

St Michael's Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	100731
Local Authority	Lewisham
Inspection number	354879
Inspection dates	24–25 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Helen Howard

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	281
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Beryl Fielder
Headteacher	Tabetha White
Date of previous school inspection	11 September 2007
School address	Champion Road Sydenham London SE26 4HH
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The team observed 21 lessons taught by 12 teachers. They met with pupils, parents and carers, representatives of the governing body and members of staff. They observed the school's work and looked at school documentation, including its self-evaluation, policies and procedures relating to the safeguarding of children and data about pupils' progress. Inspectors also considered the views of pupils and the 34 parents and carers who returned the questionnaire.

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

- The effectiveness of teaching in accelerating progress for pupils in Key Stage 2.
- The consistency of leadership in ensuring that teaching is at least good.
- The effectiveness of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Information about the school

St Michael's Church of England Primary is a popular school that is larger than the average for this kind, and is situated on a split site. The majority of pupils are of Black British Caribbean or other Black heritage. One pupil in five is of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including those who have statements of special educational needs, is above average. These include pupils with moderate learning difficulties, emotional and behavioural problems and autistic spectrum disorders. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is above average and more pupils than in most schools join or leave the school other than at the usual times. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are taught in one Reception class. The school has a number of awards including Healthy School Status, Activemark, and the gold 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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

St Michael's Church of England Primary School is a good, inclusive and harmonious school which is continuing to improve under the very strong leadership of the headteacher. She is supported well by the whole staff and by the effective governing body. The school has been highly successful in establishing a very caring and supportive ethos, enhanced by very strong links with the church so that pupils develop strong values, confidence, maturity and enjoyment of learning. The school looks after its pupils exceptionally well, including those whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. Children and pupils feel very safe because safeguarding arrangements are outstanding. Pupils enjoy coming to school and show good attitudes to learning. The school is prepared to go to great lengths to support pupils, and the care, guidance and support for pupils is exceptional. One pupil said, 'Teachers really look after us.' Excellent engagement with parents and carers ensures that they have opportunities to be fully involved in their children's learning.

The rigorous systems that are in place for evaluating how well pupils are doing play a key part in improving performance. Outcomes for pupils are consequently good. Information about pupils' progress is regularly collected by teachers and monitored by the leadership team. Pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress relative to their starting points and some make outstanding progress. Achievement in mathematics, which had been a focus for leaders and managers, has improved through more effective teaching. While achievement is good overall, attainment is average and the quality of learning throughout the school is not yet consistent across all year groups. It is strongest in Years 5 and 6. Data are used well at whole-school level to identify patterns of pupil performance so that teachers can address them. At class level, it is not consistently used to give pupils clear indications of their targets and how to improve.

The curriculum offers pupils many opportunities for making links across a range of subjects and provides very effective support programmes for targeted pupils. The school responds quickly to areas for development and works outstandingly well with other partners to enhance its provision. The opportunities for singing result in performances of a very high standard.

Pupils' behaviour is good and this is reflected in lessons, in the way they move around the school and in their play. Pupils get on very well together. In a few lessons, attitudes to learning were not at the same high level but this was because teaching was not so stimulating. The school has robust systems in place to monitor the effectiveness of its work. Self-evaluation is strong. The school knows its strengths and weaknesses and plans effectively to address them. As a result, previous good performance has been consolidated and improved. The improvements in teaching, particularly in the Early Years Foundation

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Stage and in mathematics and writing, demonstrate that there is good capacity to sustain further improvements.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- By July 2012, in order to raise attainment, increase the proportion of good and outstanding teaching by:
 - ensuring that all pupils know their targets
 - making more consistent use of assessment in lessons so that pupils know how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils start school with skills and abilities that are below age-related expectations and by the end of Year 6 they make good progress overall. The quality of learning and progress in lessons is good, as is achievement. Pupils are keen to come to school and all parents and carers who returned a questionnaire agreed that their child enjoyed learning. Pupils acquire a good level of basic skills, including the use of information and communication technology, and apply these in a range of activities. Different groups of pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress. Some make exceptional progress because they are very well supported by teaching assistants and external partners who plan activities with teachers to meet specific needs of individual pupils. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning and particularly enjoy applying skills related to their philosophy lessons. This was demonstrated in an outstanding Year 5 and 6 literacy lesson, where pupils were evaluating their performances of a poem. They were very well motivated by the teacher's excellent use of questioning and, as a consequence, were able to build on responses from other pupils to justify their own opinions.

