

# St Michael's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, Lyme Regis

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	113851
<b>Local Authority</b>	Dorset
<b>Inspection number</b>	357438
<b>Inspection dates</b>	8–9 March 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Anna Sketchley

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>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	140
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Audrey Vivien
<b>Headteacher</b>	Annabelle Grose
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	28 April 2008
<b>School address</b>	Kings Way Lyme Regis Dorset DT7 3DY
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited eight lessons and observed five teachers. They held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and groups of pupils and analysed 53 questionnaires from parents and carers. They observed the school's work and looked at a wide range of documentation, including pupils' work, systems for monitoring and tracking pupils' progress, plans for improvement, and reports written by the local authority. Questionnaires completed by 81 pupils and 10 staff were also evaluated.

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

- How effective, rapid and sustainable the strategies in teaching, learning and the curriculum are in improving the achievement of different groups of pupils in English and mathematics, particularly the more able and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities in both key stages.
- The ability of leaders at all levels to sustain and drive forward improvement.
- How well pupils in Key Stage 1 achieve in relation to their achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

## Information about the school

This small primary school is on the eastern side of the town. A new headteacher took up post in September 2010. There are three mixed-age classes: Early Years Foundation Stage children with some Year 1 pupils, Years 1 and 2, and, Years 3 and 4. There are two single-age classes in Years 5 and 6. Pupils are drawn mainly from the town, but a few come from villages in the surrounding area. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage and a very small minority is at the early stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is average. The school has achieved several national awards, including Rights Respecting Schools, Investors in People and Healthy Schools Plus. The school offers a 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**

**2**

## Main findings

St Michael's is a satisfactory school. It is improving rapidly because of accurate self-evaluation and the identification of the correct priorities supported by comprehensive action plans. The new headteacher shows determination and vision. She and the senior leaders make a strong team. They are supported by staff and governors who want the school's vision to succeed and who are quickly developing the skills to ensure this happens. Consistent with the ethos of Investors in People, a significant amount of professional development for teachers has enhanced teaching. Regular meetings to discuss pupils' progress have recently been introduced. There is a rigorous approach to using assessment to plan the next steps in pupils' learning, ensuring that all pupils have an equal opportunity to make the progress of which they are capable. All pupils are making satisfactory progress, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and more-able pupils. A previous dip in achievement at Year 6 has been successfully arrested and there are significant signs that attainment is beginning to rise and progress is improving throughout the school. As a result of these initiatives, together with accurate self-evaluation, the leadership of the school demonstrates a good capacity for sustaining further improvement.

Children make satisfactory progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and this is now maintained at Key Stage 1. However, there are insufficient opportunities for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to choose their own learning activities.

Strategies to address underachievement in writing have resulted in significant improvement and attainment in writing is above average. There is also improved progress in mathematics. Attainment in reading is not as good. Groups of pupils reading together with the teacher show signs of success but it is too early to see the full impact of this strategy. A complicated staff structure and timetable are hampering teachers in planning a more creative approach to the curriculum. There are too few opportunities for pupils to practise their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills in other subjects. The school are fully aware of this difficulty and early plans are in place to simplify organisation, enabling pupils to practise these skills more regularly and so make faster progress.

The school's strong Christian ethos and excellent relationships underpin all its work. Pupils enjoy school and have a confident attitude to all aspects of school life. They are well behaved and polite. These qualities, in a calm and happy 'family' atmosphere, create a very positive climate for learning. Pupils say 'learning is fun' and 'we have to work hard', and parents support this by their many positive comments such as, 'Our daughter loves going to school which must mean she is in a safe and happy environment. We are delighted with her progress.' The school has rigorous procedures to deal with

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absenteeism, but the attendance of a significant number of pupils is affecting progress in raising overall attendance rates.

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 and improve pupils' progress in reading by:
  - developing reading skills through more opportunities for individual and guided reading
  - improving reading resources
  - involving parents and carers more in reading at home.
- Reorganise the staff structure so that timetabling constraints on teaching and the curriculum are removed, allowing pupils to make faster progress in developing key skills.
- Address the imbalance between adult-led and child-led activities in the Early Years Foundation Stage so that children have more opportunities to choose their own learning.

