

St Michael's Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique reference number	133282
Local authority	Warwickshire
Inspection number	381487
Inspection dates	30–31 January 2012
Lead inspector	Keith Sadler

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	289
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Patricia Hall
Headteacher	Christopher Errington
Date of previous school inspection	22 June 2010
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Age group	3–11
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Introduction

Inspection team

Keith Sadler	Additional inspector
Roary Pownall	Additional inspector
Vanessa Ward	Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 19 lessons led by 13 different teachers or practitioners. The inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body, staff, parents and carers, and groups of pupils. Inspectors took account of the responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation. This included the school's analysis of pupils' progress, teachers' lesson plans, the school development plan, leaders' monitoring records, and pupils' work. Questionnaires from 84 parents and carers, from staff and from pupils in Key Stage 2 were analysed and their responses taken into account.

Information about the school

St Michael's is an average-sized and over-subscribed primary school. Most of the pupils live within the immediate vicinity, though an increasing number of pupils come from the wider area. Most pupils are of White British heritage and there are a few from a wide range of minority ethnic backgrounds. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is high. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is above average. Many of these pupils have social and emotional difficulties. The school meets the current government floor standard. The school has gained Healthy School Status and also the silver Eco School award.

The school has gone through a number of changes since the previous inspection. A new headteacher and deputy headteacher have been appointed. The school merged with the adjacent nursery school and children's centre in September 2010. St Michael's Children's Centre is subject to a separate inspection report. There is also a breakfast and after-school club, Minimacs, which is managed by the governing body and is included in this inspection.

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

Overall effectiveness	2
Achievement of pupils	2
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	2

Key findings

- This is a good school. The headteacher's effective leadership and dedication to improvement is shared by the staff and the governing body. All are committed to gaining the best provision and outcomes for pupils. Parents and carers recognise these strengths and they are almost unanimous in their support.
- Achievement is good. Pupils make good progress from low starting points and by the time that they reach Year 6, attainment is above average in reading and mathematics although it is below average in writing. This is because, in the past, the achievement of boys in writing has been weak. It is now strengthening and the gap between the attainment of boys and girls is narrowing. Even so, higher attainment is hampered by poor handwriting and restrictions in their use of grammar.
- Teaching is good. Teachers invariably provide interesting and exciting activities that capture the pupils' interest because lessons are generally planned well to meet the varying learning needs of the pupils. Teachers' use of assessment is good although there are inconsistencies in their marking of work. Sometimes the pace of learning is slowed because teachers take too long to introduce lessons.
- The school has a warm and welcoming environment where pupils feel cared for and safe. Their behaviour is good and their attitudes positive. The school's outstanding provision for the many pupils that have social and emotional difficulties, and disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, ensures that they make good progress.
- Due to the resolve and determination of the headteacher and senior staff, a concerted approach to school improvement has resulted in a strengthening of teaching and learning since the last inspection. All staff with responsibilities make a good contribution to the school's effective monitoring and evaluation processes.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Lift the quality of teaching and learning from good to outstanding by:
 - strengthening pupils' handwriting and spelling skills
 - improve the pupils' use of grammar and punctuation
 - ensuring that teachers do not spend too long introducing lessons
 - removing inconsistencies in the marking of pupils' work by ensuring that next steps in learning are made explicit and comments focus on the intended outcomes of work by September 2012.

Main report

Achievement of pupils

Children enter the Nursery classes with skills and abilities that are below those expected for children of their age, particularly in their social and emotional development. Provision is consistently good in both the Nursery and Reception classes and, because the staff care for the children well and create a warm and nurturing environment, they make good progress in their learning. As a result, children achieve well, particularly in their personal and social development. By the time that they enter Year 1 the majority of children achieve the expected goals in most of the areas of learning.

Parents' and carers' almost unanimous view in saying that their children make good progress is well-founded. Learning, as observed in lessons and during support sessions across the school, is good for all groups of pupils and it matches the school's own tracking and achievement data. The pupils' above average attainment in mathematics and reading at the end of Year 6 shows that most pupils achieve well by the time they leave the school. However, attainment in writing is below average. The staff are keen to accelerate further progress in writing, particularly for the boys. The well-founded and comprehensive range of improvement projects are tackling this well and starting to show benefit. As a result, the gap between the performance of boys and girls has closed to compare well with the national picture. One of the main reasons for this is that the curriculum has been reviewed and a much greater emphasis is now placed on providing opportunities for pupils to write in other subjects. This is paying dividends because the well-chosen topics are designed to capture the interest and engagement of boys. For example, as part of a rain forest topic, pupils talked enthusiastically about the opportunity they had, from a visiting specialist, to handle a python and gecko, and this excited the pupils. Even so, pupils' attainment in writing is hampered by weak handwriting and spelling skills. Even the most able Year 6 pupils who are securely on course to attain the higher level at the end of the year do not take sufficient care in their presentation of work.

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Pupils enter Year 1 with reading abilities that are below expected levels. Their average attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 reflects their good achievement. Listening to readers and observations of group reading show that the close guidance provided for pupils when reading in groups enables both boys and girls to enjoy reading and make good progress. In both Years 1 and 2, progress is aided by the rigorous attention given to the teaching of sounds and letters. In consequence, most Year 2 pupils make good use of a wide range of phonic structures when reading and their basic sight vocabulary is good. Good progress is maintained in Key Stage 2 and this is aided by the project, 'Take One Book'. Year 6 pupils were enthusiastic when explaining how their learning is built around the characters and plot of the chosen text.

