

St Michael's Primary School

Dee Road, Tilehurst, Reading, RG30 4AS

Inspection dates

3–4 October 2012

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children make a good start to their learning. Most pupils make good progress in Key Stages 1 and 2, including those who are disabled and those with special educational needs.
- The quality of learning has improved since the last inspection and is now good. This is the result of good teaching and the effective monitoring, support and performance management of staff.
- Behaviour and safety are managed well as a result of intense support, especially for those who are at risk. Bullying is effectively dealt with whenever it occurs. Pupils have good knowledge of safety issues such as using the internet safely.
- Pupils are friendly, courteous and respect adults. These characteristics are promoted by a broad and balanced curriculum and a strong emphasis on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- The school has a strong partnership with parents as shown by their participation in the harvest festival and the support they give to pupils in reading during school time.
- Leaders have steered the school in a positive direction. As a result, outcomes for almost all pupils have improved.
- The governing body and local authority provide effective support and help to promote improvement.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Tasks are not always well matched to the needs of higher-ability pupils, as a result of which , some pupils make slower progress, especially in mathematics.
- What is taught in Early Years Foundation Stage is not always well linked to planned topics. As a result children are not always sure why they are learning.
- Some middle leaders are new to their roles and their responsibilities that are not firmly established

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 17 lessons, of which two were joint observations with senior leaders. In addition, the inspection team also made a number of shorter visits to other lessons.
- Meetings were held with two groups of pupils, a representative from the local authority, the Chair of the Governing Body and two other governors, and senior leaders and managers.
- Inspectors looked at documents relating to self-evaluation, performance management, the tracking and assessment of pupils' attainment and progress, pupils' books, school policies, records on behaviour and safety, attendance and the monitoring of teaching and learning, as well as safeguarding documents.
- Inspectors looked at 27 questionnaires completed by staff.
- Inspectors took account of 20 responses to the on-line Parent View survey. Other parental views were sought at the start of the school day and during school time.

Inspection team

Zahid Aziz, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Shela Rowan

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Michael's Primary School is smaller than the average primary school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for extra funding through the pupil premium funding is above the national average.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is broadly average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- More pupils than average are from minority ethnic backgrounds, but the proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average.
- The school meets the Government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase further the effectiveness of the middle leaders to raise achievement by:
 - ensuring that their roles are clearly defined and that they receive the necessary guidance and support from senior leaders to discharge them well
 - ensuring that they provide opportunities for higher achieving pupils to make faster progress, especially in mathematics
 - ensuring that staff make pupils more aware of the overall learning in independent activities, particularly in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- At Key Stage 2, the vast majority of pupils make at least good progress when account is taken of their different starting points. This is reflected in the improved progress and attainment year on year in English and mathematics since the last inspection. However, progress in mathematics is slower compared with English, especially for the higher attainers, because of lack of challenge in some lessons.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children start below expectations in social and communication skills but make good progress and enter Year 1 at the expected levels. However, in outdoor activities especially, learning is not sufficiently well linked with planned topics. Consequently, children are not always clear about the purpose of what they are doing..
- Attainment is broadly average at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 for English and mathematics, although mathematics is the weaker of the two subjects. School data show an improved picture for current cohorts who are on track to make better than expected progress in English and mathematics.
- The majority of pupils enjoy coming to the school because they have made better progress this year compared with last and have made good progress over time. Almost all parents feel their children make good progress. This is confirmed by the books examined and the lesson observed by inspectors. Children are well prepared for the next stage of their education.
- Most pupils love reading and take books home for further enjoyment. As a result, they develop good reading skills overall. Attainment in reading is above average, especially for higher attainers at Key Stage 1, because of very effective phonics teaching.
- Case studies of those pupils who are vulnerable indicate that the high level of support has improved their attitudes to learning and they have, as a result, made good progress. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, together with those for whom the school receives additional funding make good progress. This is because of strong and effective adult support and help..