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

Children enter school with levels of knowledge and skills broadly as expected for their age, although some aspects of communication, language and literacy and calculation skills are, in some years, below those typically expected. National tests show that in 2009 attainment in English and mathematics for pupils in Year 6 dipped significantly. This is partly attributable to the unusually high number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities in that year. However, the school responded rapidly to the drop in achievement and results for 2010 showed that attainment for the pupils in Year 6 was average overall, although stronger in mathematics. Evidence from pupils' work, lessons and assessment data during the inspection showed that average attainment and satisfactory progress are being sustained, with signs that progress is beginning to accelerate in some areas.

In both English and mathematics lessons pupils are encouraged to talk through their ideas with a partner. All pupils were challenged exceptionally well in a Year 5/6 mathematics lesson. Through a fast game they clearly demonstrated that they can use quick mental strategies. This helped them later in the lesson when they made very good progress whilst investigating probability. Pupils worked hard because they were enjoying an exciting lesson. During a Year 3/4 mathematics lesson the teacher competently met a wide variety of abilities through targeted tasks. During the mental starter the more able pupils made good progress whilst working independently on a challenging computer program. Those with special educational needs were supported well by a skilled teaching assistant and the use of number fans. The teacher worked with the rest of the class and they learned quickly because of the clever use of the interactive whiteboard. Although the school's work to raise attainment in reading is just beginning to show impact, the school is aware of the need to improve resources for reading and to encourage parents and carers to spend time reading at home with their children.

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Pupils get on well together and are very friendly towards each other. They feel very safe in school and demonstrate a good understanding of issues related to safety, knowing, for example, how to use the internet safely. The excellent relationships in the school mean problems are rare, but pupils know who to approach for help if they need it. They said 'a teacher always sorts it out'. When asked about healthy living pupils knew the importance of a healthy diet and lots of exercise. Due to their Healthy Schools Plus initiative there is a serious commitment to healthy snacks, breakfast and lunch boxes. Pupils enjoy having responsibilities around the school and being members of the school forum, although they do not take part in decision making as much as they could. They are proud of the charities they support by raising money for those less fortunate than themselves and their spiritual development benefits considerably from strong links with the local church. Breakfast club is excellent and is of considerable value to the local community. Life skills learned through these opportunities, their good behaviour and sound basic skills are preparing pupils satisfactorily for the future. The spiritual, moral and social aspects of pupils' development are strong but there are fewer opportunities within the curriculum for pupils to gain a full understanding of cultural traditions and ways of life that are different from their own.

*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>3</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?

Due to the significant amount of professional development that has taken place, teachers' subject knowledge is good. Detailed planning meets the needs of all pupils. Teachers

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make it very clear what is to be learned and careful questioning and opportunities for pupils to talk or work with a partner enable them to make considered responses. Most pupils know their targets, although this is a recent initiative, and together with well-phrased marking this shows them how they can improve their work. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are well supported by highly skilled teaching assistants. In a small minority of lessons introductions are too long and the pace slows so that pupils do not have time to make as much progress as they might with their tasks.

Writing and mathematics skills are well taught, but there are not enough opportunities for pupils to practise these and ICT skills in other subjects. Teachers plan creatively where possible, but they are limited by a piecemeal staffing structure and limiting timetable. Music and art are particular strengths and many pupils learn to play a musical instrument. Extra-curricular activities are strong for such a small school and enrich pupils' experiences through such activities as circus skills, drama, Spanish, French and choir. Personal, social and health education is promoted well and is the bedrock of the polite behaviour and excellent relationships.

The school is particularly sensitive in the way that it cares for each individual. Parents show a high level of satisfaction with all safety procedures, commenting upon the improved level of safety at the end of the school day. Safeguarding procedures are carried out diligently, although some policies require updating. Links with outside agencies are good, supporting the well-organised provision for vulnerable pupils and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities. This is much appreciated by parents, one of whom said, 'This school has so welcomed my special needs child. All staff are so kind, generous and conscious of my child's needs. I can express any concerns with complete confidence.'

*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>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>2</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

In the short time that she has been in post the headteacher has forged together a strong and effective team of senior leaders. A previous local authority course on moving the school from satisfactory to good in terms of overall effectiveness, together with several new initiatives, are already beginning to prove successful, and staff are fully aware of senior leaders' vision for the school's future. Self-review and evaluation are very thorough, identifying the correct priorities which inform a detailed action plan to support the school's vision for improvement. Governors know the school well through their links with subject leaders and are involved in the life of the school at both an operational and strategic level. They are committed to training and development but as yet their monitoring of the school's work is insufficiently rigorous.

