

Inspection of St Michael's Church of England Primary School, Bamford

Bury and Rochdale Old Road, Heywood, Lancashire OL10 4BB

Inspection dates: 8 and 9 May 2024

Overall effectiveness	Outstanding
The quality of education	Outstanding
Behaviour and attitudes	Outstanding
Personal development	Outstanding
Leadership and management	Outstanding
Early years provision	Outstanding
Previous inspection grade	Outstanding

Until November 2020, the school was exempt from routine inspection because it was judged as outstanding at its previous inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005. The school has not been inspected under section 5 of the Act since February 2009.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils, including children in the early years, benefit from an education of exceptional quality. They are curious and enjoy their learning. Children in the early years participate in a wide variety of learning activities with gusto. Throughout the school, pupils progress extremely well through the curriculum. This prepares them very well for their next stages of learning.

The school has the highest expectations of pupils in every aspect of school life, including their achievement. Pupils are proud to maintain these high standards and achieve highly. The climate of warmth, care and compassion develops pupils' confidence and makes them unafraid of mistakes. Pupils behave well and are highly respectful to staff and each other. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) thrive in the welcoming and supportive environment.

The school has thought carefully about the personal qualities that it supports pupils to develop, with a particular focus on developing their independence. In the early years, staff ensure that children are exposed to carefully managed risks. For example, staff teach children to safely use knives to prepare their own snack. Older pupils enjoy an array of clubs that develop their talents and interests, which include story explorers, social action and coding clubs, as well as sports such as tag rugby and netball.

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

The school has a well-established and highly ambitious curriculum in place. It has designed the curriculum to continuously develop pupils' knowledge from the early years to Year 6. Teachers at every stage prioritise the knowledge that pupils need to prepare them for their next steps. For example, in the early years, staff take every opportunity to develop children's sense of number, through engaging activities and counting games. This prepares children very well for the demands of key stage 1.

Teachers have strong subject expertise and deliver the curriculum well. They design learning that enthuses and inspires pupils, as well as developing their understanding. Teachers adopt effective strategies to check on pupils' knowledge during lessons. They skilfully identify and address any misconceptions that would otherwise hinder pupils' learning. Pupils achieve highly across the range of subjects and the quality of their work is excellent.

Children's love of reading begins in the Nursery class, where stories and rhymes form the heart of the curriculum. Staff expertly deliver the phonics programme. They ensure that children in Reception class and pupils in key stage 1 regularly practise reading using books that include familiar sounds. Staff make careful checks on pupils' reading, swiftly resolving any gaps in their knowledge. As a result, pupils develop into fluent and confident readers.

Pupils with SEND are identified quickly and supported very well. Teachers make sensitive and effective adaptations that enable these pupils to successfully progress through the curriculum alongside their peers. However, the school recognises that some parents and carers of pupils with SEND have a negative perception of the support offered for their children. It has recently taken steps to improve engagement with these parents, for example, through hosting regular coffee morning sessions to allow discussion of their child's progress and share any concerns with the school.

The school fosters a warm and positive climate for learning. In lessons, behaviour is exemplary. Pupils place a high value on their education. They do not want to miss out on any learning, or cause others to miss out. Pupils are typically keen to come to school and have high rates of attendance. Where this is not the case, the school works closely with parents to surmount any barriers that limit pupils' attendance.

Throughout the school there is a sharp focus on wellness and well-being which extends to pupils and staff. Pupils learn a wide range of strategies to promote their physical and mental health. They know that they can discuss any worries with staff. Any pupils that need further care receive targeted support from well-trained staff.

The school fosters an impressively strong community spirit. This is embedded through regular assemblies that celebrate the school values and promote pupils' sense of collective endeavour. Pupils take on an array of responsibilities within the school. For example, some pupils were tasked with creating a 'reading cottage' in the school grounds, including managing the design and budget. Other pupils have been trained to resolve any disagreements on the playground and to support any of their peers that are upset or lonely.

Staff feel valued and respected by the school and governors. They appreciate the support for their professional development through regular training and collaborative working. They are proud to work at the school.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

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	105813
Local authority	Rochdale
Inspection number	10242366
Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	230
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair of governing body	John Knott
Headteacher	Melanie Barratt
Website	www.stmichaelscebam.rochdale.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	26 February 2009

Information about this school

- The school offers childcare for pupils in the form of a breakfast and after-school club.
- The school does not use any alternative provision.
- This Church of England school is part of the Diocese of Manchester. The school's last section 48 inspection, for schools of a religious character, took place in September 2019. The school's next section 48 inspection is due to take place by the end of 2026.

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.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. Inspectors discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and have taken that into account in their evaluation of the school.

- Inspectors met with senior leaders, including the headteacher and a range of staff. They also spoke with representatives of the governing body, including the chair of governors.
- The lead inspector met with representatives of the local authority and of the diocese.
- Inspectors reviewed a wide range of evidence, including the school's self-evaluation documents, improvement plans and minutes of governing body meetings. Inspectors also reviewed records of pupils' behaviour and attendance.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, 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 spoke with pupils about their experiences of school and their views on behaviour and bullying. They observed pupils' behaviour during lessons and at social times.
- Inspectors carried out deep dives in art and design, early reading and mathematics. For each deep dive, they discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke with some staff and pupils about their learning, and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- Inspectors visited lessons and reviewed pupils' work in some other subjects.
- Inspectors observed pupils from Years 1 to 3 read to a familiar adult.
- Inspectors considered the responses to Ofsted Parent View, including the free-text comments. They also considered the responses to Ofsted's online survey for staff and pupils.

Inspection team

Charlotte Oles, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

Wendy Tracey

Ofsted Inspector

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