Assessment data show that the relatively high numbers of pupils that have social and emotional difficulties make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. This is because skilful small-group teaching helps to narrow the gap between these pupils and others. Other disabled pupils and those with special educational needs also progress well. They develop new skills well because additional adult support ensures that their individual educational plans are carefully implemented. The high number of pupils that are known to be entitled to free school meals also make good progress in both English and mathematics. The progress of Year 6 pupils is boosted by each pupil having a personal learning mentor for the second half of the school year. All the teaching and support staff take responsibility for supporting a Year 6 pupil through to the end of the assessment process. This enables pupils to receive social support as well as constantly reviewing progress towards targets.

Quality of teaching

Parents and pupils expressed the view that teaching is good and this is borne out by inspection findings. Teachers manage pupils well and relationships are positive with all classrooms presenting with a calm and purposeful atmosphere. Staff are skilled at building pupils' talking skills and this is facilitated by the many opportunities that are provided for paired and small group work. Teachers' challenging questioning also enables them to check pupils' understanding as well as building the pupils' vocabulary. Even so, occasionally, the pace of learning is slowed because teachers spend too long introducing lessons. Teachers' good subject knowledge aids learning well. In a Year 6 French lesson, for example, the teacher's good accent and her insistence on pupils' correct pronunciation linked to the pupils' modelling of her vocabulary ensured that learning was rapid and also enjoyable for the class. Although most marking is good, there are inconsistencies because teachers do not always focus their comments on lesson outcomes. Furthermore, next steps in learning are not always made explicit. Activities are generally matched well to pupils' abilities. High quality learning was seen, for example, in the Early Years Foundation Stage unit as children were first introduced to the well-equipped pet shop role-play area. Later they responded excitedly to the teacher's suggestion that they could sound out letters as they wrote as vets. Topics, complemented by such assembly themes as the nature of trust, also successfully promote the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and their enjoyment of school.

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Behaviour and safety of pupils

Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and learning. Behaviour is good both in lessons and around the school. Those with social and emotional difficulties are managed well and the excellent and wide-ranging programme of high quality support enables these pupils to play a full part in lessons. Parents and carers are effusive in their comments about the way in which the nurture groups, the 'Jungle' and also the literacy and numeracy for life facilities support their children's emotional well-being. Pupils who have concerns are confident that all the adults will help them. Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They are aware of the various risks they face in and out of school, such as when using the internet or when walking and cycling, and how to respond to these. Pupils are aware of different types of bullying, including cyber bullying, and know how to deal with these. They say that the rare incidences of bullying of any kind are dealt with well by staff. The school's explicit principles ensure that there is a positive and welcoming ethos. Outstanding levels of pastoral care ensure that there is sensitive support for pupils and families whose challenging circumstances may make them vulnerable. A number of parents and carers made appreciative comments about how the school has helped them through times of difficulty. Others commented on how the good quality breakfast and after-school club are enjoyed by their children, and this was confirmed by inspection. Furthermore, they are unanimous in saying that their children are kept safe in school.

Leadership and management

The school is well led and managed. Leaders, staff and governors hold high expectations of themselves, the school and of pupils. Discrimination of any kind is not tolerated. Senior leaders and governors share a clear vision for the school and a determination to ensure that provision and attainment are strengthened. Team work is strong and staff morale high, with many members of staff commenting that they are proud to be part of the St Michael's team. Self-evaluation is accurate and is based on rigorous and regular checking of the quality of teaching and of the progress that pupils are making. Close attention has been paid to recommendations made during the last inspection. The focus on improving attendance has been particularly successful. There has been a strengthening of provision, particularly in teaching and the curriculum, and this has led to raised rates of progress, especially in writing and that of the boys. Data about pupils' progress are used very well, both to check that provision is being successful and to target extra help and support as required. In this way the school ensures good equality of opportunity. Parental approval is high, with almost unanimously positive opinions being expressed in questionnaires completed for the inspection.

Staff and governors have grasped the opportunity to strengthen the partnership with parents and carers with the opportunities provided with the merger of the Nursery school and Children's Centre. The revised school curriculum is good. It successfully promotes good progress by providing pupils with skills to use in many contexts and by supporting many aspects of their personal development. It also successfully

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promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Governance is good. The governing body supports the school well and has managed the appointments and organisational changes in its stride. Close attention is paid to ensuring safeguarding arrangements are robust and meet regulatory requirements.

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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	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).

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.



1 February 2012

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Michael's Church of England Primary School, Bedworth, CV12 9DA

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to inspect your school. We enjoyed hearing about the many things that you enjoy in your school. We know that you really enjoy all the trips and visits that you make and we hope that your learning is helped by the forthcoming visit to a sculpture park.

Yours is a good school. Your teachers work hard to make lessons interesting and they plan lots of exciting activities for you to do. This helps you to make good progress in your learning. Those of you who find learning hard also make good progress. This is because the staff make sure that you have lots of chances to learning in the 'Jungle', the 'Literacy for Life' and 'Numeracy for Life' rooms, and in the common room.

You told us that your school is a happy place and that the adults look after you really well. We agree with you and so do your parents and carers. We were impressed by how well you get on together. Your behaviour is good and you feel safe in school. Your Headteacher does a good job and he is greatly helped by all the staff. They are always checking on how well you are doing because they want you always to do as well as you can.

Even in a good school like yours, there are things to improve. We have asked your teachers to make sure that your handwriting and spelling improves and also your grammar. We have also asked your teachers to make sure that they do not spend too long introducing lessons. Finally, we have asked that when marking your work, your teachers always focus on lesson success criteria and they make your next steps in learning clear.

We really enjoyed our time in your school. Thank you for taking time to talk to us and letting us watch your lessons. You can help to make your school even better by continuing to work hard towards your targets.

Yours sincerely

Keith Sadler
Lead inspector

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