

St Michael's CofE Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109155
Local Authority	Bath and North East Somerset
Inspection number	356487
Inspection dates	24–25 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Hazel Callaghan

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	167
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Rev Richard Wilson
Headteacher	David Goucher
Date of previous school inspection	11 December 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Sixteen lessons were observed, taught by seven teachers, and meetings were held with the staff, representatives of the governing body, pupils and representatives of partnership organisations. A variety of documentation was scrutinised, such as that relating to safeguarding, policies, the school's record of pupils' attainment and progress, pupils' work and improvement plans. They observed the school's work, and analysed questionnaires returned from pupils and staff along with 26 parent questionnaires.

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

- The extent to which improved attainment is being sustained and pupils' progress increased in all classes, particularly for more able pupils and for girls.
- The extent to which teaching and the curriculum are consistently meeting pupils' personal and academic needs so they are enabled to make better progress.
- The capacity of senior leaders and the governing body to continue to move the school forward. The capacity of senior leaders and the governing body to continue to move the school forward.

Information about the school

St Michael's Church of England Junior School is small compared with most primary schools. Most of its pupils are from White British backgrounds and no pupils currently speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is significantly higher than the national average, as is the proportion identified as having special educational needs and/or disabilities. The predominant areas of special need are moderate learning and emotional, behavioural and social difficulties. The latter is because the school has a resource base (The Lodge) for 8 pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties and at the time of the inspection it was oversubscribed with 10 pupils attending. These pupils start in The Lodge when they first arrive at St Michael's but, once they are settled, are taught predominantly in mainstream classes. The school has achieved a number of awards, the most recent being the International Schools Intermediate Award and Healthy Schools Plus.

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, however, and has many strengths. The headteacher has a clear vision for the school and provides the drive and the ambition which inspire the staff and pupils. There has been a successful focus on improving teaching and learning with the result that attainment has risen and is now broadly average. Those who have behavioural and emotional difficulties have made significant strides in overcoming the barriers to their learning. They are now not only ready to learn, but want to do well. Progress overall is satisfactory, however, because the significant progress evident in many areas is not yet fully overcoming a legacy of slow progress in the past. The quality of learning in mathematics is often good. English continues to be a challenge for some pupils, especially in reading, and improvement in this area is the current priority for the school. Most pupils show very little experience of books and experience of a wide vocabulary and so do not have the range of vocabulary to help them succeed. The school has successfully engaged with families to ensure that pupils attend school regularly and this also supports pupils' learning. Some pupils do not always arrive punctually at school, however, and they miss the start of lessons and the focus for learning.

Many pupils face considerable challenges in their lives, not least their own personal emotional and behavioural difficulties, but pupils feel extremely safe at St Michael's because the care, support and guidance given to all pupils are outstanding. They also have a good understanding of what constitutes an unsafe situation and develop strategies to keep themselves safe. They are given every kind of support which is very specific to their own particular needs so they grow in self-esteem and in confidence, not only in the staff, but also in their own abilities. Pupils consequently behave well and this also is a significant factor in their improving progress. The excellent range of additional activities, visits and themed events provided by the school and through its outstanding partnerships with a wide range of outside organisations also enhance pupils' academic and personal development. Pupils respect each other and they make a significant contribution not only to the life of the school but also to the wider community. In recognition of its work, the school has received the International Intermediate Award. Pupils enjoy school and their lessons. This is because the teachers make lessons fun. One pupil's comment reflects the views of many when he said, 'They even make English and maths interesting'!

The quality of teaching is satisfactory, but improving strongly. Teachers do all they can to motivate pupils to learn but sometimes they focus too often on the boys, not only in their questioning but also in planning activities which they know will engage the boys more readily; consequently, girls are sometimes not as effectively engaged. Elements of good teaching were observed in many classrooms but this does not yet build effectively to ensure consistently good learning over time. This is because although effective assessment systems have been introduced, they are not always used sufficiently

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accurately to gain a clear picture of what pupils already know and can do, with the result that activities do not sufficiently build on prior learning. Pupils' targets for the next steps in learning are consequently too broad to help them understand what they need to do to improve. They are satisfactorily prepared for their future education.

