

# St Michael With St John CofE Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	119356
<b>Local Authority</b>	Blackburn with Darwen
<b>Inspection number</b>	358538
<b>Inspection dates</b>	18–19 January 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Pat Kime HMI

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>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	470
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Fr Philip Knowles
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Sarah Murphy
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	2 October 2007
<b>School address</b>	Swallow Drive Blackburn Lancashire BB1 6LE
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 14 lessons, observing 13 teachers. They had discussions with staff and pupils, and the Chair of the Governing Body. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation, including curricular plans, improvement plans and records of pupils' progress. They received responses to the inspection questionnaires from pupils and staff and from 98 parents.

- How high is pupils' attainment by the end of Key Stage 2 and how well are pupils making progress in their learning?
- How much has the school improved since it was last inspected?
- How effective is the temporary senior leadership team?
- How effective is the governing body which includes many new members?

## Information about the school

St Michael with St John CofE Controlled Primary School is much larger than the average primary school. All pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds; almost all are Asian. Most start school with very little knowledge of English. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is higher than average, as is the proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities.

Eight of the 18 teachers have been appointed since the previous inspection. A deputy headteacher was appointed in 2008. Following the headteacher's retirement a temporary senior team took over in September 2010 with the deputy headteacher becoming acting headteacher and two other staff stepping up to serve as acting deputy headteachers.

The school has received several awards, including Investors in People, Healthy Schools status and the Artsmark.

**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 its pupils with a satisfactory education. It offers good care, guidance and support and it works in good partnership with parents and external agencies. Pupils enjoy school. Their good behaviour and positive attitudes aid their learning. They make satisfactory but uneven progress in their academic learning and good progress in their personal development.

Pupils get a very good start in the Nursery and the Reception classes. They are now doing well in Year 2, in response to good teaching, and they make particularly rapid progress in Year 6 but in other years there is not enough good teaching. Consequently, pupils do not make the accelerated progress needed, from their low starting points, to reach the expected standard by the age of 11. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment in English and mathematics is generally below average. Last year's leavers attained average standards and this shows what pupils are capable of with a preponderance of good teaching. However, attainment this year is not set to be so high. Although pupils are now progressing at a satisfactory rate overall, there remains a legacy of underachievement.

Since the previous inspection, staff have benefited from additional training and teaching has improved. Teachers are now held responsible for pupils' progress each term. Appropriate arrangements have been introduced for assessing pupils' attainment and keeping track of their progress, though these are not consistently implemented with sufficient rigour. Much of the action taken to promote improvement is recent and has not yet had a substantial impact on pupils' achievement. The school has received intensive support from the local authority and members of the school's acting senior team have been instrumental in moving the school forward. They have a well-founded picture of the school's effectiveness, are strongly committed to further improvement and know how to achieve it. The role of subject leaders in driving improvement is, however, at an early stage of development for many. Governance is satisfactory. The Chair of the Governing Body has a sound understanding of the school's performance but is due to relinquish this role soon as he has moved to a new parish. More than half of the governors are newly appointed and most of these are new to school governance. The unsettled nature of leadership and management mean that the capacity for sustained improvement is, at present, no better than satisfactory.

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?

- Improve the quality of teaching where it is not consistently at least good by:
  - raising teachers expectations of what pupils can achieve

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- ensuring that, for all pupils, work is always set at a level that builds on what they have already learned
- ensuring that teachers assess how well pupils have learned what they should have in each lesson.
- Raise attainment by:
  - improving pupils' rate of progress in Key Stages 1 and 2, particularly for the most able
  - ensuring that assessments of pupils' attainment and the tracking of their progress are consistently accurate and are used to set appropriately challenging targets for all pupils.
- Strengthen leadership and management by:
  - securing stability at senior leadership level, as soon as possible
  - developing the role of subject leaders
  - developing the expertise of newly appointed governors.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****3**

Pupils are now making satisfactory progress overall in their learning but many have ground to catch up because they have fallen behind their targets over the years so are working below the level expected for their age. When pupils start the school they can do much less than most children of their age. As a result of outstanding progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, pupils start Year 1 with attainment that is broadly in line with the national average for their age. Progress thereafter is uneven because, while there are pockets of good teaching, too much of the teaching is mediocre.