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The promotion of community cohesion at school and local level is strong, especially through links with the church and immediate community. Pupils' understanding of the cultural diversity that exists in the United Kingdom and internationally is less strong and there are fewer opportunities for them to improve this. As a Rights Respecting School pupils have a good understanding of the rights of children worldwide and have made contact with a school in Uganda, and plan to make contact with a school in London. However, in both cases these projects are at an early stage of development.

The school has good relationships with parents and carers, schools and other agencies. The St. Michael's Friends Association is particularly strong. These partnerships enhance a wide variety of areas of school life, for example the local pyramid of schools joint business manager, curriculum days for pupils, and gifted and talented opportunities at Exeter University. Promoting the equality of different groups of pupils is satisfactory and, through careful monitoring, it is becoming more effective as provision and outcomes for all pupils continues to improve. Leaders do not tolerate any kind of discrimination. The governing body and school staff ensure that safeguarding procedures are followed carefully and regular training and monitoring ensure that a satisfactory quality is maintained.

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

## Early Years Foundation Stage

The school thoughtfully provides flexible arrangements for those Year 1 pupils who are a part of the Reception class. Some of these pupils are incorporated, where appropriate, into the literacy and numeracy groups in the Year 1/2 class. This ensures that they are fully challenged and working at the correct level for their age and ability. The satisfactory start that young children make in Reception is now being securely built upon in Years 1 and 2.

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A warm and stimulating environment awaits Reception children. Relationships are excellent and as a result children are confident and at ease in their surroundings. In whatever they are engaged, children's behaviour is good as children share quality resources and learn together. The curriculum and indoor learning environment is entirely appropriate for learning and development in the early years. Children were captivated by the 'Jungle' theme and fully engaged in writing their own jungle books. Planning is detailed and the classroom well organised, but there is an over reliance on teacher-directed tasks. There are insufficient opportunities for children to choose activities for themselves, encouraging curiosity and learning through their own play. Opportunities for learning out of doors are restricted and activities to gain good coordination skills are limited. Wheeled toys, sand and water play were not available at the time of the inspection. Assessments are carefully recorded, but it was not clear whether or not these are used to plan the next steps in learning for individual children.

Induction procedures are satisfactory and links with parents continue throughout the Reception year with the opportunity for a written dialogue through the reading record book. Children are very well cared for and the leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage are satisfactory.

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

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

**Views of parents and carers**

The vast majority of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire were very supportive of the school. Of the very small number of concerns raised most were individual issues. A very small minority was concerned about the progress their child is making. Inspectors found progress to be satisfactory and improving strongly.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Michael's C of E 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 53 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 140 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	32	60	17	32	2	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	36	68	14	26	1	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	20	38	30	57	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	17	32	31	58	4	8	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	23	43	27	51	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	17	32	32	60	2	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	21	40	28	53	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)	20	38	27	51	1	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	19	36	28	53	2	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	18	34	28	53	3	6	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	19	36	33	62	1	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	24	45	26	49	1	2	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	27	51	22	42	2	4	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.**



10 March 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St Michael's Church of England Primary School, Lyme Regis DT7 3DY**

Thank you for the very warm and friendly welcome you gave us when we visited your school recently and for spending time talking to us. We really enjoyed meeting you. We found St Michael's to be a satisfactory school. You are working hard and the actions taken by your headteacher, governors and other adults in your school are improving your school quickly. These are some of the best things we found.

- You enjoy coming to school and you are very polite and well behaved. This is helping you to do well.
- You have a good understanding of how to stay safe and live a healthy lifestyle.
- You enjoy helping in school and get on really well together.
- Your teachers teach you well and make learning fun. You have a very good attitude to your work and find your learning really interesting.
- You are well cared for and you told us that you feel very happy and safe in school.

All the adults in your school want you to do your very best. Although they know what needs to be done next, we have asked them to do three things to make your learning even better.

- We would like them to help you improve your reading skills by encouraging you to read more at school and at home and by providing you with more interesting books.
- We would like them to reorganise the way you are taught so that you make faster progress, especially in literacy, numeracy and ICT.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage we would like children to have more opportunities to choose their own learning tasks.

Please keep working hard!

Yours sincerely

Anna Sketchley

Lead inspector

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