

# Hathersage St Michael's CofE (Aided) Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	112885
<b>Local authority</b>	Derbyshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	378594
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 January 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Tim Bristow HMI

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	157
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Stuart Turner
<b>Headteacher</b>	Andrew Poole
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 September 2008
<b>School address</b>	School Lane Hathersage Hope Valley S32 1BZ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01433 650434
<b>Fax number</b>	01433 659761
<b>Email address</b>	info@st-michaels.derbyshire.sch.uk

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
<b>Inspection date(s)</b>	11–12 January 2012
<b>Inspection number</b>	378594



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## Introduction

Inspection team

Tim Bristow

HMI

Graham Marshall

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed eight teachers and visited 26 lessons. They held meetings with members of the governing body, the headteacher, staff and four groups of pupils. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection. They observed the school's work, and looked at: the school development plan, governing body meeting minutes, assessment information, lesson plans, school safety procedures and responses to questionnaires from 103 parents and carers.

## Information about the school

The school is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic heritages and pupils who speak English as an additional language are well-below average. The proportion of pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs is below average. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average.

Pupils are able to attend an after-school club that is managed privately. There is also a privately managed pre-school on site that is subject to separate inspection arrangements. In the last three years, the school has exceeded government floor standards. The school has achieved National Healthy School status. It has gained the Eco-Schools bronze level, Activemark and Investors in People awards.

**Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate**

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

## Inspection judgements

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>2</b>

## Key findings

- This is a good school. It has improved considerably in the last three years. Achievement is good. By the time pupils leave Year 6, attainment is above average in reading, writing and mathematics each year. This is as a result of the consistently good progress that nearly all of them make.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, the achievement of children in all areas of learning is usually good. However, in 2011, it was outstanding.
- In the past, the progress of a few pupils with disabilities and those with special educational needs has not been as rapid as that of others. A recent strengthening of the provision to support these pupils has resulted in most of them now making similar progress to their peers. However, communication between the school and a few parents and carers has not been sufficiently successful in allaying their concerns about provision.
- The teaching has improved considerably since the previous inspection. The teaching in most lessons is good. Writing is now taught particularly well, which has resulted in the strong improvement in attainment.
- Pupils are very well behaved around the school. They are polite, kind and respectful to each other and adults. In lessons, their responsible attitude to their own work is a major contributory feature to the good quality of learning.
- School leaders and the governing body demonstrate a good capacity for sustaining school improvement. Rigorous procedures to check the work of teachers have been instrumental in embedding the consistently good teaching and achievement. Very good provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage inside the school is not matched by the outdoor provision, which gives children insufficient opportunity for learning in all areas of the curriculum.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Strengthen the consultation and communication with all parents and carers who have children with disabilities or with special educational needs so that they are fully confident that the school supports their children effectively.
- Give children in the Early Years Foundation Stage better-quality opportunities

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for learning outside by:

- broadening the range of activities that children can take part in so that they address all areas of learning
- establishing times of the day and procedures to enable children to choose whether to learn inside or outside the classroom
- ensuring that there are more opportunities for child-led activities outside.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

The rise in attainment in writing in the last three years has been considerable. In 2009, it was below average. It is now above average, matching the attainment in reading and mathematics. The proportion of Year 6 pupils achieving the higher Level 5 in national tests has also risen considerably and is now above average. That is because pupils demonstrate well-developed literacy skills. The attainment in reading of pupils, including the few from minority ethnic heritages, in Key Stages 1 is above average. Even the few pupils in Years 1 and 2 who find reading a challenge have learnt to recognise the sounds of letters so that they are equipped to read words that they are not familiar with. Older pupils in Year 6 demonstrate that they can write proficiently in a range of styles. For example, they were able to report the key characteristics needed when writing instructions. That was notable, as they had not written instructions since the beginning of the academic year. Pupils achieve well in other subjects, particularly in music, science and information and communication technology (ICT).

Inspectors agree with nearly all the parents and carers, who believe that their children make good progress. The quality of learning for nearly all pupils is good because the work is well pitched and challenging. For example, in a Years 3 and 4 mathematics lesson, all pupils were persevering tenaciously to complete an investigation involving multiplication problems. The teacher had ensured that the challenge of the work for all pupils was pitched appropriately to their ability so that they made good progress. Occasionally, the most-able pupils do not make as rapid progress as they could because the higher expectations of what they are to achieve are not made clear enough at the start. Pupils with disabilities or with special educational needs have not always made good progress. For example, unvalidated assessment information shows that a few pupils did not make as rapid progress as the rest in 2011. A detailed examination of assessment information and the work of pupils in lessons show that the steps taken by the school to improve the progress of this group have been successful. Currently, most of these pupils are making good progress.

Effective links with the pre-school help to ensure that children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage well prepared for learning. They make good progress then in all

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areas of learning. By the time they enter Year 1, nearly all pupils have exceeded the skill development that is typical for their age. The skill development of the majority is usually well above that expected for their age.

### **Quality of teaching**

Good teaching is a consistent feature of the large majority of lessons. Nearly all parents and carers agree that teaching is good and a few commented that, while they would like teaching to be outstanding, they recognise the improvement in recent years. The large majority of pupils, also, agree that teaching is good. The teachers are successful in establishing an environment for learning that fosters independence and creativity. There are high expectations of pupils when cooperating and working with each other that contribute very effectively to their moral and social development. Typically in lessons, nearly all pupils work hard and have a thorough understanding of what it is they are trying to achieve because expectations are clearly explained. For example, in an ICT lesson all pupils worked extremely hard on developing a spreadsheet with formula for calculations. It was very challenging work. The perseverance and support for each other, demonstrated by all pupils when trying to complete the tasks, were very impressive. In lessons, teachers use assessment information well to plan work that is challenging and interesting for all groups. For example, in a lesson in the Early Years Foundation Stage, children were engrossed in searching for grandma's lost carrots. The work was developing children's speaking and listening skills very well. As one child reported, having successfully completed the task, 'We have solved the mystery!'

