

St Michael at Bowes CofE Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102026
Local Authority	Enfield
Inspection number	335826
Inspection dates	16–17 June 2010
Reporting inspector	Stephen Dennett

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	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	313
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Jean Jakobson
Headteacher	Maria Jay
Date of previous school inspection	22 May 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Inspectors observed 14 lessons and saw 15 teachers. Meetings were held with governors, staff and pupils, and parents met with inspectors informally before school. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at teachers' planning, case histories of vulnerable pupils, assessment information, reports to governors, a sample of pupils' books and 43 questionnaires from parents and carers.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following:

- pupils' attainment and progress in science
- the progress made by different groups of pupils, including those who speak English as an additional language
- the consistency and effectiveness of assessment
- the role of the governing body in monitoring provision and holding the school to account for standards and the quality of education.

Information about the school

St Michael at Bowes is a larger-than-average Church of England junior school which serves a socially and culturally mixed community. The majority of pupils are of Turkish and Eastern European origin, although there are sizeable African, Caribbean and Asian minorities. A large majority of pupils speak languages other than English at home and an above average number of pupils have special educational needs and/or disabilities. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is also well above the national average. The number of pupils who join or leave the school other than at the normal time of transfer is high. The school's recent awards and achievements include: Leading Parents' Partnership award, Investors in People, Intermediate International award and the Healthy School award.

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

This is a good school, which is improving rapidly. The headteacher has a clear vision for further improvement and, together with the senior management team and governors, has successfully addressed the shortcomings identified in the last report. Attainment in literacy has risen substantially and is now above the national average. This is no small feat, as a large majority of pupils speak English as an additional language. The school also has an above average number of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Attainment in mathematics has risen and is now broadly average. All these factors demonstrate that the school has a good capacity for sustained improvement. However, attainment in science has been lower but there are clear signs of improvement.

Although pupils enter the school with attainment that is broadly average, there are an increasing number of pupils with below average attainment in writing. However, a significant minority of pupils enter the school after Year 3 with levels of attainment which are well below average. Many of these have no previous formal education. Pupils make good progress in their learning through the school with a very large majority advancing by at least two National Curriculum levels from Year 3 to Year 6. An above average number of pupils achieve the higher Level 5 in English. Pupils who speak English as an additional language make good progress in their acquisition of English and in other aspects of their learning. Although around a third of pupils do not join the school in Year 3, these pupils make good progress. This high number of pupils joining the school late, many with limited English, is the major reason for overall attainment being broadly average when they leave. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress in relation to their starting points and abilities.

Leaders, managers and governors have made a concerted effort to improve the overall quality of teaching and with the recent appointment of a science coordinator, the quality of teaching in this subject is improving rapidly, leading to much better progress. A very large majority of the lessons seen in the inspection were at least good and none were inadequate. Teachers have good relationships with pupils, planning is effective and good use is made of support staff to support individuals and groups. Assessment information is used effectively to plan interesting work for pupils and to ensure it is well matched to their needs. Pupils are very well aware of their targets and what they need to do to improve. The quality of the curriculum is good and the use of the International Primary Curriculum is engaging pupils' interest very effectively. This is a strength of the school.

The school has a very positive ethos, which is shared by the pupils. They enjoy learning and are well on the way to becoming mature and responsible individuals. Behaviour is good throughout the school and sometimes excellent in the older classes. Pupils feel very safe as there are excellent procedures for safeguarding them.

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Acts of collective worship provide pupils with very valuable opportunities for quiet reflection and for them to develop their own spiritual responses. The development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural skills is outstanding. They express their views coherently and have a clear set of personal values. Respect for different cultures is evident in the very high level of racial harmony in the school. Pupils have a deep interest in ethical issues and have raised considerable sums for a variety of charities.

Leaders, managers and governors have good systems to evaluate the effectiveness of provision and pupils' progress. They have built an accurate picture of the school's strengths and areas for development. This, along with the rapid progress currently being made, indicates the school's good capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve provision and pupils' progress in science by:
 - providing pupils with more opportunities to develop their investigative skills
 - developing pupils' understanding of how to carry out a 'fair test', using correct scientific methodologies
 - increasing pupils' understanding and use of scientific vocabulary.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Attainment is broadly average and on a rising trend of improvement. In science, attainment is lower as pupils' investigative skills and their use of scientific vocabulary are underdeveloped. Classroom observations and analysis of pupils' books show that pupils make good progress in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology and better progress in science, because of good teaching. Pupils clearly enjoy learning and many expressed their appreciation of teaching. One pupil in Year 6 commented, 'I like maths, because I like to be challenged by puzzles.' The overwhelming majority of parents and carers said their children enjoyed school. Inspection evidence shows that successful strategies are being used to improve pupils' writing and numeracy skills. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress because of good support and work which is well matched to their needs. Although girls did not do as well as boys last year, this has now been addressed well and there is no significant difference in performance.

All pupils say they feel safe in school and know who to go to if they have problems. They especially appreciate the peer mentors, who take their roles seriously. Pupils behave well in class, the playground and around the school; lunchtimes are pleasant social occasions. In some older classes behaviour is exemplary and pupils have mature and responsible attitudes. Most show a good awareness of the need to lead a healthy lifestyle. There are many opportunities for pupils to contribute to the life of the school and the community. The school council is active in making suggestions to the school management and a majority of pupils take part in services at the two churches in the parish. The school's productions and concerts are popular with parents, carers and friends alike. Pupils are keen to come to school and are generally punctual. Attendance is broadly average, although a few parents persist in taking their children on holiday in term time. As a result of the good emphasis on literacy, numeracy and computer skills, pupils are rapidly gaining the skills they will need for their future economic well-being.