The quality of teaching is good

- There are consistently high expectations both from teachers and adults who support pupils and, as a result, teaching is typically at least good, and occasionally better.
- Lessons are planned to take into account each pupil's targets in English and mathematics, and they are mostly set demanding tasks. Learning objectives are shared at the start of the lesson. As a result, pupils gain new knowledge and experience in a wide range of subjects.
- In the Early Years Foundation Stage, children have extensive opportunities to develop their independent learning skills, such as writing letters, so that they can improve their communication skills. As a result, children make good progress and enter Year 1 with the skills expected for their age.
- In a Year 2 mathematics lesson, the teacher used effective questioning techniques to correct misconceptions, enabling pupils to improve their skill in adding numbers. In Year 6, pupils extend their knowledge and understanding of poetry through collaborative work and expressive art. Because of this, pupils enjoy the task and get better at their speaking, listening and teamwork skills.
- Good use is made of adult support to meet the needs of all pupils. The activities are well planned, well resourced and make good use of time. As a result, pupils work hard, are engaged and make good progress, as seen in a phonics session in Year 1.
- Pupils receive regular feedback and are actively involved in assessing their own and others' work. Pupils are very clear about their targets and know how to achieve them. However, higher attainers sometimes make slower progress because questioning and tasks are not appropriately

matched to their needs.

- The school council is proud of the work it has done to improve the approach to homework, so that all pupils enjoy doing homework and learning independently.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Most pupils have positive attitudes to learning. Behaviour and safety are good in school. Pupils welcome visitors and enjoy having a conversation with them because most of them feel positive about themselves. In the great majority of lessons, behaviour is good.
- Parents share a very positive picture of the school and have very few concerns. Staff also confirmed the positive way the school deals with any behaviour problems. Pupils also speak positively about the behaviour generally. They feel safe and know how to keep themselves safe, including in the safe use of the internet.
- Attendance is above average and persistent absence has reduced since the last inspection. The inclusion manager has been relentless in dealing with families who are hard to reach. Pupils are polite and respectful to each other and adults.
- Pupils show good awareness of different forms of bullying. The few cases that do occur are dealt with effectively by the school and pupils and parents feel confident in the school's procedures in managing them.
- Case studies indicate that the behaviour of pupils at risk has improved over time and they have made good progress academically as a result of intense support by the school. There is effective supervision, including of play equipment during break times, which helps to ensure all pupils enjoy their break.
- Pupils cooperate well with each other and are polite. They are ready to take on responsibilities, for example preparing and delivering gifts to elderly people during harvest festival and other festive occasions.

The leadership and management are good

- Since the last inspection, the headteacher has resolutely and successfully worked with other senior leaders to improve the school. Some of the middle leaders have taken an active role, especially in improvements in Key Stage 2 provision. There are high aspirations from all leaders and parents. As a result, achievement, teaching and behaviour and safety have improved.
- An effective monitoring system is in place to improve teaching and learning. This is linked to the performance management arrangements and to salary progression. Senior leaders regularly observe staff in the classrooms and suggest ways for them to improve. Adults who support in class also receive training and guidance to ensure effective delivery of their support sessions.
- All staff are supported well through additional training to meet the development needs of the school and their own professional needs.
- The monitoring undertaken by some middle leaders is not detailed enough, especially in checking the progress of higher attainers. As a result, progress of these pupils is not fast enough, especially in mathematics.
- Self-evaluation is mostly accurate. As a result, leaders and managers have implemented appropriate priorities to improve the school. The capacity to continue to improve is clearly evident in the successful way that the school has implemented the recommendations made in the in the last inspection report, including, for example, accelerating pupils' progress in reading and writing.
- The curriculum is broad and balanced. Pupils have chances to develop a range of skills through enrichment activities as well as visits and visitors. The school also has links with universities.
- There are ample and timely opportunities to focus on the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils. As a result, they are polite, courteous, respect others and have a sense of place in the community.

- A strong partnership exists with parents and carers, as demonstrated by their presence during harvest festival assembly and reading to their children during school time. A typical comment from a parent was that; 'I have found the school to be helpful, approachable, accommodating and professional.'
- Safeguarding of pupils is effective and meets requirements.
- The local authority has given effective support to the school to help to ensure pupils' higher attainment and better progress. As a result, the local authority now provides light touch support.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - has been effective, supportive and challenging through various committees; performance management of the headteacher is well coordinated and contributes to school improvement
 - ensures the efficient use of finance and resources, including adult support for those who are eligible for pupil premium funding.

What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

School details

Unique reference number	109796
Local authority	Reading
Inspection number	405254
Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	233
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Karyn Stiles
Headteacher	Miss Anne Higginbotham
Date of previous school inspection	19–20 May 2011
Telephone number	0118 901 5550
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