

# St Michael's Catholic Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	102773
<b>Local Authority</b>	Newham
<b>Inspection number</b>	355255
<b>Inspection dates</b>	10–11 February 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Peter Sudworth

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>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	257
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	George Power
<b>Headteacher</b>	Linda McSweeney
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	5 December 2007
<b>School address</b>	Howard Road East Ham, London Ea E6 6EE
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. They observed teaching and learning in 18 lessons taught by 10 members of staff. They held meetings with the Chair of the Governing Body, the headteacher, other staff and a group of pupils. They observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation, for example that relating to safeguarding, curriculum organisation, pupils' work and the information used to track pupils' progress. The 88 questionnaire responses from parents and carers were analysed, as were staff and pupils' responses to their own questionnaire.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- The progress that has been made in improving science provision and writing and increasing pupils' rates of progress in these areas since the last inspection.
- The factors that support the school's own judgement of outstanding for the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The evidence that able pupils are making enough progress in Years 3 to 6.

## Information about the school

This is an average-sized primary school with eight classes, including the Nursery which children attend part time. They commence the Nursery after their third birthday. Progression to the Reception class usually occurs at the start of the year in which the children become five. The vast majority of pupils are from ethnic minorities of which Black African or Black British African pupils form the largest group. Over two thirds of the pupils speak English as an additional language. The percentage of pupils designated as having special educational needs and/or disabilities is below the national average. Most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The school has gained several awards including Healthy Schools, and the Activemark. The school manages its own breakfast club.

**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

The school provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. There are some good features, such as the good care provided for the pupils, many aspects of the pupils' personal development and the provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Inspectors also found the provision for music to be a strong feature. The overwhelming majority of parents are happy with the school. As one parent wrote, 'I am proud of St Michael's School because of the support they give my child and the discipline, learning style and organisation.'

This is a happy school with lots of joyful singing. The pupils are really keen to attend because they enjoy school so much. Pupils from different ethnic groups and those whose first language is other than English make similar rates of progress over time. Very few are at an early stage of learning English after Year 2 because of the good support for their language development in the early years of their schooling. Pupils achieve satisfactorily but science and writing are weaker aspects of their work. Satisfactory progress has been made in developing these aspects since the last inspection. The school has worked hard to improve writing through new initiatives and there are some encouraging signs of improvement, but not enough is done yet to get pupils to use writing purposefully in different subjects. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to plan investigations for themselves in science.

Pupils have a good understanding of healthy and safe living. The school is an excellent model of racial harmony and pupils of different nationalities play and work alongside each other with good levels of friendship. Pupils fulfil their various responsibilities well. Their attendance is excellent. Teaching is satisfactory overall, but some good and outstanding teaching was also seen. Teachers do not always provide well enough for able pupils in lessons by offering enough challenge in their work. Pupils are soundly prepared for the next stage of their education.

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. Monitoring of lessons is regular but there is too much focus on the teaching and insufficient attention to the learning. The governors demonstrate a satisfactory range of skills for finding out about the school's strengths and weaknesses but do not gain enough knowledge by themselves in order to challenge the school and ask searching questions.

The school demonstrates a satisfactory capacity for further improvement. The school's self-evaluation is honest but its grades for some aspects are optimistic. It has a good recognition of its strengths and weaknesses and has focused well on improving teaching and attainment. There is a trend of improvement in attainment but this is yet to show itself in consistency over time. Systems in place are enabling the school to continue improving. The children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage. While the school has worked soundly in bringing about improvement, some aspects still need to be improved further, such as science and writing.

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Up to 40% of the 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 science by:
  - ensuring that pupils have more opportunities to investigate in science and think through the process of investigation for themselves.
- Build on the initiatives that have been introduced to improve pupils' writing skills further by providing increased opportunities for pupils to apply their writing skills in different subjects in meaningful contexts.
- Improve the consistency in the quality of teaching by:
  - making planning more sharply focused to achieve the learning intention
  - monitoring teaching with a specific focus on the learning
  - ensuring that the able pupils in each class are more effectively challenged so that more pupils reach the higher level.
- Establish clear systems for leaders at all levels, including governors, to monitor the work of the school more rigorously.

## Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

**3**

Children's attainment on entry to the Nursery at age three is low because of their limited familiarity in English and their limited social and emotional development. Pupils reach broadly average standards by Year 6 in their basic skills. Progress is best in reading and mathematics because of the good reading materials and opportunities to read, and the attention given to neat layout of work in mathematics which supports accuracy. In a Year 6 mathematics lesson, very-able pupils worked neatly and methodically on a much more demanding task and rose to the challenge in calculating the area of different shapes. The new initiatives introduced to improve writing are bringing about improvements, but they have still to show their full impact. The strength in reading helped the pupils to reach above average standards in Year 6 in 2010 in English. Mathematics was also above the national average but the school has still to demonstrate consistency in maintaining these levels of attainment in both English and mathematics over time. Science attainment is broadly in line with expectations for the pupils' ages but there is still too much variability in the quality of their science work. Science investigations are too limited. Pupils do not use their basic mathematics and writing skills well enough when they record their work in science to report their investigations and draw conclusions. Pupils make good progress in music and in learning French because of the specialist and skilled teaching that is provided. Pupils engage with particular enthusiasm in these sessions. They are also making good progress in learning to play different musical instruments. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar rates of progress to other pupils because of the small group tuition that they have. In one such group, pupils applied their recently learned knowledge of letter blends effectively to write and spell words and achieved a good level of success which boosted their confidence and developed their skills.

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Pupils feel safe in school and have confidence in their teachers. They know that if they have a worry they will be listened to and that if they drop a note into the 'worry box' it will be acted upon. They lead healthy lifestyles acknowledged in the Healthy Schools Award. They know which foods are good and the importance of eating fruit and vegetables daily. They engage well in sport reflected in the school's Activemark status. Pupils' spiritual development is particularly strong. Pupils act honestly and with concern for others. They raise money for different charities. Pupils have responsibilities, such as friendship buddies and duties around school which they fulfil well. They are still gaining an awareness of difference outside their own locality but the school is working hard to develop this, for example through residential visits which also foster their social development. Pupils behave well and show good levels of cooperation with their teachers. Pupils' good social skills are reinforced at the breakfast club.

*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>1</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?

Pupils are confident to contribute answers in lessons because of the good, respectful relationships that they have with their teachers. They concentrate well on their learning and this is supported by the visual introductions teachers provide on large electronic whiteboards. This preparation of materials helps the pupils' understanding of what they are expected to learn in lessons. The pace of learning is satisfactory overall and occasionally good. Sound planning ensures that the focus of the learning is clear but

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Lesson planning does not always support the focus well enough nor sharply define the work for different abilities so that each is stretched to the limit. Marking is up to date and generally helpful to pupils with a good blend of praise and aspects for improvement, but teachers do not always ensure that pupils profit from their mistakes in mathematics. Teachers make good use of paired talk in some lessons so that pupils can discuss ideas and these instances help to enhance pupils' speaking and listening skills.

The curriculum is developing but in part still relies on published materials. Strengths include music and French and the extra-curricular activities which support pupils' healthy lifestyles effectively. Useful visits are occasionally made to places of interest, for example to museums or the local nature reserve, and support pupils' work in different subjects. The school's focus on the international curriculum is developing, but the staff are still working to ensure that there is a build-up of skills in different subjects within this. Good attention is given to the basic subjects but writing and numeracy are still not used to their fullest capacity in different subjects in meaningful contexts. The personal, social and health education programme supports pupils' good social skills and helps to foster the good relationships and concern and respect for others which are key features of the school.

Home visits before the children begin school and the work of the family support assistant help to secure good links with the parents and carers. Transition arrangements between classes and when pupils move on are effective in helping the pupils settle well to new situations. The pupils themselves look after one another well and forge good relationships between different ethnic groups. Good care is provided at the breakfast club. The school provides a warm and welcoming environment for the pupils. Good links are made with external professional agencies so that any pupils with specific problems can receive extra help. The school keeps a careful watch and maintains well-documented records of pupils who may be vulnerable. Health and safety matters are given good attention and the school has an adequate number of first-aid personnel.

*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?

Partnerships with parents and carers and the church are good as they are with professional agencies in developing pupils' well-being and learning. Effective links with the secondary schools include the sharing of staff which supports the physical education curriculum effectively. Good links exist with other local schools and are improving the curriculum further. Arrangements for safeguarding are good. Policies are well considered

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and provide good guidance to staff. Child protection arrangements are secure. The breakfast club is well managed.

Leaders and managers have a vision for the school which they want to achieve but because self-evaluation is too generous, they are not always able to draw out effective development points and so embed ambition and drive improvement strongly enough. Leaders and managers, including governors, are not yet sharply focused enough in their monitoring of the work of the school. Governors, although very supportive and fulfilling their statutory duties, rely too much on the headteacher for information.