Pupils' positive attitudes, good behaviour and cooperative approach support their learning well. They develop good skills for learning. For example, in lessons they are attentive, they get down to work promptly and try hard. They work sensibly and productively in small groups. They respond particularly well to challenging, pacy lessons which include a variety of appealing, imaginative activities. Learning in many lessons is no better than satisfactory because work is not closely tailored to meet pupils' different needs, given what they have already learned.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 is below average but has risen steadily over the last three years and is much higher than at the previous inspection so better foundations are laid for learning in Key Stage 2. The lessons seen and work in pupils' books confirmed this picture.

In the national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 pupils' results have fluctuated and are generally below average. The large majority of the present Year 6 pupils are on course to make the expected progress during Key Stage 2, though from a very low starting point at the age of seven, but very few are set to reach an above-average standard for their age.

Pupils with special educational needs receive additional support and, given their starting points and capabilities, they progress at a similar rate to their classmates.

Pupils make good progress against the national 'Every Child Matters' agenda. They are well-informed about how to keep themselves safe, including when using the internet.

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Questionnaire responses from them and their parents and carers confirm that they feel safe in school. Pupils say there is absolutely no bullying at their school. They understand well the importance of a healthy diet and exercise. Indeed, many would like more opportunities for physical education and sport at school. All pupils take on responsibilities that contribute to the community life of the school, for example, as play leaders or peer mediators. They also make a positive difference to the local community, for instance, through the 'Big Tidy up' and an anti-graffiti operation, and they raise funds for international charitable causes. Pupils' spiritual and moral development is especially strong. They have a good awareness and understanding of world faiths, respect for the faiths of others and a good appreciation of the importance of faith in believers' lives and they are developing a set of values to guide their lives.

The attendance rate has improved and is broadly average, despite a number of pupils making extended holidays abroad.

*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>	3
<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?**

Inspectors' observations of lessons confirmed the senior staff's judgements of the quality of teaching and learning across the school. They showed that teaching is predominantly satisfactory, though some is good and a little is outstanding. Where teaching is good or better, mainly in the final year of each key stage, pupils generally make at least good progress. However, pockets of strong teaching are not enough to enable most pupils to

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reach the standard expected for their age by the time they leave the school. Typically, teachers have positive relationships with the pupils and they deploy support staff well. Bilingual teaching assistants play a crucial role in the younger pupils' literacy development. The marking of pupils' work and setting targets for the next steps in their learning are of variable quality.

The most significant common shortcomings that prevent much of the teaching being better than satisfactory are:

- a lack of challenge in some lessons so that, although the general pitch of work is broadly suitable for the age-group, some pupils, often the more able, are not pushing on as rapidly as they could; teachers expectations are not always high enough
- a lack of methodically planned progression in some work so, for example, some pupils in Key Stage 1 were expected to spell some hard words even though they had not laid the foundations for work at that level
- a lack of clarity about what pupils are expected to learn and, consequently, limited lesson-by-lesson assessment of whether they are learning at the rate they should
- a lack of precision in some assessments of where pupils are up to in their learning.

In the more effective lessons work is adjusted for different groups of pupils and the activities are appealing. For example, in one lesson pupils prepared their ideas for written work through a speaking and listening activity in the format of a television programme. A demanding level of work was seen in Year 6 where the teacher's skilful questioning was very successful in developing pupils' speaking skills and their vocabulary was extended very well.

The curriculum covers all that is required, with an appropriate emphasis on literacy and numeracy. It is sufficiently enriched with a range of extra-curricular activities, visits and visitors. The support provided for pupils to learn English as an additional language is good. Good plans have been drawn up to develop this aspect of the school's provision.

Pastoral care remains good. The school takes good care of pupils. It supports them and their families well and makes good use of external support when needed, for example, to help pupils who have emotional or behavioural difficulties. Pupils know the adults at school care about them and they feel confident to approach them if they have any worries. The breakfast club, run by school staff, provides healthy food and a range of activities, including fitness computer games.

*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>

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## How effective are leadership and management?

The acting leadership team knows how well the school is doing and where improvements are needed. Its members are ambitious for pupils and determined to improve the school's provision and staff have confidence in their leadership. Their contribution to improvement since the previous inspection and the steps they have taken this school year show they have the ability to achieve their aims. A detailed plan is produced each term identifying what will be done, across the school, to raise pupils' achievement. Staff responses to the inspection questionnaire were all positive about their knowledge of, and involvement in, what the school is trying to achieve. A particular strength is the introduction of a termly meeting with each teacher to discuss pupils' progress and determine what is to be done to get any pupils who are not doing well enough back on track. This arrangement has established a culture of greater accountability. Much has also been done, with a fair degree of success, to improve the quality of teaching, through, for example, coaching, modelling of good practice and additional training. Nevertheless, shortcomings noted in the previous inspection report have not been entirely eradicated.

