

St Michael and All Angels Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	105090
Local Authority	Wirral
Inspection number	355695
Inspection dates	18–19 November 2010
Reporting inspector	Diane Auton

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	200
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Patrick Regan
Headteacher	Mrs Sally Collins
Date of previous school inspection	7 December 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 13 lessons and observed 11 teachers in their classrooms. They held meetings with members of the governing body, staff, groups of pupils and parents and carers. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, including pupils' progress and attainment data, the school's planning documents, policies, procedures and records. They reviewed information provided by parents and carers in 69 completed questionnaires. They also took into account the views pupils and staff expressed in the questionnaires they returned.

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

- The impact of the school's work on ensuring that pupils progress and attain as well as possible, especially in English.
- How effectively provision builds on pupils' skills from year to year, particularly how successful the school has been in ensuring that the quality of teaching is consistently good or better.
- How effectively provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage enables children to progress in their learning and development.

Information about the school

This primary school is of average size compared to others of the same type. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The proportion with special educational needs and/or difficulties is also above average. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds, with a small proportion from other heritages; this proportion has risen since the time of the last inspection. The school is resourced by the local authority to provide eight additional places in Key Stage 1 for pupils, drawn from schools across the local authority area, who have behavioural, social and emotional difficulties. A rise in pupil numbers over the last two years is mainly linked to changes in primary school provision across the locality. During this period, the proportion of pupils joining and leaving the school at times other than the usual transition points has been much higher than that seen in most other schools. Since the school's last inspection, the governing body has gained accreditation for the Financial Management Standard in Schools. An after-school club is offered on site by an independent company. This provision is subject to separate inspection and the report is available on the Ofsted website.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

This good, inclusive school serves the needs of its community with dedication and outstanding care. Well-led, effective practitioners ensure that lessons are planned well to meet the needs of all learners. As a result, pupils enjoy learning and apply themselves readily. They also feel exceptionally safe. Their overall progress in learning is good and their attainment, although currently average, is rising.

Successful learning in the Early Years Foundation Stage gets their education off to a good start, despite most children's very low skill levels on entry. Pupils continue to progress well throughout the school and go on to achieve broadly average standards by the end of Year 6. The school has coped well with the challenge provided by the arrival of new pupils at random points during the past two years. The school population has become more stable in the current year and good teaching and effective assessment are successfully eliminating remaining inconsistencies between year groups and subjects.

Although the quality of provision is good and evaluated regularly, a small proportion of satisfactory teaching remains. Individual learning targets are not yet being used as effectively as possible. Expectations are high, however, and pupils respond to this positively, growing in confidence as learners. Very careful consideration is given to pupils' welfare and they demonstrate excellent knowledge and awareness of issues around personal safety. Sensitive and effective support is provided for vulnerable pupils, for those who have special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those in the resourced provision, and for those with English as their additional language; this enables all to make good progress. The information gained from progress reviews is used well to help plan provision and additional support for individual pupils, although currently this information is not shared fully with all staff and the governing body. The actions to raise attainment and progress that are set out in the school development plan are chosen well. However, the criteria against which their success should be measured are not precise enough and this means that the school's overview of its effectiveness is not always sufficiently detailed or clear.

The headteacher has created a strong team ethos, with a clear focus on school improvement. Self-evaluation is largely accurate, based on systematic monitoring. Attainment in English is rising rapidly as a result of successful actions taken to improve writing. All of this, together with the skills and talents of staff and leaders, demonstrates that the school has good capacity to continue to improve.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Reinforce the drive for continuous school improvement by:

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- ensuring, through rigorous and effective monitoring, that teaching is consistently good or better
- ensuring that pupils' individual learning targets are used with consistent effectiveness across the school.
- Ensure that information about pupils' progress is used more effectively by producing a concise summary report each term for staff and the governing body, in order to provide an improved overview of progress across year groups and subjects.
- Define success criteria more precisely in the school development plan, so that the impact of improvement actions can be measured accurately to provide an overview of school performance.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**2**

Pupils' attitudes to school are positive. They show interest in their work in lessons and are responsive learners. Inspectors saw that they enjoy working with a partner or in a group and that this is helping them to develop their thinking and to offer their ideas with confidence. Their concentration and study skills are developing well: they listen carefully in lessons and they see tasks through to completion. From very low starting points on entry to nursery, pupils progress well through the school. They go on to reach nationally expected standards by the end of Key Stage 2. Across the school, however, attainment in English was lower than in mathematics during the last school year and the rate of pupils' progress was uneven from one year to the next in both subjects. The school has taken actions to address these issues and progress and attainment seen in lessons and in pupils' current work is improving rapidly, particularly in writing. Pupils' overall achievement is now good, with fewer inconsistencies between subjects. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who have English as their additional language all make good progress and achieve well, as a result of the good support they receive.

Pupils show an excellent understanding of issues about personal safety. They form good relationships with each other and with the adults in school and they say they are extremely confident that help is on hand if they encounter any problems. Pupils and parents and carers agree that school is a place of safety. Pupils have a good understanding of how to keep themselves healthy and they participate enthusiastically in the many activities provided to support their health, fitness and well-being. They enjoy taking responsibility, for example, as influential school councillors. They are enthusiastic fundraisers for charities at home and abroad. All of this, together with their rapidly improving basic skills, contributes to equipping them well for the next stages in their education. Pupils in the resourced provision achieve positive outcomes, including, in many cases, successful reintegration into mainstream classes. Pupils show a good understanding of the sound moral values the school promotes and this is reflected in their good behaviour and considerate attitudes. Attendance is greatly improved and is now in line with the national average.

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These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

¹ 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?

