

# St Michael's Church of England Primary School (Tenterden)

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	118670
<b>Local Authority</b>	Kent
<b>Inspection number</b>	358417
<b>Inspection dates</b>	3–4 November 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Susan Orpin

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 controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	191
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Nicola Denoon-Duncan
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Moira Duncombe
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	16 October 2007
<b>School address</b>	Ashford Road Tenterden TN30 6PU
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors observed 14 lessons and 7 teachers were seen. Meetings were held with the headteacher, staff, four governors and a group of pupils. The inspectors scrutinised teachers' planning, the school's assessment information, safeguarding policies, the monitoring of pupils' progress and pupils' work. They analysed questionnaires from the staff and pupils, as well as 86 from parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- The provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage and how well children are helped to make a good start in school.
- The rate of pupils' progress in Years 1 to 6 and the extent to which it has improved in the last year.
- The quality of teaching and how well it provides the right level of challenge for all pupils.
- How well leaders and managers at all levels are helping to accelerate pupils' progress.

## Information about the school

St Michael's is an average-sized primary school and is located in a rural area. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average and their needs are varied. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have been in post for 10 months. There is an after-school play club which is run by an outside provider and which is inspected separately.

The school has achieved the Activemark, the Bronze Award for modern foreign languages and Healthy School Status.

**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: how good is the school?**

**3**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**3**

## Main findings

This satisfactory school has successfully arrested a decline in standards, which are now beginning to improve. The self-evaluation systems are accurate, so leaders are clear about what has to be done to make the school even better. When they join the school, most children are working at the levels typically expected for their age. Pupils' progress is improving in all subjects so it is now satisfactory, although there is still some inconsistency across the school. Leaders have made a good start to reducing inconsistencies by improving the provision in writing, mathematics and science in Years 1 and 2, and in English, mathematics and science in Years 3 to 6. The improvements have been achieved by better quality teaching, a more interesting curriculum and raising the rate of attendance. Despite these developments, attainment is only average and senior leaders and governors know there is more work to do to raise standards. Outcomes in the Early Years Foundation Stage have improved and children now get a good start to their education. These improvements are secure and demonstrate the school's satisfactory capacity to improve further.

Teachers have good relationships with their pupils and they manage their behaviour well, so pupils' behaviour is good. Although, when lessons require pupils to listen for long periods of time, they lose concentration and become less attentive. In a few lessons, teachers' knowledge of the subject was insecure, leading to some confusion in pupils' learning. Assessment is carried out well by some teachers, but in a few lessons the information from assessments is not used well enough to make sure that tasks provide suitable challenge for pupils' differing abilities, especially the more able. The curriculum provides a strong focus on English, mathematics and science and is being developed to make learning more interesting and relevant through the use of a thematic approach. As a result, pupils enjoy lessons, although at times when there are links between subjects, the purpose of lessons is confused, so pupils learn less well.

Pupils are well cared for and supported. They have a good understanding of how to stay healthy and safe. Most parents and carers are confident in the school's ability to keep their children safe. Attendance has improved and is above average. Pupils' contribution to the school and wider community is good. The school council has begun to give pupils a voice so they can contribute their views to improving life at school. For example, they have contributed ideas about the seating arrangements for assemblies and their opinions are being used to improve assessment procedures. Pupils value and care for each other well. Their moral development is good and they work and play together well. However, their understanding of cultures other than their own is less well developed.

The school is improving because senior leaders are helping teachers improve their lessons. The determined leadership of the headteacher has developed a purposeful team of staff who want to improve. However, subject leaders are not taking on enough management

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responsibility. There is satisfactory engagement with parents and carers, most of whom are very happy with their children's experience at school.

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

- Improve learning and progress and raise attainment for all pupils, especially the more able, in English, mathematics and science by:
  - ensuring teachers use assessment information more effectively to improve teaching so lessons are better matched to pupils' different learning needs
  - making sure activities in lessons are always suitably challenging and interesting.
- Develop the curriculum by improving the planning of topics which link subjects together, so the intended learning outcomes are clearly defined.
- Develop further the roles of subject leaders so they are able to participate more fully in rigorous monitoring activities to help teachers improve their lessons and further improve attainment and progress.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**3**

Pupils' achievement is satisfactory and most enjoy school. Pupils' learning and progress in lessons are satisfactory, although at times the most able do not achieve as well as they might. Pupils make better progress when they are given a variety of interesting activities they can take part in, together with a clear purpose. For example, in a key stage 2 literacy lesson, pupils were learning to use story maps to help them tell their stories, set in Victorian times, to the rest of the class. This challenged pupils of all abilities and helped them to learn more about using notes to help tell the stories, whilst also demanding that they use their historical knowledge. As a result, pupils were motivated, attentive and used their initiative to develop their vocabularies and to make further use of historical facts. However, in a mathematics lesson, pupils were learning how to classify shapes, which they were quickly able to do. They then pasted straws onto paper to make the shapes they had discussed, which was time consuming and added little to their learning. Pupils with special educational needs are given satisfactory support and they make the same progress as other pupils.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are friendly and welcoming to each other and adults. They play and work together well. Pupils' preparation for the next stage of their education is satisfactory.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

<sup>1</sup> The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

## How effective is the provision?

The school is a calm and purposeful place where pupils and adults feel valued and work together industriously. The pastoral care for pupils is good and their well-being is a high priority; vulnerable pupils are being supported and monitored well.

