

# St Michael's Nursery and Infant School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	112143
<b>Local Authority</b>	Cumbria
<b>Inspection number</b>	357050
<b>Inspection dates</b>	25–26 January 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Sue Sharkey

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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–7
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	80
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Eileen Bold
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Anne Tait
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	1 November 2007
<b>School address</b>	Station Road Workington Cumbria CA14 2UY
<b>Telephone number</b>	01900 325244
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors observed teaching and learning in five lessons and observed four teachers. Meetings were held with the headteacher, pupils, representatives of the governing body and staff. The inspectors observed pupils' work and looked at the school's system for tracking pupils' progress, safeguarding documents and key policies. Inspection questionnaires from 35 parents and carers, and seven school staff were also taken into account.

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

- The effectiveness of actions taken to improve writing.
- Whether there are procedures for ensuring that the more-able pupils achieve as well as they can in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Whether actions taken to raise attainment and achievement are sustainable.
- Whether the school's new approach to linking subjects in the curriculum is helping pupils to improve their work.

## Information about the school

St Michael's is smaller than the average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is lower than the national average. Almost all pupils are from White British backgrounds with very few speaking English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is in line with the national average. The school is situated on two adjacent sites. The school has the Leading Aspect Award for the Early Years Foundation Stage and transition to Key Stage 1 and Active Mark for Sports England.

**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

St Michael's School is a good school. Its care, guidance and support for pupils and its engagement with parents and carers are outstanding. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school, its staff and leadership. A typical comment was, 'I believe the school provides a great start to children's education. They enjoy school and are safe.' Children flourish in the Early Years Foundation Stage where they make good progress, learn to share and follow routines. Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 2 is broadly average in reading, writing and mathematics, reflecting good achievement and progress across Key Stage 1. Pupils who speak English as an additional language, and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make similarly good progress because their work is targeted well and they are ably supported by teaching assistants who are well skilled to play an active role in the classroom.

The extent to which pupils feel safe is excellent. Pupils trust the staff to make sure the school is safe for them and say that they can always talk to any adults in school if they have a problem. Pupils' knowledge of keeping themselves healthy is first-class. The extensive range of clubs is well attended and pupils understand the importance of walking to school and eating healthy food. Attendance is average. Not all pupils attend school as often as they should and there are pupils who are often late. Pupils' contribution to the local and wider community is outstanding, especially through taking on responsibilities in school.

Teaching and the curriculum are good. Teachers and teaching assistants know their pupils well. Lessons are well planned, work is usually well matched to pupils' varying abilities and good use is made of resources to engage pupils in their learning. However, sometimes teachers' expectations of writing for boys are not high enough and there are not enough opportunities for boys to write in different areas of the curriculum. The school makes good use of the immediate environment, for example, by visiting the local library or designing plates at a local pottery workshop. Pupils enjoy using information and communication technology which they do with confidence and enthusiasm.

The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and a realistic view of its strengths and areas for development. Several recent changes in staffing have been managed well so that the school has continued to run smoothly. Higher achievement, accurate self-evaluation and recent well-focused developments, such as those to the curriculum, demonstrate that the school has good capacity to improve. There is a great sense of teamwork and a desire to continue to do better.

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

- Improve the quality of boys' writing by:

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- - raising the expectations of teachers as to what these pupils can achieve
- - extending writing opportunities across the curriculum.
- Raise attendance levels and improve punctuality for pupils in some families.

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

**2**

Since the last inspection, the school has introduced a number of strategies which have successfully raised pupils' achievement, particularly in mathematics. A current focus is to promote enjoyment and achievement in reading and writing. In a Year 1 lesson, following the introduction of a story, pupils acted out how the lion could move through the swamp. They thoroughly enjoy stamping and splashing and this provided good opportunities for pupils to extend their speaking and listening skills while engrossed in their actions. This led to the pupils writing new action words and, for some, the formation of short sentences. Guided reading is used well and this helps to develop pupils' interests and skills. Enjoyment and good progress in lessons were frequently evident during the inspection. Throughout the school there is a clear commitment by teachers to making very good use of a wide range of resources to encourage pupils to enjoy reading and writing.

Overall, children enter the Early Years Foundation Stage with skills well below those expected for their age. They make good progress in the Nursery and Reception classes but reading and writing are often still below age expectation for many pupils, when they enter Year 1. Pupils maintain this good progress throughout Key Stage 1, so when they leave school at the end of Year 2 their attainment is broadly in line with the national average. This gives pupils a good grounding in basic skills and means that they are well prepared for the next stage of their education at junior school.

Pupils develop an excellent understanding of how to keep healthy and, when outside, they enjoy energetic play. They are enthusiastic at break time when they can choose their favourite healthy food and drink. Despite their young age, pupils can explain extremely well about the importance of helping to keep everyone safe. They say the buddy system in school works excellently, not only when they are in the playground but that it can also provide support for each other in the classroom. Pupils value the opportunity to carry out responsibilities, which they do with great enthusiasm. Pupils behave well because they enjoy coming to school. Pupils' involvement in the wider community is greatly valued and is outstanding. The school council is proud of how it is able to help the school improve and is pleased that, at their request, balls have been purchased providing an opportunity for pupils to play football in the playground every day. Spiritual, moral social and cultural development is good. Pupils make good contribution to the wider and global communities through their support of local and international charities.

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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>2</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>2</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?

Pupils make good progress through school because the quality of teaching and the curriculum are good. Teachers know their pupils well and the good support of teaching assistants means adults often work effectively with pupils in very small groups. This ensures that pupils behave well and have very good attitudes towards their work.