The governing body fulfils its responsibilities satisfactorily. Governors are involved in planning for improvement and are well informed about the school's performance. However, many governors are new to the role.

The school provides equal opportunities for all pupils. Senior staff have analysed pupils' achievement according to ethnicity and gender. They know the reasons for any underachievement and take steps to remove barriers to learning. For example, additional support is provided for pupils who have fallen behind and pupils benefit from the Home Access scheme for computer technology. The school's good partnership with parents is seen in the way it actively seeks their views and keeps them well-informed about school life. Parents' responses to the inspection questionnaire and the school's own survey show that the very large majority are happy with the information they receive about their child's progress.

The school promotes community cohesion satisfactorily. The school knows its community and plans this aspect of its provision, for instance, by hosting an annual Eid Mela event for the community. Pupils have good opportunities to meet children from different backgrounds in the wider local area and there are links with a local Islamic school. Wider links nationally and globally are considerably less well-developed.

Staff and the governing body have ensured that the arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet requirements. Staff are trained in child protection procedures. This training and that for safe recruitment procedures are updated regularly. The school is proactive in work with a range of external agencies to support pupils' safety.



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

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Most children join the school in the nursery but around a fifth start in the Reception classes. Whenever they join, most children can do much less than is usual for their age. Their language development is particularly weak. The children make outstandingly good progress in all areas of learning and, by the end of Reception, their attainment is usually at least broadly average and sometimes higher. This progress is the result of:

- generous staffing, with a good number of bi-lingual staff who very skilfully help children to develop language skills in their home languages and to learn English
- teaching that is consistently at least good with a significant amount that is outstanding
- a well-planned curriculum, provided in a well-ordered environment both indoors and out.

The staff have a very good understanding of the requirements for education and welfare for this age group. They sensitively help children to behave well, develop positive relationships and grow in independence and responsibility. The highly effective provision continues to be developed. For example, adjustments are made to the curriculum to meet the needs of particular groups of children. For instance, a recent innovation is a change to the teaching of early writing skills to boys in the nursery. Partnership with parents is strong and much is done to help them support their children. The Early Years Foundation Stage team leader is aware of areas which could be developed further. For example, she knows that, although the arrangements for judging children's attainment have improved greatly, assessments of their learning are not always absolutely consistent across the classes.

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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>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

## **Views of parents and carers**

As seen in the table below, the very large majority of parents and carers who returned questionnaires have a positive view of the school and are happy with their child's experience at St Michael with St John CofE Primary School.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Michael With St John CofE Controlled 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 98 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 470 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	48	49	49	50	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	50	51	46	47	2	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	33	34	55	56	6	6	2	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	22	22	68	69	2	2	6	6
The teaching is good at this school	24	24	67	68	3	3	3	3
The school helps me to support my child's learning	30	31	60	61	5	5	2	2
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	38	39	58	59	1	1	1	1
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)	25	26	60	61	5	5	1	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	25	26	66	67	3	3	2	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	26	27	57	58	8	8	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	17	17	68	69	6	6	3	3
The school is led and managed effectively	24	24	65	66	6	6	1	1
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	31	32	62	63	3	3	2	2

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.**



20 January 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St Michael With St John CofE Controlled Primary School,  
Blackburn, BB1 6LE**

Thank you for welcoming Mr Halford, Ms Daniels, Mr Martin and me when we inspected your school recently. You may also remember Mrs Li-Koo who came with us to learn more about how schools are inspected. I am writing on behalf of us all. We enjoyed our time at your school and we learned a lot about how well you are doing at school from talking to you and observing your lessons. This letter is to report our judgements to you.

St Michael with St John gives you a satisfactory education and the staff look after you well. Children get an outstanding start in the Nursery and the Reception classes. After that, progress in learning is satisfactory but it is not even across the classes. In some years you do very well but in others your progress slips. You could do better if more lessons were taught well.

As well as improving teaching so you reach higher standards, we have asked your teachers to sharpen up the way they measure what you have learned and whether you are doing well enough. We also think that it would help to have a permanent senior leadership team and the new governors should have some training.

We were pleased to see that you are well behaved and you work hard in lessons. You are developing very well spiritually and morally and you make a good contribution to school life and the local community. You know a lot about how to be healthy.

I wish you all well for the future. I know that, through the class councils and the school council, you will be able to suggest your ideas for improving the school. I am sure you will all have good ideas.

Yours sincerely,

Pat Kime

Her Majesty's Inspector

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