



Children's Services

Sharon Hubber,

Director

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Number One Riverside, Smith Street,
Rochdale OL16 1XU

Phone: 01706 647474

www.rochdale.gov.uk

St Michael's CE Primary School, Alkrington

School Context

St Michael's CE Primary School is a one form entry voluntary aided primary school in Alkrington, Middleton in the Diocese of Manchester, for pupils from 4 to 11 years old. It currently has 205 pupils on roll. The school's Christian values are evident in daily practice, worship and relationships, fostering a nurturing and inclusive culture. Partnerships with parents, carers and St Michael's Church enhance the school's identity and support pupil's development.

The school currently has significantly lower than national average numbers of disadvantaged pupils, those eligible for free school meals and EAL pupils.

The percentage of SEND pupils is broadly in line with National average. However, recently the school has admitted a number of high needs SEND children into school, which has had a significant impact upon the deployment of support and the school's budget. The number of pupils at SEND support is 13.2% and EHCP 2.4%.

Attendance is good, 95.5% in 2024/25, 9.4% persistent absence.

The school's provision for pupils' personal development is very good with a wide variety of enrichment opportunities, whilst mental health provision is robust.

Leadership

The current leadership structure includes the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and Assistant Headteacher, who work closely together to drive school improvement. The leadership team is a stable, well-established team.

The SENDco has recently taken over the post after previously covering the role during a maternity leave. She is a committed advocate for SEND, well organised and knowledgeable.

A new school bursar has recently been appointed and brings the skills and experience required to provide strong and effective support to the leadership team.

The governing body brings the required knowledge and skills to its role of supporting and challenging the school.

The school is part of an effective collaborative group – The Arch Alliance, which includes several strong schools, with experienced and supportive leaders and a track record of successful collaborative working. Staff also work with The Maths Hub and are supported by The English Hub

Being part of a productive and supportive diocesan group has given school access to further training opportunities.

Outcomes & Ofsted

The most recent Section 5 Ofsted inspection in October 2024 judged the school to be good in all judgement areas.

The report recognised the improvements made since the previous inspection and highlighted many of the school's strengths, including the caring environment, pupils' attitudes and behaviour, and school's high expectations: -

The school has high expectations for pupils' achievement, including for those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Typically, most pupils achieve well across a range of subjects. They speak confidently about what they have learned.

Pupils have positive attitudes towards their education. They behave well during lessons, which are calm and purposeful. This positive behaviour extends across the school, including at social times. Pupils try hard to meet staff's expectations and to follow the school's values, which include responsibility, thankfulness and respect.

The report's recommendations included: -

The development of assessment strategies in some subjects to support staff to identify and remedy gaps in pupils' subject knowledge.

Ensuring that staff deliver the curriculum consistently well to reduce variability in implementation.

These areas have been the focus of school improvement work since the inspection.

The school's last section 48 inspection, for schools of a religious character, was in April 2024. The school received a positive SIAMS inspection, affirming its strong Christian values, inclusive ethos and impact on pupils' spiritual development. The school's next section 48 inspection should take place before April 2029.

Outcomes data – 2025

EYFS GLD – 64%

Phonics – Year 1 - 80% WS

Multiplication check – average score 23.4

KS2

Combined R/W/M 2025 – 65% EXP – 19%GDS

Maths 2025 – 84% EXP – 32% GDS

Reading 2025 – 74% EXP - 29% GDS

Writing 2025 – 77% EXP – 19% GDS

GPS 2025 – 65% EXP - 26% GDS

Curriculum

The school has focused on developing a broad and balanced curriculum, which is now in place. Leaders have determined the important knowledge that pupils should learn and the order that teachers should introduce it. Children in the early years are generally well prepared for their next steps in learning.

Subject leaders have carefully designed and ordered the curriculum so that pupils can build their knowledge from the time they are in the early years to the end of Year 6.

School environment

St Michael's sits on a lovely site with a large playing field and playground, and a well-developed Forest School area. Outdoor provision for EYFS is an area for future development to enhance provision.

The building is bright and purposeful and has been well maintained, with no significant issues.

Attributes for leadership in the face of current challenges

A new leader will need to be committed to inclusion and to understand the impact of the increased level of needs of a variety of children.

They will need to work in a way that reflects the Christian ethos and character of the school, and also supports families, provides a caring environment and promotes the school as a strength of the local community.

It would be advantageous to have a background in EYFS or a clear understanding of what effective EYFS provision is, to ensure that school provides a strong start for all children.

It will be important that they understand the importance of investing in developing staff.

They should be capable of building strong relationships with staff at all levels, whilst confidently managing difficult conversations when required.

They will need to be able to demonstrate an understanding of, and the ability to respond effectively to, current parental expectations and challenges.

Likewise, they should be aware of the financial challenges associated with the school's budget and demonstrate an ability to work effectively within its constraints.