately identifies pupils' individual needs from an early stage. Staff consider pupils' differing needs carefully, and swift support is put in place to reduce barriers to learning so that all pupils can access the same curriculum. For example, pupils who speak English as an additional language are provided with effective support to keep up with the school's intended curriculum. Staff are skilled at adapting their approach to teaching so pupils are fully integrated into lessons. This includes those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), who access the school's specially resourced provision, many of whom successfully return to mainstream education.

The school's approach to inclusion ensures that vulnerable pupils, and especially those with SEND, are prepared well for the next steps in their education. The school engages well with parents and carers as well as other professionals, such as the virtual school's headteacher, to make the best use of their expertise. Leaders and governors analyse the impact of the interventions that the school puts in place for different groups of pupils. They ensure that funding such as the pupil premium helps pupils make secure progress through the curriculum and in their personal development.

Leadership and governance

Strong standard ●

Leaders and governors understand their school well. They accurately prioritise actions to improve key aspects of pupils' education. As a result of their efforts, pupils make positive progress through the curriculum. Leaders place pupils' needs at the heart of their decision-making. For example, there has been a concerted effort to provide staff with the knowledge and skills to help develop children's language skills and vocabulary. This is helping promote discussions between children in the early years, as well as setting the groundwork for key stage 1 pupils' future learning in subjects across the curriculum.

Governors use a wide range of sources, including external agencies, to validate the information that they receive about the school. They undertake their statutory duties well. They question central aspects of the school's work, including the use of the pupil premium funding, to ensure that all pupils receive a high-quality curriculum. Governors fully understand the impact that their decisions have made on the achievement of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those accessing the specially resourced provision and disadvantaged pupils.

Staff appreciate the way in which leaders and governors consider their workload and wellbeing, and all are committed to the vision that leaders have set out for the school.

Personal development and well-being

Strong standard ●

The school promotes its values well, so all pupils develop respect for others. Leaders have ensured that these values underpin the extensive personal development offer and ensure that disadvantaged pupils, pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) and those who speak English as an additional language are included. In the early years, there is a strong emphasis on developing children's personal development from the start. For example, children learn to cooperate well and demonstrate a clear sense of right and wrong. Older pupils in key stage 2 gain a deep appreciation of each other's views, and they develop their understanding of difference well. They have a secure awareness of what it means to be equal and of how cultures and religions differ.

Pupils develop a detailed knowledge of fundamental British Values. The well thought-out personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) curriculum ensures that pupils are well equipped for life in modern-day Britain. The PSHE curriculum includes appropriate relationships and sex education and health education. Pupils know how to maintain healthy relationships. They understand the concept of consent and learn how to keep themselves safe, including when online or using social media. Staff have received suitable training in how to support pupils who have had adverse childhood experiences. Their approach has

been successful in ensuring that all pupils, including those who are vulnerable, benefit from the school's personal development programme.

The school offers a wide range of trips, clubs and visitors to enrich the curriculum. Leaders ensure that each of these activities are accessible for disadvantaged pupils, those with SEND and those who speak English as an additional language. These activities further contribute to pupils' enjoyment of school.

Expected standard

Achievement

Expected standard 

Pupils, especially disadvantaged pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, achieve well from their starting points. Pupils who are new to the school and country develop their language skills quickly to make strong progress through the curriculum. Staff work tirelessly to ensure that vulnerable pupils achieve as well as others in the school. Pupils' attainment in the Year 1 phonics check, and in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2, is similar to that of pupils nationally. However, in some subjects, such as writing, pupils' achievement could be strengthened further. Although pupils acquire important knowledge and skills well, there is some variation in the quality and presentation of their written work between classes, particularly in key stage 1. In the wider curriculum, pupils' knowledge is developed in line with national curriculum expectations. This ensures that pupils are ready for their next steps in learning.