There has been marked improvement in pupils' progress overall where there has been a specific focus and drive, for example on standards in writing and mathematics in Years 5 and 6. There are some differences in the rates of progress between year groups and classes. Attainment in the current Year 6 is at the expected level and in Year 5 is above the expected level for this stage. Overall, attainment is average and improving.

Pupils have an excellent sense of how to keep themselves safe and are confident about the role that adults play in looking after them. The good and occasionally outstanding behaviour of pupils in lessons and around the school contributes to their security. Attendance is high and pupils arrive punctually to school and to lessons. They have a good understanding of how to live a healthy lifestyle and this is supported by initiatives taken by the school to promote physical and emotional health, resulting in the awarding of the 'Healthy Schools' status. A small number of pupils have emotional and behavioural difficulties and staff are extremely skilful in managing their needs so that learning is not disrupted.

Pupils respond positively to the opportunities to take responsibility within the school and are proud of the contribution they make. They are highly reflective about the world around them and opportunities for them to acquire a sense of wonder are a significant factor in their spiritual and cultural development. The very effective links with the local church support spiritual development particularly well. Assemblies provide excellent opportunities for them to share their prayers and to reflect on the world around them.

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They have a very strong understanding of right and wrong, are able to manage conflicts in a mature manner and are sensitive to the diversity within their community. Their outstanding spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Teaching is good overall and occasionally it is outstanding. There are very positive relationships between staff and pupils and teachers' good subject knowledge and use of data are applied well to monitor pupils' progress and plan activities that match the needs of all pupils. As a result, teaching is securing good progress overall, especially in the upper end of Key Stage 2. While data are used well by teachers to plan activities and to identify pupils who are underperforming, they are not consistently used to guide pupils on how to improve their work in lessons through targets, marking and other comments. A range of resources are effectively used to support learning and practical approaches to teaching are helping to accelerate pupils' progress. Drama, model making and role play are all innovative ways that the school uses to inspire pupils. For example in one lesson in a mixed age class in Key Stage 2, following a performance of the poem 'Jabberwocky', pupils were making models in preparation for an animation film.

The curriculum is considerably enhanced by regular trips and visits and through highly effective partnerships that provide exciting activities for pupils. These include a range of cross-curricular opportunities, sports, art and cultural activities, which have helped the

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school to achieve awards including the gold standard 'Artsmark' and the 'Activemark'. The international primary curriculum has been used effectively to stimulate learning about other cultures and has been further strengthened through links to other schools, including one in Brazil. The school has also developed a successful programme to improve pupils' learning skills and this has been shared with other schools.

The school knows and supports its pupils exceptionally well and is able to give them the help they need. As one parent said, 'I feel as if the children are truly cared for.' There is a very welcoming environment and the overwhelming majority of parents, carers and pupils feel that there is good preparation for moves to the next year group or school. Carefully targeted personalised support for pupils whose circumstances may make them vulnerable ensures that all pupils are included and can enjoy the same experiences as their peers.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher has shown ambition and determination in creating a shared vision for improving outcomes for all pupils. She is very well supported by the senior leaders and by the governing body, who effectively monitor and evaluate the school's performance and plan well for further improvements. While she is aware that more needs to be done to gain greater consistency in some aspects of teaching, she has brought about significantly improved teaching throughout the school and good progress overall.

The school promotes equal opportunities well and ensures that there is no discrimination. The diversity and talents of pupils are celebrated and pupils show high levels of respect for each other. As a result, outcomes for all groups of pupils are good.

