

# Michael Syddall Church of England Aided Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	121609
<b>Local authority</b>	North Yorkshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	380283
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 January 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Derek Neil

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>	175
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Robert Knowles
<b>Headteacher</b>	David Stott
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	3 December 2008
<b>School address</b>	Noels Court Mowbray Road Catterick Village Richmond DL10 7LB
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## Introduction

Inspection team

Derek Neil  
Peter Bannon

Additional inspector  
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed seven teachers in 16 lessons or parts of lessons. These included two joint observations with the acting headteacher. Inspectors held meetings with five groups of pupils; with the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors; and with school staff, including senior and middle managers. They also had a telephone discussion with a representative of the local authority. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a number of documents including the school development plan and assessment information. They analysed 38 parental questionnaires. The lead inspector looked at the online questionnaire (Parent View) but no responses were recorded.

## Information about the school

This primary school is smaller than average. Approximately a quarter of the pupils are from service families stationed at the nearby garrison. An above-average number join or leave the school at other than the normal times. The proportion known to be entitled to free school meals is well-below average. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The school has very few pupils at the early stages of learning English as an additional language. The number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those with a statement of special educational needs, is low.

The school exceeds the current floor standard set by the government, which determines the minimum expectations for attainment and progress. The school has achieved Healthy School status, the International School Award and the Inclusion Quality Mark. The independently managed on-site pre-school provision is subject to a separate inspection. At the time of the inspection the headteacher was on long-term absence. The headteacher of another local school was acting headteacher on a part-time basis.

**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>3</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>3</b>

## Key Findings

- This was a satisfactory school at the time of the last inspection and remains satisfactory. The current temporary arrangements for the leadership of the school have underpinned considerable improvements. The acting headteacher has identified appropriate priorities, based on a thorough analysis of the school's performance. Middle and senior leaders and the governing body now have a good understanding of their roles and are developing their skills in monitoring the school's performance and in taking responsibility for improvement.
- Pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Attainment is broadly average, though in 2011 attainment in mathematics and writing dipped because of disruption to staffing and leadership. Although not fully overcome, these have been largely tackled. Few pupils reach the higher levels in each key stage. Pupils make satisfactory progress from their starting points, though their progress is stronger in reading than in writing or mathematics. The school's data about pupils currently in the school and inspectors' scrutiny of their work indicate many are now making good progress and are on track to reach above-average attainment in national tests in response to the school's successful efforts to improve.
- Teaching is satisfactory and improving. Much of the teaching seen on the inspection was good. Teachers have good relationships with their pupils and manage their behaviour well. Some lessons are very practical and include exciting activities but others are more humdrum
- Pupils behave well in class and throughout the school day. They report that there is little bullying and that it is dealt with effectively by the school when it occurs. Staff deals with occasional poor behaviour appropriately.
- Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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

- Raise attainment in mathematics and writing by continuing with current efforts to accelerate pupils' progress in these subjects.
- Improve teaching by:
  - introducing exciting and imaginative activities into more lessons
  - ensuring pupils do not spend too long on the carpet listening to the teacher
  - Challenging the most-able pupils with harder work at all times, including the times when the teacher is teaching the whole class.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
  - securing stable, long-term arrangements for leading the school
  - Pressing ahead with plans to develop further the governors' and school leaders' skills in monitoring and improving the school's performance.

## Main Report

### Achievement of pupils

Attainment in both key stages has been broadly average for some years. It rose after the previous inspection but dipped in 2011 in writing and in mathematics. This was partly due to staffing disruption and insecure leadership in the school for much of that year. Few pupils reach the higher levels in either key stage. Attainment in reading is about average at the end of Key Stage 1 and above average at the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils develop good ability to read unfamiliar words in Key Stage 1 because they are taught effectively about the sounds different letters make (phonics). By the end of Key Stage 2 they are fluent and confident readers. Many greatly enjoy books. Though most pupils take care to present their written work carefully, the presentation of a few pupils betrays a lack of pride in their work.

Children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that at the end of Reception they have skills that are slightly above average. Throughout the rest of the school they make satisfactory progress, though in 2011 the progress of some pupils in mathematics, mainly girls and the less-able, was limited. The school has tackled these issues; the gaps are closing and now pupils make at least satisfactory progress and many are making good progress. This includes pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those pupils who join the school at other than the usual time.

Learning in lessons is satisfactory and often good. Pupils work enthusiastically and learn well when they are given a practical activity. As one girl expressed it, 'We prefer doing it, not writing it!' For example, they worked very well in a science lesson in small groups to create an electrical circuit; at times pupils consulted other groups on how to make progress. However, when pupils have to sit on the carpet for too long they get bored, and when the most-able are not challenged they do not enjoy their work. Nonetheless, most pupils say they learn most of the time and their

parents and carers agree they make good progress. This is increasingly true, despite some differences in the progress made in some year groups.

### **Quality of teaching**

Teaching is satisfactory and improving. The school has done much to eliminate the weaknesses that contributed to the dip in standards in 2011.

