

Kirkham St Michael's Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119550
Local authority	Lancashire
Inspection number	385865
Inspection dates	3–4 July 2012
Lead inspector	Brian Padgett HMI

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	5–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	172
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Helen Hockenhull
Headteacher	Margaret Long
Date of previous school inspection	24 March 2011
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Introduction

Inspection team

Brian Padgett
Sheila Mawer

Her Majesty's Inspector
Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. Inspectors observed 12 lessons taught by eight teachers. Meetings were held with parents, pupils, members of the governing body and staff. Inspectors observed the school's work, heard pupils read and looked at documentation and records provided by the school, including those for safeguarding, pupils' progress and the minutes of meetings of the governing body. The responses to questionnaires from pupils and staff and from 63 parents and carers were scrutinised.

Information about the school

St Michael's serves the small town of Kirkham between Preston and Blackpool. It is of average size for a primary school. Nearly all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is about average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is below average.

At its previous inspection, in March 2011, the school was given a Notice to Improve. Although it met the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for attainment and progress, it required significant improvement in teaching. The school received a monitoring inspection in November 2011 when the school's progress towards resolving its weaknesses was judged satisfactory. The school has experienced considerable staff turbulence in recent years.

The school holds the Basic Skills Award and an Eco Schools award.

Kirkham St Michael's After School provides before- and after-school childcare for pupils who attend the school. This provision is inspected separately by Ofsted. Its latest inspection report may be found on the Ofsted website under the reference 309829.

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	3
Achievement of pupils	3
Quality of teaching	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils	2
Leadership and management	3

Key Findings

- In accordance with section 13 (5) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that the school no longer requires significant improvement. St Michael's is now a satisfactory school. It is improving rapidly but is not yet good because the improvements that have taken place in leadership, teaching and pupils' progress have yet to be fully embedded and sustained. Schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.
- By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils attain broadly average standards and nearly all have made the expected progress from their respective starting points. This represents considerable progress since the previous inspection in pupils' reading, writing and mathematics. Moreover, progress in each year and for all groups of pupils show improvement, indicating standards are set to rise further.
- Teaching has improved significantly. It was judged inadequate at the previous inspection. It is now good. All the weaknesses in teaching identified during the previous inspection have been resolved. Teaching of outstanding quality was observed.
- Pupils' behaviour is very good. Pupils enjoy school a great deal. They are respectful of and encouraging to others. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Their good attitudes to learning and very good relationships with staff create an excellent ethos within the school. Pupils' attendance is consistently above average.
- School improvement in recent years has been frustrated by exceptionally high levels of staff absence: each class has been taught by several, often temporary, teachers. Parents and carers expressed concern about staff turbulence and its impact on their children. Staffing is now largely stabilised, especially with the return to duty of key senior staff, and improved provision is being embedded. The governing body and headteacher, with good support from the local

authority, now have the school on an even keel. Performance is managed adequately. There is work remaining, for example, within the governing body and in fully recovering the confidence of the school community. However, the school has a good capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that teaching is of a consistently good quality, being relevant and engaging for all pupils.
- Adjust the structure of the governing body to improve representation and to consolidate the improvements made in holding the school to account for its standards and effectiveness.
- Complete the work already begun to fully involve, engage and communicate with all stakeholders, including parents and carers.

Main Report

Achievement of pupils

Children enter Reception with levels of development typical of children of their age. They make good progress within the Early Years Foundation Stage, including in early reading, and the majority of children leave Reception with levels of development that are above those of most children entering Year 1. Parents and carers expressed particular satisfaction with the good start children make in Reception. Good progress in acquiring basic skills continues in Key Stage 1, and some exceptional progress was observed in writing in Year 2, where standards are consistently above average in reading and writing. Throughout the school, pupils develop a strong interest in books.

In the previous inspection, pupils' achievement in Key Stage 2 was inadequate. It is now satisfactory and improving rapidly for all groups of pupils as a result of improved teaching. Progress observed in lessons and work examined in books supports the teachers' assessments of enhanced learning. Procedures to identify pupils who are falling behind with their work, who are disabled or who have special educational needs are in place. Improved intervention strategies are ensuring these pupils make the same level of progress made by other pupils. Year 6 pupils are in line to achieve the national expectations in English and mathematics in the national, end of key stage tests and assessments, having recovered much lost ground. Pupils are responding very well to the increased expectations of teachers. They know their individual targets and want to do well. Interest in reading is high and nearly all pupils are in line to attain the national expectation in reading by the end of Year 6.

Quality of teaching

The quality of teaching has shown significant improvement since the previous inspection. No lessons observed were inadequate and all lessons had good features. Several lessons were outstanding, including in Key Stage 2, where teaching had previously been weakest. Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good.