Good and sometimes outstanding teaching is contributing well to pupils' learning and progress and to their personal development. Most lessons are planned well to take the range of learners' needs into account. Learning usually moves along briskly and this helps pupils to progress well. In the few less effective lessons seen, a slower pace meant pupils' progress was slower than it could have been. Individual learning targets are not being used to full effect; as a result, although marking usually provides them with helpful advice for improving their work, pupils do not always understand how well they are doing. Regular assessment is helping to identify where extra support is needed. Teaching assistants contribute effectively to pupils' learning, especially for those pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.

The curriculum provides broad, balanced and often rich opportunities to promote good learning and personal development. Pupils enjoy an increasing number of opportunities to practise and develop their literacy and numeracy skills through work across different subjects. Topics and themes which are interesting and relevant for pupils are helping to make learning fun. The curriculum is enriched by opportunities for pupils to develop skills in sports and music and to learn three modern foreign languages. A range of visitors and visits help to promote pupils' personal, social, health and citizenship education. Good teaching and support programmes for pupils with special educational needs and/or

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disabilities, including those in the resourced provision, ensure they enjoy full access to learning and are included in everything on offer.

Pastoral care is excellent and the school works sensitively to support vulnerable pupils and their families. This is helping to break down barriers to learning and progress that a number of pupils encounter. Strategies to improve attendance have been applied successfully, so that past problems around attendance are now resolved. Good links with the local high schools benefit pupils at transition. The school collaborates well with a range of agencies that support pupils' health, welfare, social and learning needs.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Staff and the governing body share the headteacher's firm commitment to school improvement and her ambition to achieve the best possible outcomes for pupils. Middle leaders contribute well to ensuring the good overall quality of provision and to driving improvement initiatives. The school development plan identifies appropriate actions for raising attainment and increasing progress. The criteria against which the success of those actions may be measured are not sufficiently quantitative or precise, and this reduces leaders' ability to assess exactly how well the school is doing. Regular reviews carried out each term give leaders a very clear picture of how much progress each pupil is making in reading, writing and mathematics. The school uses this information well to target support and plan 'next steps' although it does not produce succinct summary review reports for each year group. This restricts the overview of performance for the governing body and staff and limits the school's ability to review the 'bigger picture' for progress from one term to the next. Although the quality of teaching is monitored regularly, the school is aware of the need for monitoring to be even more rigorous, in order to eliminate the small amount of satisfactory teaching. The governing body provides effective support and challenge.

Parents and carers are appreciative of all that is done to support their children's welfare. Effective communications ensure they are kept well-informed. The school complies well with statutory requirements for safeguarding, health and safety and child protection through well-managed procedures and thorough ongoing review of their effectiveness. Its inclusive ethos promotes equality of opportunity and access to educational entitlement well. The school contributes well to community cohesion through a range of partnerships and activities in the community and with the church and parish. This contribution is exemplified in the school's effective partnerships with the 'home' schools of the pupils in its resourced provision.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

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

Early Years Foundation Stage

Most children enter the Nursery class with skill levels that are well below expectations for their age, especially in their language and mathematical development and in their personal, social and emotional development. They make good progress. By the end of the Reception Year, although their skills are slightly below expected levels for their age, they have gained very positive attitudes and have become happy, interested learners. The quality of teaching is good and children are provided with a stimulating learning environment, both indoors and in the outdoor area. There is a good balance of activities between those chosen by the children and those led by adults, and children are thereby supported well in developing the skills that lead to independence. Very effective assessment is supported by a wide range of evidence gathered through observations of the children in their activities and staff use this information very well to plan the next steps in their learning and to meet their individual needs. The setting is effective in identifying and supporting children with additional learning needs. Children interact well with each other and enjoy warm, trusting relationships with the caring staff; as a result, they grow in confidence, are happy and secure, and ready to learn. They settle quickly because induction procedures are sensitive and the staff forge the positive relationships with parents and carers that prevail throughout the school. The setting is well led and managed and the staff team work together well. Provision is monitored regularly and this supports ongoing improvements. Procedures to ensure children's welfare are very good and meet all requirements.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
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

Around one third of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. Most of those who responded said they agree or strongly agree that they are happy with their children's experience at the school. This is in line with the inspection team's judgement on the school's good overall effectiveness.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Michael and All Angels Catholic 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 69 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 200 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	41	59	27	39	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	46	67	23	33	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	40	58	26	38	1	1	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	34	49	31	45	3	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	39	57	27	39	2	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	37	54	28	41	3	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	35	51	30	43	3	4	0	0
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)	34	49	26	38	1	1	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	38	55	25	36	3	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	34	49	29	42	4	6	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	30	43	34	49	3	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	30	43	30	43	5	7	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	38	55	25	36	2	3	0	0

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). 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">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.



23 November 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Michael and All Angels Catholic Primary School, Wirral, CH49 5LE

Thank you for the warm welcome you gave the inspectors when we visited your school. As you know, we came to see how well the school is doing and how you are all getting on with your learning.

We found that St Michael and All Angels is a good school and is a happy place for you to learn and grow together. You are well-behaved and polite young people. We were especially impressed by how much you know about how to keep safe. You work hard in your lessons and enjoy what you do. You get on well with each other and with the grown-ups in school. They look after you extremely well. They have been working hard, too, to make sure you are taught well. You are making good progress in your learning and standards are rising rapidly. Keep up the good work!

There are still some things to do to help make St Michael's the best school it can possibly be. This is what I have asked the school's leaders to do.

- Keep on improving teaching and make sure that you all know and understand your learning targets.
- Improve the way they share information with each other about the progress you are making each term.
- Improve some of the ways they measure the success of the actions they take so they can see more clearly how the school is improving.

You can help by continuing to do your best and by continuing to be happy learners.

With my very best wishes for the future,

Yours sincerely

Mrs Diane Auton

Lead inspector

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