

From being a Black Country Challenge school in 2009, with attainment at just 13% A*-C including English and Maths, results at St Michael's had increased to 55% by 2013 and the school was recognised as being 34th in the country in the Government's most improved schools list. In 2014, the SSAT awarded St Michael's the Educational Outcomes Award for being in the top 20% of schools nationally for outstanding continuous improvement; we were rated Good by Ofsted and, the following year, the Anglican and Methodist Schools' inspectors judged St Michael's to be Outstanding. In November 2017, the school was once again judged to be Good by Ofsted, with Pupils' Personal Development and Welfare rated as Outstanding.

St Michael's is unique: the only Anglican Secondary school in Sandwell, and one of only two in Birmingham. An oversubscribed school, we are proud to be inclusive. The ethos has become a shared vision with everybody working towards the same, explicit goals. Staff work with each other – discussing ideas in a supportive cohesive environment.

The leadership team has been expanded to include Associate Assistant Heads to direct work on literacy; numeracy; students with high levels of attainment or entry to the school; years 7 to 9 (KS3) progress; disadvantaged students' progress; behaviour and transition into Year 7.

We encourage a culture of collaboration: sharing of good practice between teachers and departments. To increase accountability for student data and to enable staff to plan for progress, we introduced the Go4Schools data package.

We have formed KS3 'Raising Attainment Group' meetings, to identify issues early and avoid 'firefighting' in Year 11. We established an Academic Board group, to encourage curriculum and pastoral leaders to co-ordinate, and created working parties for key areas of teaching, learning and assessment and student well-being. As a result of these collaborations, we have created strategies to target our underperforming student groups. For example, higher order questions are directed to disadvantaged students first. The working parties trial innovations such as the 'Wow! Now. How' marking system and 'Safebook', both of which encourage meaningful dialogue between students and staff to promote progress.

Whilst behaviour in classrooms is typically very good, minor issues during break times have been addressed through the introduction of expectation cards. Carried at all times, if a student violates uniform or behaviour protocols outside of lessons, their card is signed. Three signatures result in a detention. A blank card at the end of the term results in a reward. The success of this scheme, alongside a stringent, structured, transparent and consistent set of scaled sanctions, has had a very positive impact on students' conduct around the school.

Another successful innovation has been to change Year 11 form tutors so that they are all maths teachers, with Year 7 tutors being English specialists. This means that students can take advantage of extra maths tuition/literacy during form time. We are planning to introduce project based, thematic work in years 7 and 8, to create a more effective transition from primary school and we have timetabled double lessons in all year groups to reduce movement around the school and intensify learning.

Forming an Ethos Committee has been an unprecedented success. Christmas and Easter services brought the whole school together; developing a strong sense of community and spiritual awareness. Similarly, stronger liaison with key stakeholders, including Governors and primary Headteachers, has led to more effective information-sharing.

Essentially, we are striving to raise aspirations, both of the students and their parents/carers, and create independent, skilled, problem-solving learners who are well-prepared for the next stage in their educational or vocational journeys.