

St Michael's Church of England Aided Primary School

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

Inspection dates

5–6 December 2017

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
Effectiveness of leadership and management	Outstanding
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Outstanding
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Outstanding
Outcomes for pupils	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is an outstanding school

- 'Learning to love, loving to learn' is at the heart of St Michael's. Its core values of 'faith, joy, aspiration and responsibility' reflect the strong Christian ethos that permeates the school. One pupil said, 'It's what St. Michael's stands for.'
- The school provides a safe, nurturing and aspirational environment that supports pupils extremely well. They are given every opportunity to become successful learners.
- The headteacher, her leadership team and governors provide outstanding leadership. Their vision to achieve the very best outcomes for everyone in their school, staff and pupils, is abundantly clear in all that they say and do. The school has continued to improve since the last inspection. As a result, pupils receive an outstanding education and do well socially and academically.
- Pupils are proud of their school. They demonstrate outstanding behaviour and attitudes at all times. They are polite, courteous and keen to learn. Almost all parents strongly agree that their children are cared for well, are safe in school, are happy and do well. One parent spoke for many when she said, 'a wonderful school community which cares for and develops the whole child.'
- Staff deliver the rich and varied curriculum highly effectively. This enables pupils to make excellent progress in a wide range of subjects, such as music, art, sport, reading, writing and mathematics. However, leaders acknowledge that expectations for writing, including the quality of handwriting and presentation, could be higher in some subjects.
- Teaching is outstanding. Teachers use what they know about pupils' knowledge, understanding and progress to make sure that they carefully match the work to meet pupils' individual needs. As a result, pupils of all abilities make excellent progress.
- From their low starting points, pupils make significant progress to achieve standards mostly above national averages. By the end of key stage 2, disadvantaged pupils make progress well above the national average for non-disadvantaged pupils.
- Provision for the early years is outstanding. Children make very good progress so that by the end of Reception the proportion of children achieving a good level of development is above the national average.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that pupils maintain a consistently high standard of handwriting and presentation across the whole curriculum.
- Ensure that the same high-quality skills in writing are consistently applied in all other subjects.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management

Outstanding

- The leadership of the headteacher is inspirational. She is uncompromising in her determination to ensure the best possible outcomes for pupils. She is ably supported by an equally effective leadership team, staff and governors. As a result, the school has improved significantly over time.
- Leaders have high expectations for their pupils, academically, socially and emotionally. They track the progress of pupils rigorously and know the strengths and weaknesses of individuals and groups of pupils well. They identify emotional needs and gaps in learning quickly and respond with appropriate support in a timely manner. As a result, pupils' needs are well met and they make excellent progress.
- Additional funding for disadvantaged pupils is used well. A learning mentor supports the disadvantaged pupils to ensure that they do not fall behind. Funding is also used to make sure that disadvantaged pupils do not miss out on a broad range of experiences. For example, some learn to play a musical instrument. As a result, they have grown in confidence, have caught up with non-disadvantaged pupils in the school and often make better progress than non-disadvantaged pupils nationally by the end of key stage 2.
- Funding for pupils who have special educational needs (SEN) and/or disabilities is used equally well so that pupils make good progress from their starting points.
- Leaders have promoted a culture of learning among staff and pupils. As a result, staff are keen to develop their own practice and that of others. Leaders regularly check the quality of teaching and hold staff to account. Teachers welcome and respond positively to incisive and developmental feedback.
- As a result of effective leadership, leaders are now supporting a neighbouring school. This has opened up opportunities for middle leaders to take on additional leadership responsibilities. They are doing this well, while ensuring that high expectations and strong outcomes are maintained at St Michael's.
- Leaders, including governors, have an accurate view of what the school does well. They identify clear areas for improvement based on careful analysis of pupils' progress and pupils' needs. They set demanding targets, take swift action and closely monitor the progress and impact of their actions.
- The curriculum ensures that pupils have a range of different experiences that they might not otherwise have had. They particularly enjoy the opportunity to use the outdoor environment and describe how they have campfires and build dens. One older pupil said, 'We can use our imagination.' The curriculum is greatly enhanced by regular visits, visitors to school, residential and extra-curricular activities such as sewing club and cookery club. As a result, pupils are becoming well-rounded individuals.
- The primary physical education (PE) and sport funding is used well. Sports coaches help teachers to develop their skills in teaching PE. The coaches provide additional activities at lunchtime, which pupils thoroughly enjoy. Extra-curricular activities are

provided so that more pupils are physically active. Pupils recently requested clubs for dance and yoga, and these were provided after school.

- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Pupils demonstrate an excellent understanding of British values. Pupils represent each other on the school council and the spiritual council, as a house captain, as a British values ambassador or as a digital ambassador. Members of these groups talk with pride about their roles and about their visit to the Houses of Parliament. In the 'spiritual corner' pupils add prayers, and in the 'garden of memories' they can have some quiet reflection time. They engage in a number of charitable endeavours such as sponsoring children in a school in Uganda and fundraising for 'Children in Need' and 'Save the Children'. In worship, pupils talked about 'preparing our hearts for Christmas'.
- Parents are overwhelmingly positive about the school. They are appreciative of how well the school supports their children, particularly those children who have SEN and/or disabilities. One parent commented, 'My child has flourished academically, emotionally and socially.'

Governance of the school

- The quality of governance is impressive and cohesive. It has improved significantly since the last inspection. Governors are well trained and use their skills and experience effectively to make strategic decisions to support the school. They have an accurate and incisive understanding of the school's strengths and challenges. They regularly ask themselves, 'What will fit for our school?' and 'What is best for our children?'
- Governors challenge school leaders appropriately and hold them to account. They are well informed and highly involved in the work of the school. They visit school regularly and meet with subject leaders to understand how leaders check the impact of their work. They oversee the expenditure and impact of pupil premium funding and the PE and school sport funding and ensure it is used effectively. One governor 'lived the life' of a disadvantaged pupil at St Michael's for a day.
- Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities. They manage finances effectively and check safeguarding procedures regularly. They say, 'Everybody is responsible.'

Safeguarding

- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.
- Safeguarding is a high priority in school, ensuring that the most vulnerable pupils are safe and well cared for. Leaders and staff are vigilant and tenacious in their approach to keeping children safe.
- Leaders work closely with parents. They go the 'extra mile' to look after families in difficulty so that pupils are not disadvantaged socially, emotionally or academically.
- Staff and governors are well trained in safeguarding procedures for the reporting of concerns and the recruitment of staff. Records are well kept and procedures are well followed. They are regularly checked by the lead governor for safeguarding and the local authority to ensure their effectiveness.

- Leaders are asked by the local authority to share their good practice with other schools. The school is well regarded by the local authority for its support of looked after children. As a result, the local authority directs carers to the school.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment

Outstanding

- Pupils demonstrate very positive attitudes to their learning because teachers have high expectations and pupils know exactly what is required of them. They are encouraged and supported to try their best. Pupils enjoy their learning and are highly engaged in lessons.
- Teachers make good use of assessment information. They know what individual pupils need to learn and plan work that is right for them. The support given to pupils, particularly those who have SEN and/or disabilities, is highly effective and is carefully matched to the individual needs of pupils. As a result, they make significant gains in their progress.
- Teachers make sure that pupils know how to improve their writing. They set tasks that enable pupils to reflect on previous learning or practise new skills. Pupils routinely edit their work and develop skills well over time. As a result, they secure a greater depth of understanding and accuracy in their work.
- In English, pupils are taught features of language and aspects of grammar very well. Pupils in Year 4 can explain articulately the meaning of synonyms, metaphors and similes and use them well in their writing.
- Pupils are applying their literacy skills more effectively in other subjects. For example, in science, pupils used instructional writing well when recording a science investigation. However, the high standards in writing are not consistently applied in all subjects. The quality of handwriting and presentation varies across school.
- Phonics is taught well and therefore pupils make good progress. In phonics lessons, teachers assess pupils accurately so that they are challenged appropriately. Teachers give pupils immediate feedback and encourage them to correct their own work. Pupils use their phonics knowledge well and have developed effective strategies to work out unfamiliar words. In Year 1, for example, pupils demonstrated clear phonics knowledge and a high level of resilience when reading unfamiliar words in the Christmas story.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress because teachers assess them quickly and provide short, sharp phonic interventions. Further support is provided daily to develop fluency in reading.
- The teaching of reading is strong. Pupils read fluently and demonstrate a good level of comprehension. Teachers use high-level questioning effectively to develop pupils' understanding of text. As a result, pupils are developing higher-level skills of inference and deduction well.
- Teachers choose books to engage pupils' interests. For example, Year 2 pupils were excited and motivated when reading 'The Polar Express'. Pupils make regular use of the school library. Additional reading support for vulnerable pupils is provided by a local charity so that they can practise more frequently.