Attendance and behaviour

Expected standard 

Leaders have taken effective action to address high levels of persistent absence for some pupils. Initiatives such as a '25-day challenge' are motivating pupils to attend more regularly. Leaders have increased the school's capacity to provide targeted support for pupils and their families over the last 18 months. For some pupils, this has made a marked and positive difference to their attendance. However, a minority of pupils still miss too much of their learning because they are persistently absent.

Pupils' conduct around the school is calm and respectful. Poor behaviour is rare. Inspectors found no signs of disruption in classes or at break times. Pupils are quick to say that this is typical and that there is no discrimination or harassment by other pupils. They approach their learning with enthusiasm. All pupils, including those who access the specially resourced provision, are keen to learn more about the topics that they study. Staff manage pupils' behaviour consistently well across the school. They are vigilant to any signs of dysregulation, particularly for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. When necessary, staff intervene effectively and sensitively to help keep pupils calm.

What it's like to be a pupil at this school

Pupils at St Michael and All Angels use the school's values to treat each other with kindness and respect. Staff promote positive behaviours consistently well to ensure that it is a comfortable, nurturing environment. For example, children in the early years receive a warm welcome at the start of the day. They settle into a clear routine and work cooperatively alongside their classmates. Older pupils also feel safe at school. They say that bullying is rare because any early signs of misbehaviour are dealt with swiftly and effectively by staff.

Pupils especially like the welcoming atmosphere at the school. They enjoy their work because staff provide them with interesting, relevant tasks. Staff are adept at spotting barriers to pupils' learning. Any difficulties are addressed effectively to help pupils achieve the high aspirations that are set for their learning. As a result, children in the early years and pupils across the school, especially disadvantaged pupils, attain as well as pupils nationally. The knowledge that pupils gain in subjects across the curriculum ensures that they are ready for their next steps in learning.

There is a wide range of clubs and other activities on offer to cater for pupils' interests and talents. Those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are disadvantaged feel included in all aspects of school life. All pupils are well prepared for life in modern Britain. For example, pupils in upper key stage 2 have opportunities to debate different issues to gain a greater appreciation of others' opinions and views. They also relish the opportunities they have to contribute to the school community through their leadership roles, which makes them feel proud to give something back to the school community.

Next steps

- Leaders should continue to improve attendance by tackling the persistent absence of a minority of pupils.
 - Leaders should ensure that pupils' achievement in writing is developed more consistently between year groups. They should focus on developing pupils' understanding of sentence structure in key stage 1 and pupils' handwriting and presentation across the school.
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About this inspection

The chair of the board of governors in this school is Rev Patrick Regan.

Inspectors carried out this full inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Following our renewed inspection framework, all inspections are now led by His Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs) or by Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) who have previously served as HMIs.

Inspection activities:

Inspectors spoke with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher, the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator and middle leaders during the inspection.

This school is registered as having a Roman Catholic religious character. The school's most recent section 48 inspection of schools with a religious character took place on 22 and 23 June 2023.

The school includes provision for 8 pupils who have social, emotional and mental health needs.

The school has undergone a significant change since the last inspection by extending its provision to include 2-year-old children.

Headteacher: Mrs Susan Ralph

Lead inspector:

Steve Bentham, His Majesty's Inspector


Team inspectors:

Victoria Burnside, His Majesty's Inspector

Pat Speed, Ofsted Inspector

Facts and figures used on inspection

The data was used by the inspector(s) during the inspection. More recent data may have been published since the inspection took place.

 This data is from 25 November 2025

School and pupil context

Total pupils

216

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils currently at this school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 272

School capacity

236

Close to average

What does this mean?

The total number of pupils who can attend the school and how this compares to other schools of this phase in England.

National average: 300

Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)

46.60%

Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years.

National average: 26.3%

Pupils with an education, health and care (EHC) plan

0.46%

Well below average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with an education, health and care plan. This covers pupils with more support than is available through special educational needs support.

National average: 3.5%

Pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN) support

28.70%

Well above average

What does this mean?

The proportion of pupils with reported special educational support needs at the school.

National average: 15%

Location deprivation

Well above average

What does this mean?

Based on the English Indices of Deprivation (2019) and the school's location, we have calculated whether the school is located in a more or less deprived area.

