

St Michael's on the Mount C of E Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109148
Local Authority	City of Bristol
Inspection number	356483
Inspection dates	23–24 June 2011
Reporting inspector	Christine Huard

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	189
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Ricky Winn
Headteacher	Lesley Davis
Date of previous school inspection	30 April – 1 May 2008
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Twelve lessons were observed, led by eight different teachers. Meetings were held with members of staff, representatives of the governing body and with groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at the school improvement plan, monitoring records, assessment and tracking information, as well as other documentation provided by the school. Inspectors also analysed the 56 questionnaires returned by parents and carers as well as those returned by pupils and staff.

Information about the school

St Michael's on the Mount is a smaller-than-average primary school. It is located close to the centre of Bristol, serving an extremely diverse community and draws its pupils from a very wide area. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is above average; most needs are related to moderate learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is also above average. The school has much higher proportions of pupils from minority ethnic groups and of those at an early stage of learning English than are seen in most schools. There is a much greater level of movement into and out of the school other than at normal times of transfer than is seen in most schools. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are catered for in the Reception class. The school has exceeded the government's floor targets for the proportion of pupils gaining Level 4 in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6.

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	2
Achievement	2
Teaching	2
Leadership and management	2
Behaviour and safety	2
Does the school adequately promote the pupils' well-being?	Yes
Does the school adequately promote community cohesion?	Yes
Does the school provide value for money?	Yes

Key findings

St Michael's is a good school. Good leadership and management and a relentless drive for improvement mean that standards have risen significantly, and progress has improved notably since the previous inspection.

All groups of pupils make good progress, especially those who are at an early stage of learning English. This is because they receive extremely good support and teachers ensure that they receive preliminary teaching to ensure they understand the vocabulary they will need to tackle the tasks they are given. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make good progress. They receive good support which is matched well to their particular needs.

The curriculum is relevant and interesting and closely matched to the interests of the pupils. Teachers' planning is comprehensive and carefully builds on pupils' previous learning. Until now, mathematics has been taught discretely and not integrated within the themes being pursued. This is because there were significant gaps in pupils' learning. Many of the older pupils did not have a good enough command of the basic skills, such as number bonds and tables. This weakness has been addressed successfully. It does mean, though, that older pupils have not had enough opportunities to apply the knowledge and skills they now possess to solve problems and carry out investigations.

Behaviour is good, both in class and around the school. The play spaces are well supervised, happy and harmonious places. A wide range of different outdoor resources and locations, such as the amphitheatre, means there is always something productive and interesting to do. Pupils focus well on their learning because teachers are knowledgeable and confident. They make lessons interesting and interactive and, as a result, pupils learn effectively. Pupils say they feel safe in school and are

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confident that they can approach any adult if they have problems or concerns and be sure that they will be dealt with.

Leadership and management are good. The senior leadership team is effective because responsibilities and expectations are clearly defined. Middle leaders are enthusiastic and efficient. There is a shared determination to drive the school forward and improve further. The school has taken sound/secure steps to improve the leadership and management of special educational needs this year. Procedures have been put in place to make identification more precise, and to make it easier to track progress and ensure the pupils receive exactly the support they need. However, these strategies are at an early stage of being implemented and have not yet been monitored for full impact or a plan written to show these improvements can be built on. Parents and carers are supportive and comments such as, 'My children are treated as individuals' and 'There is a good balance between academic achievement and more "fun" activities', reflect those of many.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve attainment in mathematics by:
 - providing more opportunities for older pupils to carry out investigations and solve problems in order to apply the skills and knowledge they have gained
 - ensuring that mathematical opportunities are built into the topics being pursued within the school's creative curriculum.
- Strengthen the leadership of special educational needs by:
 - ensuring that the new strategies and procedures are fully embedded
 - putting in place an action plan for future development
 - monitoring the new interventions in order to measure their impact on pupils' learning.

Main report

Children in the Reception class make good progress. There is a very good balance of activities between those which they can choose for themselves and those that are led by an adult. An exceptionally good focus on developing speaking and listening skills means that all pupils become confident learners. The current theme of fairy tales sees children role-playing Jack and the Beanstalk with puppets, building a bridge for The Billy Goats Gruff or making a wooden spoon puppet of Rapunzel. Children develop their early reading skills sequentially and develop a love of books because the expressive reading of the teacher has children engrossed and enthralled.

This good progress continues across the school. Pupils make good progress in lessons because tasks build on their previous learning well and are very closely matched to their abilities. From below average starting points, pupils' attainment rises to average by the time they leave in Year 6. The school tracks the progress of

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all pupils very carefully, both as individuals as well as by group, thereby ensuring equality of opportunity is promoted effectively. This rigorous approach is especially necessary because so many pupils join or leave the school during the course of a school year. The progress made by pupils of different groups, for example, those at an early stage of learning English, girls or boys, is broadly similar. This effective tracking enables specific needs to be identified and addressed before problems arise. Progress in reading is very good. Pupils at age six demonstrate that their reading skills are better than those expected for their age. They effectively sound out words and interpret the texts they are reading, demonstrating a real enthusiasm for reading and books. One small child reading about Emperor Penguins, said excitedly, 'I think the egg's about to hatch. I can't wait to turn over and see.' Older pupils also read very well and reading standards are above average by the time they leave in Year 6. Guided reading sessions are well focused and as pupils are placed in groups of similar ability, this helps to ensure that all are appropriately challenged or supported.

Teachers have ensured that older pupils have the skills in mathematics that they need. Younger pupils who have benefited from a continuous programme of skills development are already tackling problem solving and investigations with gusto. Pupils in Year 3 were fascinated by the 'giant's hand prints' found outside and were eagerly trying to discover whether he was as tall as the world's tallest man. They discussed how they could find out the height of the giant and the information and resources they would need to help them do so. The task challenged the most able pupils and all pupils received the support they needed from adults in order for them to solve the problem.