- In mathematics, pupils learn specific methods of calculation. They build on prior learning to secure understanding well. For example, pupils in Year 2 used practical resources to support their understanding of multiplication and then progressed to mental calculations. The teacher developed pupils' knowledge and understanding of number effectively by showing them a range of strategies to support them in their calculations. As a result, pupils were confident and able to articulate their understanding well.
- Work in pupils' books shows that skills are well embedded so that pupils do not have gaps in their learning. Pupils make good, and often rapid, progress, particularly the less able pupils. For example, at the beginning of term, Year 1 pupils matched number names to digits and can now partition two-digit numbers accurately.
- The most able pupils are challenged appropriately in mathematics. For example, pupils created their own word problems in Year 1. Reasoning in mathematics is a school priority. Teachers effectively promote and encourage pupils to explain their understanding by asking, 'Is that true?' and 'Tell me what you have noticed.'
- Parents agree that their children are taught well and make good progress.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

Outstanding

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is outstanding.
- The social and emotional well-being of pupils is a high priority. Pupils have strong relationships with each other and with staff. They look after each other and know who to go to if they are worried or upset. They know they will be listened to and use the 'worry monster' to share any concerns. As a result, they grow in confidence.
- Pupils are happy to talk to adults and are confident in sharing their learning. They adopt effective strategies to help themselves when they are stuck and access resources easily when they need them. Pupils are given increasingly difficult challenges called 'mild, spicy and hot' activities. Older pupils can choose where to start and are keen to challenge themselves. They have a 'can-do' attitude.
- Pupil voice is strong in school. Pupils have the opportunity to put forward their views through different councils and can influence what happens in school. For example, pupils created a 'Keep Safe' display to inform others about e-safety and how to keep themselves safe.
- Pupils are encouraged to have high aspirations through an inspirational display which asks, 'What could you be?' Pupils said they wanted to be a cricket player, an Olympic sprinter, a fashion designer, a doctor or a vet. Displays reflect high-quality art work and a range of writing such as stories, poems, reports and diary entries.
- Pupils take responsibility for delivering a weekly worship assembly. They help to set up daily worship and enjoy the responsibility. In worship assemblies, they are polite, respectful and know the rules.

- The wide range of cultural heritage in school is celebrated. As a result, pupils demonstrate a good understanding of different religions and treat each other with respect. One parent said, 'Different faiths are catered for in such a diverse community,' and another commented, 'My child has made friends from a variety of backgrounds.'

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is outstanding.
- Pupils demonstrate exemplary attitudes to learning, as seen in every lesson visited. A calm, purposeful learning environment is evident throughout the school.
- Pupils demonstrate excellent behaviour at other times of the day and outside of the classroom, for example in the dining room and on the playground. Older pupils support younger pupils. One pupil said, 'We work as a team.'
- Staff give sensitive support for pupils who need extra help to manage their behaviour. Pupils are helped to get back on track very quickly, enabling them to work well and make progress.
- Pupils are clear about the behaviour policy and know that they need to be 'ready, respectful and responsible'.
- Leaders monitor attendance carefully and follow up absence rigorously. As a result, attendance has improved since the last inspection and is around the national average for all pupils. The number of pupils who are persistently absent has also reduced.
- Parents agree that pupils behave well and are very respectful.

Outcomes for pupils

Outstanding

- Children often join the school with skills, knowledge and understanding below those which are typical for their age. However, as a result of accurate assessments and high-quality teaching, the vast majority of pupils make rapid progress to achieve outcomes above national averages by the time they leave the school.
- Pupils' work shows sustained progress over time. Leaders' close tracking of pupils' progress ensures there is 'no slippage'. High mobility and varied cohorts account for some minor fluctuations in outcomes, particularly as some pupils join the school with little or no English and/or with complex needs. However, leaders respond swiftly to the needs of pupils who join at different times. They provide appropriate interventions and pastoral support so that pupils catch up quickly and are not left behind.
- Progress at the end of key stage 2 has improved over time. In 2016, pupils achieved progress in line with the national average in reading, writing and mathematics and in 2017 achieved above-average progress in writing.
- Attainment at the expected standard at the end of key stage 2 is above the national average in reading, writing, mathematics and grammar, punctuation and spelling. It is also above the national figures for the higher standard in reading and writing. Leaders acknowledge the slight dip in attainment in mathematics and grammar, punctuation and spelling at a higher standard. However, they have implemented an effective action

plan to address this. Of the 2017 cohort, only 12 pupils have been at the school since Reception and all others joined at different points. Despite this, pupils still made good progress and attained highly. Current assessments and work in pupils' books show that pupils are making equally strong progress to sustain high standards.