Overall, the quality of guidance and marking received by pupils to help them improve their work is good. In writing, marking and the guidance pupils receive is more often outstanding. For example, Year 6 pupils benefit from detailed and meticulous advice and guidance that systematically enable them to improve their grammar, spelling, punctuation and the quality of the content. The pupils spoken to reported that the advice they receive is very helpful. In mathematics, pupils benefit from helpful advice and praise, but, in some lessons, these are not linked sufficiently to their targets for improvement so that practice is not as helpful as in English lessons.

Underpinning the good teaching is a very effective curriculum. For example, the teaching of phonics to enable pupils to learn to read is organised very well. Pupils are taught in smaller groups based on their ability, contributing to the good progress made.

### **Behaviour and safety of pupils**

Behaviour around school and in lessons is typically good and sometimes outstanding. Nearly all parents and carers agree with this. Pupils take responsibility readily for aspects of the day-to-day running of the school. One extremely strong feature is the pupils' kindness and consideration to each other. It is typical for them to help each other without being asked when they can see that their friends are having difficulties. This is done quietly and without fuss.

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The school has established a safe environment for learning. Nearly all parents, carers and pupils agree with this. All the pupils spoken to report how much they enjoy coming to school. Attendance in most years is above average. Incidents of bullying are rare; however, a few parents and carers are concerned that, when it occurs, it is not dealt with as effectively as it could be. Records and discussions with leaders and the governing body show that in the past, there were incidents of bullying that took some time to deal with effectively. This is no longer the case. Procedures to deal with bullying are swift and effective.

### **Leadership and management**

In the last three years, school leaders, ably led by the headteacher, have strengthened the procedures for checking the work of the school and for tracking the progress made by pupils. The work is underpinned by a realistic school improvement plan, with a shortlist of the correct priorities for improvement. The impact of these procedures on provision and outcomes is a greater consistency in the quality of teaching, raised attainment – particularly in writing – and good progress made by nearly all pupils. School leaders, such as those for English and the Early Years Foundation Stage, are particularly effective. Others are relatively inexperienced, but keen. They are supported well by other leaders to ensure that the provision and outcomes they are responsible for do not decline while they develop their leadership skills.

The governing body is extremely effective. It has a full understanding of the strategic direction of school development and hold leaders to account rigorously to ensure school improvement is driven forward. It is also extremely supportive, demonstrating care both for the hardworking staff and the pupils. The governing body and the school fulfil their statutory duties to safeguard pupils and tackle any discrimination rigorously. The close monitoring of pupils' progress and the good progress made by nearly all of them, demonstrate how well they promote the equality of opportunity of pupils.

The school and its links with the church have helped to establish a strong sense of community among pupils. For example, in assembly, the whole school sang a canon beautifully. For this to be successful, pupils had to depend on each other to sing their part well. The curriculum is broad and balanced and offers pupils a good range of opportunities to pursue their own interests. For example, many pupils are learning to play a range of musical instruments. The school has conscientiously promoted other cultures and faiths in each of the topics taught. The structure of the building is a barrier to ensuring the regular entitlement of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to learning outdoors. Staff have tried to overcome this, but there are still insufficient opportunities for children to choose to learn outdoors.

At the time of the last inspection, there were parents and carers that were concerned about the quality of communication from school to home. School leaders and the governing body have worked effectively to overcome this and communication and

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consultation is regular through newsletters, text message procedures, questionnaires and the up-to-date website. However, communication with the parents and carers of pupils with special educational needs is not yet always fully effective. Now, the very large majority of parents and carers agree that the school keeps them well informed. As one parent reported, 'I feel that the school has really improved since the last inspection - not only in terms of results, but also particularly in much improved communication with the parents.'



## Glossary

### What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

### Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	46	8	0
Primary schools	8	47	40	5
Secondary schools	14	38	40	8
Special schools	28	48	20	4
Pupil referral units	15	50	29	5
All schools	11	46	38	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 August 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.**



13 January 2012

Dear Children

**Inspection of Hathersage St Michael's CofE (Aided) Primary School, Hope Valley, S32 1BZ**

You may remember that I came with my colleague to inspect the work of the school and to check how well you are doing. Thank you for the help you gave us; we found you to be very polite and knowledgeable about the work of the school. Your views were very helpful to us as we carried out the inspection. I am very pleased to report that you are doing well. You can be very proud of the good progress you are making and the high standards you achieve in reading, writing and mathematics. When you leave this school, you are well prepared for secondary education because of your well-developed skills of problem solving, teamwork and independence. We found that your behaviour is good. We were particularly impressed by how hard you work and that you do not give up when you encounter difficulties. It was good to see how enthusiastic you are about your school. I enjoyed particularly listening to you singing in assembly. I thought you sang beautifully.

You told us that teaching and the help you get to improve your work is good and we agree. You go to a good school, where you are well cared for and where the headteacher staff and governing body have worked very hard to improve your education.

In order to help you do even better we have asked your school to do two things.

- Improve the way that it communicates with a few parents and carers.
- Give children in the Reception class more opportunities to play outdoors.

You can help by continuing to work hard and playing a full part in the life of the community.

Yours sincerely

Tim Bristow  
Her Majesty's Inspector (on behalf of the inspection team)

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