The school has made significant progress over the last two years in raising attainment and in improving teaching, learning, and attendance. This emerging strong track record, together with excellent care, support and guidance, accurate self-evaluation procedures improving governance and the concerted drive for improvement from all staff, is testimony to the school's good capacity to sustain improvement.

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?

- Ensure that pupils make consistently good progress especially in reading and writing by:
 - clearly identifying what pupils already know and can do
 - using this information to plan activities that build securely on these abilities and skills
 - setting appropriately challenging targets for pupils' next stages of learning
 - engaging girls more in lessons more consistently and effectively
 - providing more opportunities for pupils to hear and to read a wide range of literature.
- In order to support good learning, strongly encourage pupils and their families to arrive at school more punctually.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

3

Pupils enter the school with a range of prior attainment, but the majority are below the levels expected. Progress throughout the school is now at least satisfactory, and in some areas better, because most pupils are ready to learn and want to do well. The proportion of pupils reaching the higher standards of Level 5 is now broadly average, indicating that more able pupils achieve in line with their peers. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, including some of those who begin in the resource base, make good progress. Achievement in reading and writing is still slightly lower than in mathematics across the school but pupils are keen to show what they can achieve and have increasingly high expectations of themselves. This was clearly illustrated in a Year 6 session which combined two classes to work on language that described emotions. The teachers explained clearly what was expected of them and pupils had to decide at what level they would aim their written work. Many decided they would attempt the more demanding task and produced work of high quality. Similarly, in a lower ability mathematics lesson in Years 3/4, pupils readily and successfully took on the challenge to find ways of using only the 2, 3, + and keys on a calculator to find the totals from 1 all the way up to 20.

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Pupils throughout the school work together well. They share ideas and cooperate sensibly and very much enjoy being part of their house teams. They take on responsibilities very readily and play an active part in different activities, such as the school council, meal designers in the 'Food Factor' project, and the eco warriors, as well as acting as monitors. They have an exceptionally good understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles, show great enthusiasm for, and participate extensively in, sport and make positive choices in the food they eat. This is confirmed in the school's recently acquired Healthy Schools Plus Award. Pupils get on very well together, show care and empathy for others and respect each other's points of view. The school is developing global links, such as those in Switzerland and pupils meet a wide range of different people through their activities outside school, especially in the local community. Their awareness of the diversity of cultures outside their own school is developing.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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?

The strong family ethos of the school underpins all its work. Staff know the pupils extremely well and provide personalised care and support. The headteacher keeps a sharp eye out for those who need additional support, and activities within the curriculum are found that will engage their interest, raise their self-esteem and develop their confidence. These activities, alongside the extremely wide range of additional activities, enrich pupils' learning, help them develop new skills and interests and widen their experiences. The

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basic curriculum is suitably broad and balanced. Activities are often predominantly boy-orientated because getting them involved had been a prime factor in raising attainment, especially in writing. This is no longer such a priority and consideration is now being given to ensuring girls' interests are also actively promoted.

Teaching is satisfactory overall but has a variety of strengths. Lessons are typically well organised and teachers use resources well to engage pupils' interest, such as the use of film clips of 'Charlie and the Chocolate Factory' in developing writing. Relationships are strong and pupils know clearly what is expected of them. Support staff are used well and provide good levels of support in lessons and in leading intervention groups such as those now introduced to raise attainment in reading. Effective strategies are used to help pupils understand the purpose of the lesson and often the steps for success within them. Marking is usually at least satisfactory and frequently better, and helps pupils to understand how well they are doing. Activities are satisfactorily matched to pupils' prior learning, but assessment information is not always sufficiently accurate in identifying what pupils already know to ensure that activities are sufficiently well focused. All pupils have targets for next steps in writing and in mathematics but they are too broad to match all pupils' needs and they are often not reviewed regularly enough to keep up with the pace of pupils' learning.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	3
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	3
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?

