

# St Michael's Catholic Primary School

**Address:** Clumber Street North, Elswick, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Tyne and Wear, NE4 7RE

**Unique reference number (URN):** 144971

## Inspection report: 27 January 2026

|                    |                                                                                   |
|--------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 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 ●

### Attendance and behaviour

Strong standard ●

Attendance for some groups of pupils was not as high as leaders would want in the past. There has been a notable reduction in rates of absence and persistent absence at the school. For some disadvantaged pupil groups, the rate of improvement has been exceptionally rapid. All groups of pupils now have high attendance and low rates of persistent absence. Leaders understand the barriers pupils face to attending school more regularly. They provide support for families who need it most. Pupils are rewarded for attending school but also love being there. Everyone understands how critical good attendance is for pupils to succeed.

Behaviour at the school is exemplary. Pupils are polite, well mannered and committed to their learning. There is a culture of achievement where each individual strives for success. However, pupils are collaborative rather than competitive. They support one another incredibly well, and as a result, they thrive. Pupils conduct themselves maturely around school. Older pupils with leadership responsibilities are role models for younger children in the early years. Staff help pupils to recognise and celebrate each other's differences. Unkindness, bullying or discrimination are never tolerated. Pupils' views reflect leaders' high expectations. This is a great place to learn.

### Curriculum and teaching

Strong standard ●

Leaders and staff are expert in the design and implementation of a high-quality curriculum. The knowledge that pupils will learn and in what order is regularly reviewed. This ensures the curriculum meets the needs of pupils extremely well. The curriculum is exciting and engaging. Staff make highly effective choices about how it is taught. They are experts in the subjects they teach. Staff explain and model new techniques very effectively. This helps pupils tackle increasingly complex subject material. Staff identify what pupils do and do not understand before moving on in learning. If a topic or skill needs to be revisited, teachers make sure this happens.

Reading is prioritised at the school. Staff are experts in the teaching of early reading and phonics. Some pupils get extra support outside of lessons. This work is highly effective at closing gaps in pupils' knowledge and understanding. Leaders have prioritised language development in their curriculum design. Pupils are able to use a wide and ambitious vocabulary because staff emphasise this in lessons. There are high expectations for the quality of pupils' written work. Adaptations for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are expertly made. The support that pupils with SEND receive ensures that they succeed at each stage of their education.

### Inclusion

Strong standard ●

Leaders have a deep and detailed understanding of pupils who may face additional barriers to their learning. Before and during pupils' time at school, a vast amount of work is carried out with families, professionals and external agencies to help pupils achieve their best. Leaders are extremely knowledgeable about the constantly changing cohort of pupils at the

school. Pupils who might need extra help to settle in are given bespoke support by staff. Each individual's needs are carefully monitored to look for any changes. If a pupil needs something different, especially when they first join the school, leaders swiftly provide this, for example visual timetables or reading books in home languages.

Barriers to learning, whether academic or emotional, are removed effectively. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities get the help they need to succeed. Staff check pupils' progress carefully. Provision for disadvantaged pupils is constantly adapted. Leaders' monitoring tells them where support for disadvantaged pupils is having the most impact. Staff receive training to ensure they understand how to adapt teaching methods. The school's pupil premium strategy reflects pupils' needs precisely. Funding is used effectively to close gaps between disadvantaged pupils and their peers. The attendance and achievement of disadvantaged pupils have continually improved over time.

## **Personal development and wellbeing**

**Strong standard** ●

Leaders have created a wide range of opportunities for every pupil to experience something new outside of the classroom. Enrichment activities include sports competitions at a local stadium, a LEGO robotics club, chess club and involvement in local public speaking competitions. The school has done work with the Royal Shakespeare Company to help pupils grow their confidence on stage. These experiences develop pupils' talents and interests extensively. Pupils benefit from many opportunities they might not otherwise have had.