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

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	2
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	3
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?

The good progress pupils are currently making is a result of good teaching. Nearly all teaching seen was good, with a few outstanding features; no teaching was inadequate. In many classes, teachers make good use of questioning to require pupils to draw conclusions and offer opinions. Teachers clearly tell pupils what they will learn and pupils draw up their own success criteria to assess how well they have learned. Teachers use marking effectively to encourage pupils and tell them what they need to improve. Assessment is carried out regularly, and teachers use this information effectively to adjust planning and identify individuals and groups of pupils who need additional support.

The school provides an innovative and engaging curriculum, which meets the needs of pupils well. It is highly relevant to their interests as it deals with a wide range of cultures and topics. French is taught in Years 3 and 5, and pupils use this language well in other lessons. Key skills are developed well across the curriculum and pupils have made good use of their computer skills to make a video introduction to the school. There are many opportunities for enrichment, which are varied and are well attended. For example, pupils clearly enjoy the drama lessons provided by a visiting teacher from a local secondary school.

The good pastoral care system is well organised and this contributes to pupils' very good personal development and well-being. The school targets support for groups of pupils

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well, especially those who are especially vulnerable. It has effective procedures for managing admissions later in their school career, so that pupils who join feel welcomed and settle in quickly. This is especially true for those who arrive with little or no English. One pupil, who joined the school during the year speaking no English, spoke confidently to inspectors about how much he likes the school and respects his teacher. Pupils are given good advice about transferring to secondary school and all say they are confident about the move.

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	2

How effective are leadership and management?

Senior leaders have a very good understanding of their school and work effectively as a team. The recent emphasis on raising pupils' attainment in literacy and numeracy has been successful and has now turned its attention to doing the same in science. Subject leaders and other managers are enthusiastic and committed to raising attainment further. They communicate high expectations about both attainment and the quality of education provided. The school has set realistic targets; although it recognises that sometimes these are not achieved because of the high mobility of pupils. There is clear evidence that outcomes are improving strongly.

The governing body has a good capacity to meet the school's needs and helps set the school's strategic direction through its performance management of the headteacher and its contribution to the school's improvement plan. The school engages successfully with parents and carers and the vast majority of questionnaires from parents and carers expressed the opinion that the school was well managed. It has made significant gains in cohesion with its parents in this diverse community, and has effective links with other schools, in Devon and abroad. The inclusive ethos of the school and the diversity of its community ensure that equality of opportunity is a strong feature. Outstanding safeguarding systems ensure that pupils are safe, secure and well cared for. Procedures are constantly reviewed and training is extremely rigorous.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

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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	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
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

Views of parents and carers

The vast majority of responses from parents and carers in this multi-ethnic community were strongly supportive of the school and its work. Parents and carers rate very highly the safety at the school, the quality of teaching and the way in which the school helps parents and carers support their children's learning. They also think the school promotes a healthy lifestyle and that the school deals effectively with poor behaviour. A few parents and carers would like more information about their children's progress and some think that the school does not meet their needs. A few felt that the school did not always listen to their suggestions or concerns. Inspectors investigated the concerns expressed and found that some parents and carers had expectations that were based on the education system of their home country, rather than the English education system. This led to some misconceptions about how pupils' progress is judged and how pupils' needs are met. The school can show that it has appropriate complaints procedures and that any problems are resolved quickly.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Michael at Bowes 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 43 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 313 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	23	53	19	44	1	2	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	24	56	19	44	1	2	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	21	49	18	42	5	12	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	19	44	20	47	4	9	1	2
The teaching is good at this school	20	47	21	49	2	5	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	15	35	23	53	3	7	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	18	42	23	53	2	5	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)	15	35	22	51	4	9	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	12	28	21	49	6	14	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	17	40	20	47	4	9	1	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	12	28	24	56	6	14	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	19	44	18	42	2	5	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	22	51	19	44	0	0	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	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 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. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

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.



21 June 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Michael at Bowes Junior School, Enfield, N13 6JB

Thank you so much for the warm and polite welcome you gave to us when we came to inspect your school. We were very impressed with the mature and intelligent way in which you answered our questions. You obviously enjoy school and are proud of all you have achieved.

We think your school is good and improving quite rapidly. You are making good progress in your writing, reading and numeracy. You also use computers well and we are impressed with the presentations and the videos you have produced. The team were very impressed with your good behaviour, politeness and the way in which you were very helpful. We thought that you were very good at thinking extremely carefully about important spiritual and ethical issues in assembly, and you have very good social skills. You are doing well in French and clearly know a lot about your own and other people's cultures.

Your headteacher and staff make a good team. They make every effort to ensure you are safe and take good care of you. Support for those who need extra help is good and those of you who are learning English are making good progress. The teaching we saw was nearly always good and teachers make sure you know what you need to do to improve. We really liked the way nearly all of you knew your targets and what you needed to do to get to the next level in your work.

The main thing we have asked the school to do is to help you make better progress in science. We think that you need to be better at carrying out investigations and making up fair tests. You also need to have a better understanding of scientific words and how to use them properly when describing your experiments.

We think your headteacher and staff know what to do to make things better. Having a 'mad scientist' on the staff will help improve science!

Yours sincerely,

Stephen Dennett

Lead Inspector

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