Strong and effective leadership from the headteacher and the new senior team is having a positive impact on moving the school forward. A concerted focus has been placed on developing writing, which is having a positive impact on raising attainment. The school's strong and well-focused care support and guidance for all pupils is based on the consistent drive to ensure all pupils have the opportunities they need to succeed. The gap in their learning is closing and pupils are reaching average attainment from often low starting points. There is no evidence of any discrimination, pupils get on very well together and the school is a very harmonious community. The headteacher's inspirational leadership in ensuring all pupils' personal needs are met, along with very effective behaviour management by all the staff, underpins the success the school is having in enabling pupils to learn. The creative use of additional funds and excellent partnerships with local charities, outside agencies and organisations provide excellent opportunities for pupils to extend their horizons. The school has worked successfully to engage with its parents and carers to enable them to understand how they too can support their children's learning, with the result that attendance is improving and greater numbers now attend parent consultation evenings. There are good links with the local community and pupils are given

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many opportunities to meet a wide range of different people. The school knows more can be done to support pupils' awareness of the diversity of cultures outside Bath and appropriate plans have been made. Nevertheless, the school's contribution to the promotion of community cohesion is good.

The governing body supports the school in ensuring safeguarding of the pupils is effective and there are good policies and systems in place that all staff understand and follow. The school site is very secure and all adults who have contact with the pupils are carefully checked for their suitability. Pupils know they are well looked after and so they feel extremely safe. The governing body has had a number of challenging personnel difficulties to address because of a falling budget and the need to make redundancies. This has taken up a good deal of their time. The governing body provides high levels of support and is now improving in its effectiveness in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school.

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	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Views of parents and carers

The proportion of parents and carers who responded to the questionnaire was much smaller than usual. The large majority of responses were very positive about the school and, apart from one parent who did not approve of the school lunches, there were no negative written comments. The number of pupils now taking school lunches, however, has increased significantly since some of them were involved in redesigning the menus. The inspection team found that pupils' awareness of how to develop healthy lifestyles was outstanding. All other written responses were very positive and highlighted the quality of care the school provides and the dedication shown by all the staff.

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 Junior 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 26 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 167 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	19	73	6	23	1	4	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	19	73	6	23	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	18	69	8	31	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	19	73	5	19	1	4	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	19	73	7	27	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	16	62	9	35	1	4	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	19	73	5	19	2	8	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)	18	69	8	31	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	18	69	7	27	1	4	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	17	65	9	35	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	16	62	9	35	1	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	20	77	5	19	1	4	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	22	85	4	15	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.



27 May 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Michael's Church of England Junior School, Bath BA2 1RW

Thank you for making us so welcome and answering our questions when we visited you recently. We have found that the school is satisfactory and improving rapidly. It helps you to make satisfactory progress in your work but is very effective in helping you to develop confidence so you want to do well. In these ways, you are rightly proud of your school and what it does for you.

Here are some of the things we found out.

- The staff look after you extremely well so you feel exceptionally safe at school.
- Teachers make your lessons fun and interesting and most of you are reaching standards that are similar to those of most children of your age.
- You behave and get on with one another well.
- You have an excellent understanding of how to develop a healthy lifestyle and try hard to make positive decisions about what you eat.
- You make an excellent contribution to the life of the school and are keen to take on new responsibilities and jobs that will help others.
- You have a very wide range of additional activities to enjoy both inside school and through working with other organisations.
- The school is led well and staff work hard to help you succeed.

We have seen many good things at your school but we have asked your headteacher and staff to do the following things so that you can succeed even better:

- Identify carefully what you already know and can do so that your lessons and your targets help you to make better progress.
- Help girls be more involved in lessons and give you all more opportunities to hear and to read great stories.
- Encourage you get to school on time so you do not miss any of your lessons.

We wish you well and remember you can help by continuing to work hard.

Yours sincerely

Hazel Callaghan

Lead inspector

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