Prominent strengths of teaching include the good relationships in all classes, the wide range of teaching styles and good range of activities to enthuse pupils. The marking of pupils' work has improved since the last inspection enabling pupils to understand what they have learnt. There is not always a consistent approach towards helping them to make the next steps in their learning. Teaching is enhanced by welcoming, well-resourced classrooms, which are supportive to learning. Activities are generally well pitched to meet the needs of all pupils. However, teachers' expectations of boys are not always high enough in writing, nor are there sufficient opportunities to extend their writing across the curriculum.

The school has made recent changes to the curriculum. It is creating links between different subjects that add interest, fun and enjoyment to learning but this process is not yet fully embedded. There is a wide range of enrichment activities after school offering pupils the chance to add to their skills and interests and these are extremely well supported. The range of visitors, partnerships and extended opportunities available to pupils greatly enhance their learning as well as their personal development. The school

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has close links with Age UK which provides the pupils with opportunities to meet with different members of the local community. This organisation brings diverse skills and insights into school, for example, art or historical knowledge, or work with the pupils to organise community events.

Staff and pupils value and respect each other. Pupils express great confidence in their teachers and support staff, knowing that any problems they face will be dealt with successfully. The school has good links with outside agencies which provide good support for vulnerable pupils that is tailored to meet their individual needs. As a few pupils are persistently absent or late, improving attendance and punctuality is a school priority. Strategies are ongoing and beginning to be successful. The school has good strategies in place including working closely with parents and carers and in partnership with the local authority.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher, staff and governors are committed to ensuring that pupils get the very best start in life. Good links with a wide range of partners help the school to meet the diverse needs of all pupils and bring considerable benefits to their learning and personal development. The school promotes equal opportunities well, particularly with regard to the well-being and progress of vulnerable pupils. Arrangements for safeguarding pupils are of good quality. These ensure that careful checks are made on adults and that health and safety procedures are secure. The headteacher is well supported by a knowledgeable governing body which is proactive in keeping up-to-date with training and in monitoring the work of the school. The school promotes community cohesion well because it has good links with other schools and the wider community. It is right to be nurturing the links it has already initiated with schools in contrasting areas further afield in Great Britain. The school development plan is well informed, with sharp detail included, is drawn from monitoring and evaluation activities and contains very apt priorities. The school has outstanding relationships with parents and carers who value the school's provision of a Morning Club before school starts. The school provides good value for money.

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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>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>1</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>2</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>2</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage provides children with a rich and lively learning environment. Children quickly settle into the Nursery class because of the high-quality care and support they receive as well as the excellent partnership with parents and carers and very good induction processes. Children's personal, social and emotional development is excellent; children behave well and are keen to learn. They gain very good social skills as they interact with one another and develop increasing levels of independence. The indoor and outdoor areas are well planned with a range of activities that consolidate early learning. Children have opportunities to perform on the outdoor stage where they choose their musical instrument, play in the group and sing one of their favourite songs. This is enjoyed by a responsive young audience. Children enjoy the early stages of writing using water or chalk while others show a developing awareness of shape, space and measures in constructing towers that are taller or shorter than their teacher. The leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are good ensuring that planning reflects an understanding of how young children learn. Children are well taught and good use is made of assessment in helping to identify what they need to do next. As a result, children make good progress through their Nursery and Reception years so that by the time they reach Year 1 most reach broadly average standards for their age, but reading and writing are often still below expectations. Children with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because their needs are quickly identified and well met at this early stage.



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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

All parents and carers who returned questionnaires are positive about the way the school cares for and educates their children. They feel that their children enjoy school, are kept safe and are pleased with their children's progress. Some parents and carers took time to add comments to the questionnaire they returned, many to reinforce the strength of their positive views.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Michael's Nursery and Infant 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 35 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 80 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	29	83	6	17	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	30	86	5	14	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	25	71	10	29	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	25	71	9	26	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	26	74	8	23	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	25	71	9	26	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	26	74	8	23	0	0	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)	21	60	11	31	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	24	69	10	29	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	23	66	10	29	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	25	71	9	26	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	27	77	7	20	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	29	83	5	14	0	0	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.**



27 January 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St Michael's Nursery and Infant School, Workington, CA14 2UY**

Thank you for making us feel so welcome when we visited your school recently. I enjoyed talking with you and watching you learn in lessons. I was pleased with how amazingly well you understand the importance of keeping healthy. Do keep enjoying all the vegetables and fruit you eat and walk to school as often as you can. I thought your behaviour was good. I congratulate all of you for raising money for different charities such as Pudsey Bear. Overall, I found that your school gives you a good education.

There are some things that I have asked the school to do to help to make it better.

First, teachers should expect you, particularly the boys, to write longer and better sentences and stories and to let you write more often in different subjects. Second, as some of you do not attend school as often as you should and are sometimes late, I have asked the school to make sure that you are never late and to help you to make sure that you attend school every day.

When we were in your classes with you we found out that your teachers teach you well and that they make sure that you have exciting things to learn about. They look after you extremely well and you told us how you could trust your teachers to take care of you and make sure you are safe in school. Children in the Nursery and Reception class have a super outdoor area. I enjoyed listening and watching you play musical instruments on your stage. It sounded really good.

I am really pleased that you said that you enjoy coming to school. Remember to always do your best and help your teachers. Thank you for helping me and for being so polite.

Best wishes

Sue Sharkey

Lead inspector

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