Community cohesion is good. The wide variety of nationalities gets along well together. Pupils learn from each other's backgrounds and racial harmony is a strength of the school. The school capitalises on opportunities to use pupils' backgrounds through events such as International Evening when pupils and parents and carers come to school wearing traditional costumes and share each other's food. Pupils' understanding of European cultures is less well developed. The pupils have limited understanding of the diverse communities in the United Kingdom, such as rural communities, but the school has plans to address this aspect further.

Equal opportunities are satisfactory. Pupils have equal access to what the school provides, particularly in terms of extra-curricular activities, and there is no evidence of discrimination. However, the more-able pupils do not always have the opportunity to reach their full potential.

*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>2</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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Good teaching and leadership of the Early Years Foundation Stage enable the children to make good progress so they leave the Reception class with skills broadly as expected for



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their age. The Early Years Foundation Stage leader is knowledgeable and the team has created a safe and delightful learning environment which is well resourced both indoors and outside. The Nursery and Reception work closely together on a cohesive curriculum. The staff recognise the uniqueness of every child and plan accordingly with a range of experiences. This is one of the main factors in the children's overall good progress. However, some children could make better progress in aspects of their learning because there are occasional gaps between assessments.

Most children can take turns and share. They develop good skills in independence, for example putting away equipment and choosing activities sensibly. Staff are imaginative in planning activities, for example children went on a 'butterfly' hunt and followed pictorial clues to locate them. They captured their findings by taking photographs to bring back to the class to project onto the screen for discussion. When making mathematical patterns, teachers introduced red and white grapes for the children to make repeating patterns on a fruit kebab and linked this to healthy eating.

Warm relationships between staff and the children encourage the children to behave well and listen to stories. This was particularly evident in the story of 'The Hungry Caterpillar' to which the children listened with rapt attention. Later in their play they dressed up as a caterpillar and cocooned themselves with material before emerging to put on butterfly wings. Many children are confident and can talk enthusiastically about what they are doing. The staff's involvement in the children's activities encourages their development in using spoken English well.

*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**

The proportion of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire was typical of that usually received. The very large majority of parents and carers express supportive views of the school. They rightly say that their children enjoy school and this is confirmed by the inspection. They report that their children make good progress which is accurate in part. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage make good progress but it is not yet consistent across the school and over time. A few parents and carers feel that the school does not help them to assist their children with their work. However, the school has put on curriculum evenings for parents and carers in this regard.

In the few written comments there was no consistent theme. A small number of parents and carers feel that they do not have the opportunity to make suggestions or that the school does not listen to suggestions. The school has a suggestion box and states that it considers all suggestions made and acts on them as is best for the school and its pupils.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Michael's 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 88 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 257 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	64	73	24	27	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	37	76	20	23	1	1	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	63	72	22	25	1	1	1	1
My child is making enough progress at this school	54	61	29	33	0	0	4	5
The teaching is good at this school	55	63	29	33	3	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	53	60	26	30	7	8	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	65	74	22	25	1	1	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)	48	55	30	34	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	49	56	30	34	1	1	4	5
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	55	63	30	34	1	1	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	45	51	34	39	2	2	5	6
The school is led and managed effectively	64	73	19	22	3	3	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	60	68	23	26	4	5	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	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and 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 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## 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.**



15 February 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St Michael's Catholic Primary School, East Ham E6 6EE**

Thank you for your warm welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed our visit and found you to be polite children who get along very well together and appreciate each other's cultures and backgrounds. Thank you also for completing the pupil questionnaires for us which we found to be very helpful. St Michael's provides you with a satisfactory education and you make expected rates of progress and good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Your attendance is excellent ? well done. The staff take good care of you. We were pleased to learn that you use the worry box if you have any concerns. We noticed how much you enjoy school and we were impressed with your enthusiastic singing.

Your school is gradually helping you to improve the standards that you reach by the end of Year 6, but science and writing are not yet as strong as your reading and mathematics. We have asked the school to help you make better progress still in these aspects of your work. You can help by remembering the techniques that the teachers are using to help you when you write.

There are two other things that we have asked the school to consider. One is to improve the consistency in the quality of teaching between classes, for example by improving the challenge in the work for the pupils who find work easier so that more of you reach even higher standards for your age. The other is to request the school leaders and governors to check the progress of what happens in the school with greater thoroughness in order to develop the school further.

Thank you once again for your help, for talking to us about your school and sharing your work with us. We hope that you will carry on working as hard as you can and always do your best.

Yours sincerely

Peter Sudworth

Lead inspector

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