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George Barlow
Executive Principal
St Michael's Community Academy
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Dear Mr Barlow

Monitoring inspection of a school not in a category of concern of St Michael's Community Academy

This letter sets out the findings from the monitoring inspection that took place on 16 May 2025, on behalf of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills. The monitoring inspection was carried out under section 8(2) of the Education Act 2005 and took place because the school meets the monitoring threshold as set out in the [Monitoring Inspection Handbook](#).

The purpose of a monitoring inspection is not to grade the school's key and (where applicable) provision judgements, but to identify and report on the school's progress. It is to highlight to the school and parents any improvements that school leaders have made since the school's previous graded inspection.

During the inspection, I discussed with you and other senior leaders, the chief executive officer (CEO), other staff, trustees and governors the actions that have been taken to improve the school since the most recent graded inspection. We discussed the ongoing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. I also spoke to a representative of the local authority. I visited lessons, spoke with pupils and looked at curriculum documentation and pupils' workbooks. I also reviewed the single central record and the school improvement plan. I have considered all this in coming to my judgement.

Leaders have made progress to improve the school, but some aspects of the school need further improvement.

The school should take further action to:

- ensure that the school is well equipped to oversee the implementation of subject curriculums effectively and to evaluate the impact of them on pupils' learning.

Main findings

The school has undergone significant leadership changes since the last inspection. For example, very recently, it has appointed a new executive principal, head of school and several other new leaders. The school has managed this period of change effectively and staff have responded positively. Their morale is high. Many staff feel increasingly empowered to lead on planned improvements within their areas of responsibility. However, the school is at the early stages of ensuring that it has the procedures in place to check that the subject curriculums are delivered effectively and that they are having a positive impact on pupils' achievement.

Since the previous inspection, the school has identified additional development priorities related to pupils' behaviour and attendance. It has consulted with the school community to develop a fresh set of school values and a new behaviour policy. The school has also introduced more effective systems and procedures to tackle high rates of pupil absence. The positive impact of these actions is beginning to show. For example, persistent absenteeism and the number of suspensions from school have started to decrease.

Overall, the school is taking effective action to address the weaknesses identified at the last inspection. The school prioritised making improvements to the delivery of its phonics programme, including the quality of phonics catch-up support. This is making a positive difference to how well pupils are supported in learning to read. However, due in part to leadership turbulence and the emergence of additional priorities, the school's progress in strengthening the checks on pupils' learning has been limited. As a result, some pupils have gaps in their knowledge that are still not identified and addressed consistently well. The school is now working at pace to improve its use of assessment strategies to address this issue.

Those responsible for governance are providing clear strategic direction and appropriate challenge. They are making positive use of external support to assess the impact of their actions and identify next steps. Trustees and other trust leaders have also deployed additional staff from within the trust to further increase the school's capacity to tackle the remaining areas for improvement more rapidly.

I am copying this letter to the chair of the board of trustees, and the CEO of St Bart's Multi-Academy Trust, the Department for Education's regional director and the director of children's services for Cheshire East. This letter will be published on the Ofsted reports website.

Yours sincerely

David Spruce
His Majesty's Inspector