Teachers enjoy good relationships with pupils and manage their behaviour well. They use praise and incentives effectively to encourage pupils to try hard. They often ask the pupils to use a physical action to help them remember what they are learning, such as inventing hand gestures for different sequences in counting activities. They deploy teaching assistants effectively to provide support and challenge for specific groups or individuals. They create opportunities to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, for example by creating opportunities for them to collaborate with classmates or by stressing the importance of having high aspirations. Their marking of pupils' work is very effective: they give helpful guidance on how to improve it and ensure pupils respond to this advice.

Much of the teaching is good. In these lessons the teacher uses a range of methods to monitor pupils' progress, for example by asking them to show their answers or by getting in amongst them on the carpet to hear their discussions. The most effective teachers are lively and display an infectious enthusiasm for the work. They devise exciting, practical activities, such as songs and games, which the pupils enjoy and which consequently lead to good learning. For example, Year 1 pupils made rapid progress when using their knowledge of phonics to work out which words on a card were real, and so could be placed in the 'treasure chest', and which were made up, and which they therefore had to place in a bin.

Some weaknesses remain. Some teaching is pedestrian and fails to inspire pupils. In some lessons pupils are expected to remain on the carpet for too long, which results in a loss of concentration and interest. Work is sometimes undemanding, particularly for the most-able, mainly but not exclusively, when staff is teaching the whole class. The curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to develop their literacy skills in other subjects but little scope for improving their numeracy skills outside mathematics lessons. Most parents and carers and pupils feel that teaching is good.

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

Most pupils feel safe in school and their parents and carers concur. Pupils report that bullying is rare and are satisfied that staff deals with it well when it occurs. There is very little name-calling and this tends to be of a minor nature, largely confined to football games at playtime. Pupils know not to use abusive terms because, in the words of one Year 5 pupil, 'it hurts people's feelings'. Staffs take great care to protect pupils. In a Year 2 session about people who help us a teaching assistant made sure pupils knew the telephone number for the emergency services. Pupils act safely in class; when asked to carry out a physical activity in a constricted space they do so very responsibly.

Typically, pupils behave well in and out of lessons. They show respect for adults and for each other. Their conduct in class supports learning as they are quiet and pay attention. The very large majority of parents and carers agree that behaviour is good, though a minority of pupils feel it is only good for some of the time. This is because they see the behaviour of a very small number as unacceptable. The school deals appropriately with poor behaviour though occasionally staffs miss an opportunity to reinforce with the youngest children the importance of curbing aggressive feelings.

The school promotes good attendance but necessarily takes a more lenient approach with holiday requests from service families. Consequently, attendance is broadly average but fluctuates. Pupils are punctual on arrival to school.

### **Leadership and management**

Improvements since the last inspection have been hampered by staff absences. The acting headteacher, however, moved swiftly to identify priorities and has made great strides in bringing about improvements. Staff, parents and carers and the governing body appreciate her impact. Morale is high. Middle and senior leaders have been empowered to take responsibility for improving the school. Governors have developed a good understanding of their responsibility for monitoring the school's performance. The school is aware of the need for further training to improve the monitoring and evaluation skills of leaders and the governing body. Professional development has secured great improvements in the school's provision, such as the accuracy of assessment, the quality of teaching and the tracking of pupils' progress to help identify potential underachievement quickly. This has created a momentum that gives the school satisfactory capacity to improve.

The curriculum is broad and balanced, meets pupils' needs and promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development satisfactorily. Strength is the way small groups of pupils are taught short lessons by skilful assistants and make good progress with basic skills. For example, one group needing better communication skills learned how to listen without interrupting and to make eye contact with other people in the group. The school analyses assessment data thoroughly and studies the relative progress of different groups. By doing this it has ensured that pupils who join the school other than at the usual time and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities make as much progress as their peers, and that all groups are on track to attain higher levels than in previous years. The school does not tolerate any form of discrimination; its values are reflected in the way pupils of different ethnic groups play happily together at break. The school's arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements and are effective.

## 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 Pupils

**Inspection of Michael Syddall Church of England Aided Primary School,  
Richmond DL10 7LB**

Thank you for welcoming my colleague and me so warmly into your school when we inspected it recently. We enjoyed watching you in lessons and at play, talking about your school with you and your teachers, and looking at your work. Now I want to share with you what we thought.

You go to a satisfactory and improving school. It has many strong points. Staffs take good care of you; I understand why you say you feel safe there. The teachers often give you interesting activities in lessons. You behave well and take good care of each other. Your reading is good; many of you told us how much you enjoy books. In the past, pupils achieved satisfactorily and their attainment was average. Those of you still at the school are making faster progress.

There are a few things that would make the school better. I have asked the staff to continue with the work they are doing to make sure you make more rapid progress in mathematics and in writing. Some of you told us that sometimes lessons are a little dull, so I have discussed with staff ways in which they might make all lessons exciting. The acting headteacher has done a lot to improve the school and we want senior staff and the governing body to press ahead with these improvements so that you can all achieve well.

Thank you again for helping me so much. It was a pleasure to meet you. I wish all of you the very best for the future.

Yours sincerely

Derek Neil  
Lead inspector

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