Pupils understand the school's values and how they connect to fundamental British values in wider society, for example how democratic systems help to select new leaders. In school, 'oracy ambassadors' proudly undertake their roles in supporting others to speak up and be heard. They provide daily discussion topics to stimulate conversation in the lunch hall. Pupils are confident and resilient. They are extremely well prepared to contribute to society and already do so through charity and community work. Pupils understand the importance of tolerance and celebrating diversity. The school cohort incorporates over 20 different languages, many different faiths and cultures. This is a 'school of sanctuary' where everyone is given a warm welcome and a fresh start.

Leaders have created an exceptionally thorough personal, social and health education programme. This teaches pupils about the importance of respect, positive relationships, money management and balanced lifestyles. Pupils know how to stay safe and healthy, both in their personal lives and online. The curriculum is adapted carefully to support disadvantaged pupils. The curriculum reflects risks pupils might face in their local area. Pupils understand risks around water and busy roads, for example. When pupils are impacted negatively by poor mental health or other events in their lives, the school manages this very effectively. Staff are knowledgeable and caring in their support for pupils and families.

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## Expected standard

### Achievement

Expected standard 

Pupils' achievement has become stronger over time. In recent national statutory assessments and tests, key stage 2 pupils achieved significantly above national average in several areas. Gaps between disadvantaged pupils and their peers are narrowing quickly. In mathematics especially, pupils have the essential knowledge they need and are extremely well prepared for the next stage of their education. Leaders' focus on improving pupils' written communication has also had a very positive impact. However, more work remains to be done to ensure that pupils' achievement in reading, notably the phonics screening check, meets the same high standards.

In other subjects, such as science and history, pupils develop a deep, rich body of knowledge. Pupils communicate their understanding clearly using an impressive array of subject-specific language. Many pupils who join part way through their education have significant gaps in their learning or are new to speaking English. Leaders are aware of the barriers these pupils face and are addressing them swiftly.

### Early years

Expected standard 

The early years curriculum highlights the important knowledge and skills children need to develop as they begin their education. This is carefully adapted for both Nursery- and Reception-age children. Staff typically select activities that help children learn the intended curriculum; however, this is not consistent across the nursery and Reception provision. Sometimes, children disengage when learning does not match their needs and interests closely enough. Children's language development is a priority in the early years. Opportunities for conversations between children and staff are frequent. On occasion, these interactions could be of a higher quality to ensure all children learn the intended vocabulary.

Staff model phonics precisely and help children get to grips with reading quickly. Leaders have identified the need for an even greater emphasis on words and language in the early years setting. This is because children often start school with little or no English. Leaders work closely with parents and carers to support children's wider development. For example, they provide English language and phonics workshops. Staff have worked diligently to ensure the early years environment is stimulating and contains opportunities to read, write and use number regularly. Children develop their independence and resilience through planned activities. They are increasingly well prepared for Year 1.

### Leadership and governance

Expected standard 

Leaders embrace the school's context, its strengths and areas for further development. There are ambitious aims for the school to become an exceptional place to learn. Those responsible for governance understand and support these aims very effectively. Governors are knowledgeable about what the school does well and why. There is a shared ambition and strategic understanding among leaders at all levels. This has led to sustained improvement over time and strong standards in many areas of leaders' work.

Leaders' priorities are carefully chosen. These are informed by a wide range of accurate evidence. Where new initiatives might cause additional workload for staff, leaders are mindful of this. Training for staff is meaningful and varied. All staff, from the most experienced to early career teachers, receive valuable professional learning opportunities. The school engages with staff, pupils, parents and carers to get their views. This helps to shape future priorities. Staff continually develop their practice and review its impact. Everyone at the school is clear about what they want to achieve, and there is a culture of high expectations.

Parents enthusiastically praise the school and its staff. The supportive, nurturing role of the school helps pupils to feel that they belong. The care that staff show pupils extends to families and the community as a whole. Staff say their wellbeing is considered and that leaders listen to what they have to say. The staff body collaborate effectively to achieve the best for pupils.