Resourced Provision or SEND Unit (if applicable)

SEN unit

What does this mean?

Whether school has Resourced Provision or SEND unit (if applicable).

Type of specialist provision (if applicable)

SEMH - Social, Emotional and Mental Health

What does this mean?

The type of Special Educational Needs provision provided at the school (if applicable).

All pupils' performance

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and maths

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standards in a combined reading, writing and maths measure.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	59%	61%	Close to average
2024/25	61%	62%	Close to average
2023/24	58%	61%	Close to average
2022/23	59%	60%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	84%	74%	Above
2024/25	87%	75%	Above
2023/24	81%	74%	Close to average
2022/23	82%	73%	Above

Pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher assessed writing

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	69%	72%	Close to average
2024/25	71%	72%	Close to average
2023/24	73%	72%	Close to average
2022/23	65%	71%	Close to average

Pupils reaching the expected standard in maths

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in maths.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	74%	73%	Close to average
2024/25	68%	74%	Close to average
2023/24	69%	73%	Close to average
2022/23	82%	73%	Above

Disadvantaged pupils' performance

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and maths

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	53%	46%	Close to average
2024/25	55%	47%	Close to average
2023/24	53%	46%	Close to average
2022/23	50%	44%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	79%	62%	Above
2024/25	86%	63%	Above

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2023/24	67%	62%	Close to average
2022/23	81%	60%	Above

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher assessed writing.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	64%	59%	Close to average
2024/25	64%	59%	Close to average
2023/24	73%	58%	Above
2022/23	56%	58%	Close to average

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in maths

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in maths.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
Latest 3 year average	68%	60%	Above
2024/25	64%	61%	Close to average
2023/24	67%	59%	Close to average
2022/23	75%	59%	Above

Disadvantaged pupils' performance gap

Disadvantaged pupils are those who have been eligible for free school meals at any point in the last six years and children looked after. The school disadvantage gap is the difference between the performance of the school's disadvantaged pupils compared to the performance of all non-disadvantaged pupils nationally.

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and maths

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths, including the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	53%	68%	-15 pp
2024/25	55%	69%	-15 pp
2023/24	53%	67%	-14 pp
2022/23	50%	66%	-16 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in reading

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in reading and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	79%	80%	0 pp
2024/25	86%	81%	6 pp
2023/24	67%	80%	-13 pp
2022/23	81%	78%	3 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in teacher assessed writing

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in teacher assessed writing and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	64%	78%	-14 pp
2024/25	64%	78%	-15 pp
2023/24	73%	78%	-4 pp
2022/23	56%	77%	-21 pp

Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in maths

The percentage of disadvantaged pupils meeting the expected standard in maths and the disadvantaged gap.

Year	This school	National non-disadvantaged score	School disadvantage gap
Latest 3 year average	68%	80%	-12 pp
2024/25	64%	81%	-17 pp
2023/24	67%	79%	-13 pp
2022/23	75%	79%	-4 pp

Absence

Overall absence

The percentage of all possible mornings and afternoons missed due to absence from school (for whatever reason, whether authorised or unauthorised) across all pupils.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (1 term)	4.6%	5.1%	Close to average
2023/24	7.2%	5.5%	Above
2022/23	7.2%	5.9%	Above

Persistent absence

The percentage of pupils missing 10% or more of their possible mornings and afternoons.

Year	This school	National average	Compared with national average
2024/25 (1 term)	15.3%	14.3%	Close to average
2023/24	21.2%	14.6%	Above
2022/23	22.9%	16.2%	Above

Our grades explained

Exceptional

Practice is exceptional: of the highest standard nationally. Other schools can learn from it.

Strong standard

The school reaches a strong standard. Leaders are working above the standards expected of them.

Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standards set out in statutory and non-statutory legislation and the professional standards expected of them.

Needs attention

The expected standards are not met but leaders are likely able to make the necessary improvements.

Urgent improvement

The school needs to make urgent improvements to provide the expected standard of education and/or care.

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