Teachers promote pupils' personal development well. They have high expectations of what pupils can achieve and they communicate these well to pupils through clear lesson objectives and good quality marking. Work is well matched to pupils' levels of understanding, because teachers prepare differentiated activities for each group for each lesson. English and mathematics are taught particularly thoroughly, with pace and challenge. Pupils showed keen interest in literacy and numeracy and in other subjects too, such as in science, art, music, geography and, especially, sport, indicating they experience a broad and balanced curriculum. They also enjoyed weeks where work is devoted to themes of popular interest, such as the Titanic and, more recently, the Olympics. Teaching assistants have, like the teachers, raised their effectiveness. They are instrumental in providing the extra support for groups in lessons, pastoral support and separate group work to ensure all pupils, including those disabled or with special educational needs, have the opportunity to make good progress and that no pupil falls behind.

Some satisfactory teaching was observed, where pupils were making less than good progress. However, all lessons had good features and teachers are keen to improve their effectiveness. Responses from parents and carers to the inspection questionnaire indicated that a large majority feel their children are now well taught and are making good progress.

Behaviour and safety of pupils

The behaviour of pupils is very good and often exemplary. It has improved from the time of the previous inspection, when it was judged as satisfactory. It is now very good in lessons and also good during breaks and lunchtime. Pupils have good attitudes to learning. They work well independently, follow rules and show respect for others, for example, by showing appreciation of the success of others in a poetry competition final held in the church. There was no evidence of pupils showing discrimination or prejudice. Parents and carers and some pupils indicated in questionnaires that bullying occurred, albeit infrequently. The inspection findings indicate such fears are ill-founded. A senior member of staff now has responsibility for behaviour. A small number of pupils have behaviour difficulties that may present as 'naughty' behaviour. However, the school has developed appropriate provision, through behaviour plans, clear rewards and sanctions and by developing the role of a learning mentor to support pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable. Overall, this is a very happy school where pupils feel safe and very confident that any issues they face will be resolved by their teachers and the support staff.

Attendance at the school has been consistently above the national average for primary schools for a sustained length of time.

Leadership and management

The extraordinary level of turbulence in staff, both teaching and administrative, over the past two years has seriously hampered the implementation of much needed changes to teaching that were required to halt the decline in pupils' standards. This turbulence has now, thankfully, settled down. The help provided by the local authority during the Notice to Improve has been instrumental in securing the improvement in teaching quality through professional development. Senior leaders

returning from leave of absence have made an immediate positive impact. They have built effectively on the progress achieved and the school's improvement has accelerated further. The confidence of staff is returning. Questionnaire returns from parents and carers indicate that a minority of the school community remains unconvinced about what has been achieved. There is little evidence for this view. Although new practices require embedding and the school cannot yet demonstrate consistently high standards at Year 6, the school is in a strong position to continue its improvement.

The headteacher and senior staff monitor the work of the school rigorously and have accurate knowledge of where strengths lie and where further work is required. Teachers are held accountable for their pupils' progress in progress meetings. Provision for pupils whose circumstances make them vulnerable, including those disabled or with special educational needs, is promoted satisfactorily and contributes significantly to equality of opportunity and the absence of discrimination. Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. The curriculum is satisfactory and the leadership team has plans to make it more relevant by focusing more on the skills pupils need to develop as well as what they should know. There is a strong partnership with St Michael's Church and inspectors saw how effectively events and worship at the church promoted pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The work of the governing body was reorganised for the period of the Notice to Improve. It is now appropriate for it to re-structure to meet the challenges of holding the senior leaders accountable for pupils' achievement without external support and to ensure full representation for all interested stakeholders.

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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data 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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

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.



5 July 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of Kirkham St Michael's Church of England Primary School,
Preston, PR4 2SL**

This letter is to let you know the outcome of the inspection of the school in July. I would like to thank all those pupils who talked to inspectors during the two days of the inspection. Your views were very important to us in reaching our judgements.

Just over a year ago, pupils were not doing well enough at St Michael's and the school was asked to improve. There had been a very high turnover of teachers and this had disrupted your education. There was a lot to do to make teaching better.

I am pleased to tell you we believe the school has done all that was asked of it. Not only that but it is improving strongly. You are doing better now, especially in your reading and writing, and all the signs are that your standards are on the rise. The future looks promising.

It was clear to us you enjoy school very much and have great trust in your teachers. Your behaviour is very good. By Year 6, you are independent young people with the skills, knowledge and attitudes to gain fully from your secondary schooling. Your teachers are proud of you. They really enjoy teaching you.

We have left your headteacher, the governors and the staff with just a few things to do that we think are now necessary. Two of these recommendations, about governance and communication, will not involve you directly. However, you can help with one recommendation. We have asked teachers to make sure you learn well in every lesson because, at present, you could learn better in some. Whether you learn well depends on you as well as your teachers. We are confident you will help them to help you to achieve your best.

Yours sincerely

Brian Padgett
Her Majesty's Inspector

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