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

Pupils join the school from a wide variety of backgrounds. Some have recently arrived in the country. Many speak English as an additional language. Others come to the school part way through their education. Leaders' ambition for every pupil is equally high. Barriers to pupils' success are swiftly identified and removed. Pupils value the care and guidance staff offer them in all aspects of school life. Pupils relish the opportunity to learn new things and enthusiastically engage in lessons. High-quality discussions are a feature of everyday school life. Pupils are confident in their knowledge and themselves. Leaders plan a wide range of experiences for each and every pupil.

Staff know when pupils or families might need a little extra support. This is done in a deeply caring manner. When children join the early years setting, staff quickly get to know them. Pupils and their parents and carers are confident to speak to staff and seek guidance. Leaders have placed their school at the heart of the community. Pupils are proud of their achievements. They recognise the value of working together and including everyone. Pupils conduct themselves exceptionally well and are kind to one another. Bullying is virtually unheard of. If pupils fall out, staff quickly resolve the issue. Pupils feel safe and are kept safe by staff who are extremely vigilant.

Pupils experience a high-quality education across a range of subjects. Over time, pupils' achievement has improved significantly. In several measures, pupils achieve much better than their peers nationally. Some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) receive a different curriculum. This has been carefully designed to help them achieve their potential. Where needed, the school's sensory room provides remarkably high-quality support and teaching for pupils with SEND. Because of the care and skill of staff, pupils with SEND flourish at the school.

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## Next steps

- Leaders should ensure that staff in early years maximise opportunities to engage in high-quality interactions with children throughout the day.
  - Leaders should ensure that the high levels of achievement in recent national tests and statutory assessments are sustained over time and that gaps between different groups of pupils continue to narrow rapidly.
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## About this inspection

This school is part of Bishop Bewick Catholic Education Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is run by the chief executive officer, Anita Bath, and overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by David Harrison. There is a head of school, Jenny Consterdine, who has some day-to-day responsibility for the running of the school.

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 executive headteacher, head of school, special educational needs coordinator and chief executive officer of the trust. The lead inspector also spoke with those responsible for governance and a representative of the diocese.

The inspectors confirmed the following information about the school:

This school is registered as having a Catholic religious character. The school was last inspected under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 in January 2019.

The school does not make use of alternative provision.

Executive Headteacher: Charlotte Chapman

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### Lead inspector:

John Linkins, His Majesty's Inspector

### Team inspectors:

Malcolm Kirtley, Ofsted Inspector

Katrina Morley, 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 27 January 2026

## School and pupil context

### Total pupils

**219**

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

**235**

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)

**65.20%**

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**

**4.57%**

Close to 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**

**15.07%**

Close to 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)**

**No resourced provision**

### **What does this mean?**

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

## **All pupils' performance**

**Pupils reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics**

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

| Year                         | This school | National average | Compared with national average |
|------------------------------|-------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Latest 3 year average</b> | 57%         | 61%              | Close to average               |
| <b>2024/25 (revised)</b>     | 73%         | 62%              | Above                          |
| <b>2023/24 (final)</b>       | 45%         | 61%              | Below                          |
| <b>2022/23 (final)</b>       | 53%         | 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 |
|------------------------------|-------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Latest 3 year average</b> | 69%         | 74%              | Below                          |
| <b>2024/25 (revised)</b>     | 80%         | 75%              | Close to average               |
| <b>2023/24 (final)</b>       | 66%         | 74%              | Below                          |
| <b>2022/23 (final)</b>       | 60%         | 73%              | Below                          |

### **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 |
|------------------------------|-------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Latest 3 year average</b> | 74%         | 72%              | Close to average               |
| <b>2024/25 (revised)</b>     | 80%         | 72%              | Above                          |
| <b>2023/24 (final)</b>       | 69%         | 72%              | Close to average               |
| <b>2022/23 (final)</b>       | 73%         | 71%              | Close to average               |

**Pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics**

The percentage of pupils meeting the expected standard in mathematics.