- Outcomes in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 1 have improved over time. In 2017, pupils achieved strong outcomes above the national average. The standards achieved in the phonics screening check have been consistently in line with or above the national figure for the past five years. This is sometimes affected by how long pupils have been in school. However, due to high-quality interventions and a strong focus on early reading skills, pupils make good and often rapid progress.
- Disadvantaged pupils make good progress, and this has improved over time. In 2017, disadvantaged pupils made better progress than non-disadvantaged pupils in school and non-disadvantaged pupils nationally. Disadvantaged pupils are carefully monitored, with additional support provided by the learning mentor, particularly for the most able. As a result, current pupils are making good progress, similar to and sometimes better than other groups of pupils in the school.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language are well supported to make progress similar to that of their peers. On occasions, some pupils present with a combination of needs but these are met well. For example, when necessary, pupils receive a daily intervention programme so that they are not left behind.
- Pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities are given sensitive and personalised support specific to their needs. As a result, they make rapid gains in progress. One parent described how his child had speech and language difficulties but had made excellent progress in six months. The most able pupils, including those who are disadvantaged, are generally challenged to achieve well.

Early years provision

Outstanding

- Children start the Reception class with starting points below those found typically for their age. They may come from up to 20 different nursery settings and some may come with no early years experience. Teachers identify any gaps in their development quickly and adapt the provision and provide appropriate adult support so that all children make good progress. As a result, by the end of Reception children achieve outcomes above the national average.
- Staff provide an environment that is nurturing and stimulating and supports children well in making accelerated progress. For example, in 'Santa's Post Office', children were having fun and developing their communication and language skills well through role play.
- Staff have high expectations and set challenging activities. They teach new concepts effectively, such as 'one less' in number, so that children are confident to 'have a go' by themselves. Children access a range of resources and activities to secure their mathematical understanding of number well.

- Staff spot misconceptions early so that learning moves on quickly. For example, when children write numbers incorrectly, staff immediately show them how to do it correctly. They use effective questioning which supports children to make good progress.
- There are very strong relationships between children and staff. Staff have clear expectations for behaviour and children respond well. As a result, routines are well established and children know what to do. They share, take turns and are highly engaged in their learning.
- Children's work on display and in books is of high quality and shows good progress. Early reading, writing and number skills are being well developed so that children are well prepared for Year 1.
- Leaders have an accurate understanding of where children are and adapt the curriculum and the provision to ensure that individual needs are met and catered for. They identify clear and ambitious targets for improvement.
- Good relationships have been established with parents through 'stay and play' sessions and 'learning together' workshops in phonics and mathematics. This supports children well in their learning and they are happy to come to school.
- Leaders ensure children's safety by carrying out regular risk assessments. They are vigilant in ensuring that children stay safe. As a result, safeguarding is effective and welfare requirements are met.

School details

Unique reference number	104384
Local authority	Wolverhampton
Inspection number	10037873

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Maintained
Age range of pupils	4 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	202
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Brennand
Headteacher	Kathryn Jackson
Telephone number	01902 558845
Website	www.stmichaelscofeprimary.co.uk
Email address	stmichaelsceprimaryschool@wolverhampton.gov.uk
Date of previous inspection	12–13 December 2012

Information about this school

- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- The school is smaller than an average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium grant is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who have SEN and/or disabilities is in line with the national average.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is above the national average. Pupils come from a wide range of heritage groups. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is higher than the national average, with more than 20 different languages spoken at home.

- The mobility of pupils is higher than the national average. Many pupils join the school with complex learning needs and sometimes little or no English.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' progress and attainment in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2.
- Leaders are currently supporting another local infant and nursery school.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed teaching and learning in all classes, spoke to pupils and looked at their work. Most observations were carried out jointly with school leaders.
- Inspectors observed pupils on the playground and during assembly. Inspectors talked to groups of pupils and listened to pupils read.
- Discussions were held with the headteacher, deputy headteacher, interim head of school and leaders responsible for SEN, early years, English and mathematics as well as several other subject leaders.
- Inspectors met with the chair of governors and other members of the governing body, and representatives of the local authority. They spoke to an external school improvement adviser by telephone.
- Inspectors spoke to parents at the beginning of the school day, met with one parent during the inspection and took into account the 31 responses to Parent View, including the 26 written comments. The eight responses to the staff questionnaires were also considered.
- A wide range of documentation was scrutinised, including: the school's own evaluation of its performance; the school improvement plan; subject action plans; information on pupils' progress and attainment; records of behaviour and attendance; minutes of governing body meetings; local authority reports and external reports including a review of governance; and information relating to the performance management of staff and safeguarding information.

Inspection team

Sue Cameron, lead inspector

Emma Titchener

Her Majesty's Inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route. www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings.

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