Teachers' planning is meticulous. They build on learning from the previous lesson to ensure that all pupils are supported appropriately. They target questions very well to specific pupils to discover how well they understand or to extend their thinking. Activities are interesting and challenging. Relationships between pupils and adults are strong and built on mutual respect so that pupils are well motivated. Pupils are encouraged successfully to work independently or together in small groups. Role-play is used effectively, especially as seen during a Year 6 lesson on Twelfth Night, when pupils showed a deep understanding of the characters in the play.

The school pursues a comprehensive programme to support pupils' personal development. As a result, they have a sharp awareness of their responsibilities both to themselves and each other; they have a well-developed sense of right and wrong. The school celebrates its cultural diversity well and pupils learn about and respect the many cultures and faiths represented. The quality of behaviour around the school and in lessons is good. Pupils say that there is no bullying in the school although there is the occasional flare up. These rare occasions are dealt with swiftly and all pupils spoken to had great confidence that adults would always resolve any problems. Behaviour management strategies are good and effective. The pupils are fully aware of what they entail and that they are expected to take responsibility for their own actions. Parents are fully involved if the behaviour of any pupil gives rise to concern and, if it is appropriate, the school draws on the support of a behaviour mentor. Pupils support each other very well. They are thoughtful and reflective and

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report that they feel safe. They have a good awareness of what constitutes an unsafe situation and understand clearly the dangers of drugs and alcohol abuse.

Attendance has improved significantly in the last year and is now above average. The school has worked closely with the local authority on developing an action plan. An uncompromising and consistent attitude towards attendance has been adopted and the impact has been extremely positive. Parents have mostly responded well to this and accept that their children need to be in school regularly in order to learn effectively.

The headteacher is skilled and very ambitious for the school. She is committed to further improvement and has the support of the whole staff team in pursuing this. The leadership team has been affected by sickness this year but has been reconstructed with staff in acting capacities to ensure that that the ongoing drive for improvement is not hindered. Leadership roles are devolved effectively and there is clear evidence that the whole staff work together well as a team in the drive to move the school forward. Pupils' progress has accelerated well since the previous inspection and become more consistent across the school because the monitoring of teaching and learning has been rigorous. The use of lesson studies, as well as more conventional lesson observations, has been instrumental in ensuring that the quality of teaching is now consistently good or better across the school. Equality of opportunity for all pupils is promoted well and there was no evidence of any discrimination at the time of the inspection.

Parents and carers are generally very supportive of the school. Those who returned negative responses to the questionnaires were mostly from a class where there has been a high level of staff turbulence during the year. The school has worked hard to minimise the effect on pupils' learning and a scrutiny of documentation shows that pupils have continued to make good progress despite the disruption. Self-evaluation is accurate and the school knows what it needs to do to improve. It has already, as in the case of the leadership and management of special educational needs and/or disabilities, begun to address the weakness identified. It has demonstrated that it has a good capacity for further improvement. The members of the governing body are knowledgeable and very supportive. They hold the school to account for its performance well. They ensure that safeguarding procedures are robust. They make very careful checks on all adults who work in the school, and ensure that health and safety checks, as well as risk assessments, are carried out rigorously.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Michael's on the Mount CE 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 12 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 56 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 189 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
Q1 My child is happy at school	35	63	20	36	1	2	0	0
Q2 My child feels safe at school	34	61	20	36	1	2	0	0
Q3 The school helps my child to achieve as well as they can	16	29	32	57	6	11	0	0
Q4 The school meets my child's particular needs	15	27	33	59	6	11	0	0
Q5 The school ensures my child is well looked after	29	52	26	46	1	2	0	0
Q6 Teaching at this school is good	28	50	23	41	4	7	0	0
Q7 There is a good standard of behaviour at this school	13	23	36	64	4	7	0	0
Q8 Lessons are not disrupted by bad behaviour	10	18	34	61	4	7	1	2
Q9 The school deals with any cases of bullying well	16	29	27	48	3	5	0	0
Q10 The school helps me to support my child's learning	17	30	29	52	7	13	1	2
Q11 The school responds to my concerns and keeps me well informed	20	36	26	46	7	13	3	5
Q12 The school is well led and managed	14	25	33	59	6	11	1	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	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 achievement of all pupils ■ behaviour and safety ■ the quality of teaching ■ the effectiveness of leadership and management <p>and taking into consideration</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ how well the school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
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 June 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Michael's on the Mount Primary School, Bristol BS2 8BE

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We really enjoyed seeing you work so hard in lessons and play so harmoniously outside. You showed us that you enjoy your school and how pleased you are with how well you are doing. You are right to be pleased, because it is a good school!

Here are some of the highlights.

- You enjoy school and make good progress in your learning.
- You behave well, both in class and out in the play spaces; we thought your amphitheatre was fantastic.
- You are reflective and take very good care of each other.
- You have an interesting and exciting curriculum; we think the Twelfth Night performance will be excellent!
- You understand well how to stay safe.
- The headteacher, staff and governors are good at running the school and understand well how they could make it even better.
- Your teachers are doing a good job. They work hard to plan interesting lessons and involve you as much as possible.
- All staff take good care of you and keep you safe.

There are some things the school could do better and we have asked the headteacher and governors to make sure that:

- you have lots of opportunities to use your mathematics skills to carry out investigations and solve problems as part of your thematic work
- the new procedures for managing the support for those of you who have more difficulties with your learning are monitored carefully and a plan drawn up to extend them even further in the future.

You can help by continuing to enjoy your learning and learning things like your tables and number bonds carefully so that you can use your knowledge to solve problems you are given.

Yours sincerely

Christine Huard
Lead inspector

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