| Year                  | This school | National average | Compared with national average |
|-----------------------|-------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| Latest 3 year average | 78%         | 73%              | Close to average               |
| 2024/25 (revised)     | 90%         | 74%              | Above                          |
| 2023/24 (final)       | 69%         | 73%              | Close to average               |
| 2022/23 (final)       | 73%         | 73%              | Close to average               |

**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 mathematics**

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

| Year                  | This school | National average | Compared with national average |
|-----------------------|-------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| Latest 3 year average | 49%         | 46%              | Close to average               |
| 2024/25 (revised)     | 60%         | 47%              | Above                          |
| 2023/24 (final)       | 35%         | 46%              | Close to average               |
| 2022/23 (final)       | 52%         | 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 |
|------------------------------|-------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Latest 3 year average</b> | 64%         | 62%              | Close to average               |
| <b>2024/25 (revised)</b>     | 70%         | 63%              | Close to average               |
| <b>2023/24 (final)</b>       | 65%         | 62%              | Close to average               |
| <b>2022/23 (final)</b>       | 57%         | 60%              | Close to average               |

### 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 |
|------------------------------|-------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Latest 3 year average</b> | 67%         | 59%              | Above                          |
| <b>2024/25 (revised)</b>     | 70%         | 59%              | Close to average               |
| <b>2023/24 (final)</b>       | 60%         | 58%              | Close to average               |
| <b>2022/23 (final)</b>       | 71%         | 58%              | Above                          |

### Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

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

| Year                         | This school | National average | Compared with national average |
|------------------------------|-------------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| <b>Latest 3 year average</b> | 74%         | 60%              | Above                          |
| <b>2024/25 (revised)</b>     | 85%         | 61%              | Above                          |
| <b>2023/24 (final)</b>       | 65%         | 59%              | Close to average               |
| <b>2022/23 (final)</b>       | 71%         | 59%              | Close to average               |

### 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 mathematics**

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

| Year                  | This school | National non-disadvantaged score | School disadvantage gap |
|-----------------------|-------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Latest 3 year average | 49%         | 68%                              | -18 pp                  |
| 2024/25 (revised)     | 60%         | 69%                              | -9 pp                   |
| 2023/24 (final)       | 35%         | 67%                              | -32 pp                  |
| 2022/23 (final)       | 52%         | 66%                              | -14 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 | 64%         | 80%                              | -16 pp                  |
| 2024/25 (revised)     | 70%         | 81%                              | -11 pp                  |
| 2023/24 (final)       | 65%         | 80%                              | -15 pp                  |
| 2022/23 (final)       | 57%         | 78%                              | -21 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 | 67%         | 78%                              | -11 pp                  |
| 2024/25 (revised)     | 70%         | 78%                              | -8 pp                   |
| 2023/24 (final)       | 60%         | 78%                              | -18 pp                  |
| 2022/23 (final)       | 71%         | 77%                              | -6 pp                   |

### Disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in mathematics

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

| Year                  | This school | National non-disadvantaged score | School disadvantage gap |
|-----------------------|-------------|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Latest 3 year average | 74%         | 80%                              | -6 pp                   |
| 2024/25 (revised)     | 85%         | 81%                              | 4 pp                    |
| 2023/24 (final)       | 65%         | 79%                              | -14 pp                  |
| 2022/23 (final)       | 71%         | 79%                              | -8 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 (2 term) | 6.0%        | 5.2%             | Above                          |
| 2023/24 (3 term) | 5.9%        | 5.5%             | Close to average               |
| 2022/23 (3 term) | 6.4%        | 5.9%             | Close to average               |

## 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 (2 term) | 15.4%       | 13.3%            | Close to average               |
| 2023/24 (3 term) | 17.8%       | 14.6%            | Close to average               |
| 2022/23 (3 term) | 17.7%       | 16.2%            | Close to average               |

## 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 standard expected of them.

### Expected standard

The school is fulfilling the expected standard of education and/or care. This means they are following the standard 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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