The school's engagement with parents and carers is outstanding. Parent and carer questionnaires and school surveys show that most agree that they are well informed about their child's progress. The innovative 'parent representatives' group, featuring parents and carers from every class, ensures that the school receives regular feedback from them. The school's work with its partners is also outstanding and is contributing to the improved outcomes for pupils. The school is leading a number of initiatives across the authority.

Members of the governing body work effectively to support the school, understand their roles and ensure all safeguarding and other statutory requirements are addressed promptly. The school promotes community cohesion well. St Michael's is a very harmonious school and has a good understanding of the religious, ethnic and socio-economic characteristics of the community. It promotes cultural heritage particularly

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effectively and has strong international links. Local community links are made mainly through church activities and through collaborations with other schools.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

On entry to the Early Years Foundation Stage, children's skills and abilities are low for their age. Good teaching ensures that they make good progress in all areas of learning. Regular observations of what children have achieved help staff monitor their progress and plan effectively for the next steps.

Children's personal development skills are especially strong and they enjoy being actively involved in lessons. They participate well in activities of choice. Teachers provide children with many opportunities to develop their basic skills and explore the world around them. The environment is welcoming and well equipped and the reduction in class size has resulted in more space for outside activities. Children particularly enjoy the opportunities for climbing and physical activities.

Leadership and management are good. A clear vision for further improvements based on accurate analysis of data has resulted in improvements in teaching and in provision. Partnerships with parents and carers are excellent and, as a result, they are well informed and involved in their child's assessment. Children are cared for exceptionally well and safeguarding procedures are outstanding.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Just over one tenth of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire, a response which is well below the average. The overwhelming majority are happy with their child's experience in school and this is confirmed in school surveys of parent views. Parents and carers are confident that their child is safe. One summed up parents' views by writing: 'The ethos and values of St Michael's help my child, who has grown into a charming young man.' The school regularly seeks the views of parents and carers and uses this information to support developments. The very large majority feel that the school is well led and managed. Most parents and carers also feel that the school helps them to support their child's learning and helps their child to lead a healthy lifestyle.

A very small minority of parents and carers indicated that they do not feel that the school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour and a very small minority also felt that their child is not making enough progress. Inspectors found that pupils behave very well and that where pupils have emotional and behavioural difficulties, staff manage their needs skilfully. Inspectors found that pupils make good progress overall but that sometimes progress is not accelerated sufficiently in individual lessons. The school has agreed to address this issue.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Michael's Church of England 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 34 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 281 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	22	65	12	35	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	20	59	14	41	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	18	53	16	47	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	13	38	19	56	1	3	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	17	50	16	47	1	3	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	15	44	17	50	2	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	15	44	16	47	2	6	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)	14	41	16	47	1	3	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	14	41	18	53	2	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	13	38	17	50	2	6	2	6
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	12	35	19	56	1	3	2	6
The school is led and managed effectively	17	50	14	41	3	9	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	21	62	13	38	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	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

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 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 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">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



26 May 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Michael's Church of England Primary School, Sydenham SE26 4HH

You may remember that we visited your school recently. Thank you all very much for giving us such a warm welcome. We could see how much you enjoy learning and how proud you are of your school. You are right to feel proud because St Michael's is a good school that helps you to make good progress.

We could see how much you like doing practical things in lessons, especially the model making and drama activities. We were very impressed with your singing and how well you all behave in school.

You told us how much you like coming to school and how safe you feel. You also told us how much you learn in lessons and how much you trust the adults in school. We think that the school cares for you very well.

We have asked the school to do two things that will help make it even better.

- Most of the teaching is good but we have asked the school to make some lessons even better by helping you to understand how you can improve your work. Some of you are not clear about how to do this and so we have asked teachers to tell you your targets and give you some ideas about how to make your work better.

You can help by continuing to behave well and by keeping up your very good attendance.

Yours sincerely

Helen Howard

Lead inspector

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