Teachers are well organised and they mostly plan their lessons carefully. Teachers manage their pupils' behaviour well, so lessons are orderly. Teaching assistants are skilled in helping less able pupils understand the lesson. Teachers assess pupils regularly and this information is usually soundly used to monitor their progress and provide extra support when needed. However, teachers do not always use the information from their assessments of pupils to help them plan their lessons so, at times, the tasks they set are either too easy for some or too difficult for others. Pupils then quickly lose motivation and become less attentive. The majority of teachers mark pupils' work well, giving pupils a clear indication of how to improve, but other teachers are less conscientious about the marking of work. In some classes pupils are given clear targets to help them learn, but these are not used consistently well throughout the school.

Literacy, numeracy, science and information and communication technology are represented well in the curriculum, contributing well to the improvement to pupils' progress. Recent developments to the curriculum have resulted in the provision of interesting topics that help make learning more engaging and enjoyable for pupils. However, at times teachers' lack of subject knowledge and an occasional lack of clarity in

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planning lead to some confusion in the purpose of lessons. There is a good programme of personal, social and health education, which is making a positive impact on pupils' personal development and well-being. There is a good range of visitors, trips and after-school clubs and extra activities provided, following consultation with pupils, that are well attended and are sometimes run by older pupils.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The recently appointed headteacher has developed the staff into a cohesive team who work closely together and share her ambition for improving the school's effectiveness. However, the middle managers do not always take sufficient responsibility for improving pupils' progress and teaching by participating more fully in rigorous monitoring activities. The governing body is very supportive and has a secure understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and the extent of the challenges ahead. Although, at times, governors do not challenge the school sufficiently in order to make sure improvements happen more quickly. There are secure systems for seeking and acting on parents' and carers' views and the school is beginning to develop its communication with parents and carers to keep them better informed about their children's progress and how they can help.

The school promotes equality and tackles discrimination in a satisfactory way. There are good systems for pastoral care and staff work closely with other agencies to make sure vulnerable pupils are fully included. The progress of pupils requiring additional help, such as those with special educational needs, is monitored closely and suitable extra activities and support are provided. The school makes a satisfactory contribution to community cohesion, especially within the school, although the plans to develop links at a national and global level are still at an early stage.

The school's safeguarding procedures are good and safeguarding is a high priority in every aspect of school life. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves safe, staff are well trained and governor training is underway.

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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<b>The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage is well led and this has ensured that provision has improved significantly in the last year. Weaker areas have been tackled rigorously and children's progress and learning have improved in all areas, particularly in their social and emotional development. There are good arrangements to ensure that children make a smooth transition to school. When they join the school, most children are working at the levels typically expected for their age. In the last year, children's progress was good, so by the end of the Reception year they were working at above average levels. Their learning is continuously assessed through the use of comprehensive detailed profiles, and lesson plans are adjusted to make sure children's differing needs are met well.

The well-planned curriculum provides a balance between activities that have been planned for children and those they have chosen for themselves. Children enjoy learning and they actively participate in lessons most of the time. For example, in a lesson to hear, recognise and say sounds, children were encouraged by a puppet monster who spelled different words for them. By the end of the session, the children recognised new words with ease. Children make full use of indoor and outdoor environments, although the outdoor area is very small and the shape limits the different ways it can be used. Adults provide good quality interaction with children, contributing well to their progress. There is a good communication with parents and carers through the use of home-school diaries.



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*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

## Views of parents and carers

Almost half of parents and carers returned questionnaires. Those received were mostly positive. Almost all parents feel the school is well led and helps their children enjoy learning, lead healthy lifestyles and keeps their children safe. About 10% of parents and carers felt their children were not making enough progress or preparing them well enough for the future. Inspectors found that while pupils' progress is satisfactory and pupils are prepared for their future lives in a satisfactory way, there is room for improvement.

Positive comments included: 'the arrival of the headteacher has been a huge asset to the school'; 'teachers are always friendly and approachable'; and, 'St Michael's is a well run school with a caring ethos'.

## Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Michael's CE Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 86 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 191 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	55	64	28	33	3	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	60	70	23	27	3	3	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	33	38	43	50	6	7	2	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	33	38	40	47	4	5	4	5
The teaching is good at this school	35	41	37	43	4	5	2	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	30	35	41	48	6	7	2	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	27	31	55	64	0	0	2	2
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	23	27	41	48	7	8	2	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	31	36	45	52	2	2	4	5
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	26	30	47	55	5	6	1	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	33	38	39	45	8	9	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	46	53	31	36	4	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	47	55	33	38	3	3	3	3

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

## 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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on 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 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:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.

**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.**



5 November 2010

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St Michael's Church of England Primary School, Tenterden TN30 6PU**

Thank you for welcoming us to your school. You were polite, friendly and a pleasure to meet. Your school is providing you with a satisfactory education. This means that we found that there are some good things in your school, but also some things that need improving.

Here are some of the good things we found out about your school.

- You do well in the Reception Year. You have fun, especially when you learn about people in other countries, for example, when painting your hands for Diwali.
- Most of you enjoy school and so you are coming to school more often.
- The topics you learn are usually interesting, which helps you to learn.
- You know how to stay healthy and safe.
- All adults in the school are kind and caring, helping you with any problems in school.
- Leaders in the school know what to do to improve your lessons so you can learn faster.

This is what we have asked your school to do now:

- make sure the work that it sets for you matches your needs and is not too easy or too difficult, to help you learn more quickly
- ensure all teachers help you to understand what you are learning and why and make your lessons more interesting and exciting
- ensure teachers with responsibilities make checks on how well you are doing.

We wish you all well for the future. You can help your teachers by continuing to work hard.

Yours sincerely

Susan Orpin

Lead inspector

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