

St Michael's CofE VC Junior School

Newton Road, Twerton, Bath, BA2 1RW

Inspection dates 10–11 January 2013

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Work is not always matched closely to the needs of individual pupils, particularly the most able, to enable them to make consistently good progress. Tasks are sometimes too easy and do not support the development of pupils' skills.
- Variations in the quality of teaching across the school mean that pupils make faster progress in some year groups compared to others.
- Pupils are not always given clear targets of what they are expected to achieve in lessons and this limits their progress.
- Teachers' marking does not always provide pupils with clear guidance on how to improve and they are not given enough opportunities to respond to feedback.
- Leaders in charge of subjects do not make good use of information about how well pupils are doing to ensure that pupils make consistent progress across year groups.
- The governing body, as a whole, lacks the skills to analyse data so that they can hold senior staff to account for improving the quality of teaching and learning, and so raise pupils' achievement.

The school has the following strengths

- The headteacher and senior staff share a clear vision and determination to improve the school's performance. They are well supported by all staff, who are equally committed to moving the school forwards.
- The attainment of pupils in English and mathematics in national assessment tests has risen since the previous inspection.
- The behaviour of the pupils in lessons and around school is good. Pupils say that they feel cared for and well looked after.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors carried out observations of teaching in 13 lessons and also observed two class assemblies. Seven observations were carried out jointly with either the headteacher or the deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with groups of pupils, the Vice-Chair of the Governing Body and five other governors, senior and middle leaders and a representative of the local authority. The lead inspector also spoke to another headteacher who is supporting the school.
- The inspectors listened to pupils read and scrutinised samples of the pupils' workbooks.
- The inspection team looked at a wide range of documents, including the school's own data on pupils' recent progress, planning and monitoring documentation, and records relating to behaviour, attendance and safeguarding arrangements.
- Inspectors took into account nine responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and one letter from a parent. In addition, inspectors held informal discussions with parents and carers when they brought their children to school on the second morning of the inspection. They also took account of the responses to 25 staff questionnaires.

Inspection team

David Hogg, Lead inspector

Additional inspector

Rowena Green

Additional inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Michael's is a smaller than average junior school. There are significantly more boys than girls in the school.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for support through the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in care and those known to be eligible for free school meals, is more than double the national average.
- Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is much lower than the national average.
- The proportion of disabled pupils or those with special educational needs supported at school action is more than double the national average. The proportion of pupils who are supported by school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs is nearly four times higher than the national average.
- The school includes and manages a local authority inclusive resource base/unit, referred to as The Lodge, for children with Emotional and Behavioural Disorders (EBD). Currently the eight place EBD unit supports 11 pupils.
- 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?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that this is consistently good or better by:
 - ensuring that assessment information is used more precisely to provide work that is not too easy, especially the more able
 - providing clear learning targets for pupils, so that pupils are clear about what they are expected to achieve in lessons
 - ensuring that all teachers give precise written feedback to pupils and provide them with the opportunity to respond to this guidance, so they have a clear understanding of what they must do to improve their work.
- Improve the quality and impact of leadership and management by ensuring that all leaders in charge of subjects are confident in using data to help ensure that pupils' progress is more consistent across year groups.
- Improve the ability and confidence of members of the governing body in holding the school to account more effectively by ensuring that they have the necessary skills to analyse performance data with greater proficiency.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Attainment for pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 has improved since the previous inspection in both mathematics and English, and pupils now attain in line with national averages. The school's own data show that pupils' progress is improving as they move through the school, but the rates of progress between year groups are still inconsistent. Not all higher-ability pupils make the progress that they should do.
- Pupils' attainment when they join the school is generally in line with the national expectations in English and slightly higher in mathematics. Teaching assistants work well to accelerate the progress of pupils who join the school with lower attainment than their peers.
- Progress for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is similar to that of other groups of pupils. In some year groups, they achieve well due to the quality of the support in class and through sessions outside the classrooms. The school has used small group work, booster sessions and one-to-one support to ensure those pupils eligible for support through the pupil premium achieve well overall, and the gaps between their attainment and that of other pupils is closing.
- Pupils' progress in writing is generally better than in other subject areas. However, the quality of pupils' spelling and basic punctuation varies in some year groups.
- Reading is very well supported with pupils reading regularly to adults in school. The school actively develops pupils' interest in books, with Year 6 pupils being given a quality book as a present at Christmas. Some of the reading records are used by teachers to provide guidance for parents and carers on how to support their child improve their reading. However, this is not done as widely as it could be.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The quality of teaching is improving. However, it is not consistently good overall and this means that rates of progress vary across the school.
- In lessons, pupils generally engage well with activities, especially when these are interesting, for example when writing postcards about the solar system and the size of stars, as seen in a Year 4/5 lesson.
- Sometimes, teachers try to ensure pupils have a good understanding of the intended learning. However, pupils are not always clear about what they are expected to produce, or what level they should be working at, because teachers do not always give clear examples or set precise targets.
- Data on pupils' progress are not always used effectively by teachers to set work that is matched to individual pupils' needs, and opportunities to accelerate pupils' progress, particularly for the most able, are sometimes limited by the lack of challenge in lessons. Work is occasionally too easy, or sometimes too difficult, and this slows pupils' progress. Lower-ability learners are, however, well supported through the good-quality work of teaching assistants.
- The quality of marking varies across the school. Pupils are sometimes provided with good guidance on how to improve their work, but they are not given opportunities to make the necessary corrections to their work. The feedback does not always provide pupils with indications of the levels they are working at, so pupils are uncertain of what they have to do to move to the next level.
- Where teaching is most effective, teachers use a range of resources to stimulate and interest pupils. For example, in one lesson, a video clip from a feature film illustrated the problems of living in space, and in another, a range of interesting items and materials were used to extend pupils' use of language. Pupils respond well to such activities and make good progress as a result.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils enjoy school and say that they feel safe and well looked after. They say incidents of unkindness and harassment are rare and are dealt with effectively by adults in school. Pupils know what is right and wrong and act sensibly around the school. Behaviour in lessons was good overall and confirms the pupils' own views about the behaviour in school. A similar view of good behaviour is held by staff and by parents and carers.
- In lessons, pupils demonstrate good levels of engagement and interest in the activities teachers provide, particularly where these are motivating and well-matched to pupils' needs and interests. They can work well in small groups, sharing and discussing ideas, and are able to work independently of adults for extended periods of time. When teaching is less strong, pupils can become less focused.
- The school works closely with outside agencies and significant members of the community, such as the local vicar and police officer, to promote appropriate behaviour and to raise the pupils' awareness of personal safety. Pupils are given good guidance about safety when using the internet and older pupils in particular are well aware of the care they need to take when using social media sites.
- Relationships between the pupils and staff are good. The school works hard to ensure those pupils with behavioural difficulties within school and part of the specialist unit are nurtured and developed. The school can point to many cases in which pupils have transferred to St Michael's from other schools and have been successfully integrated before moving on to secondary school.
- Attendance is broadly in line with national averages. The school works well with parents and carers to encourage regular attendance.

The leadership and management require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because subject leaders are new to the posts and have not had time to make a significant contribution to raising standards in the subjects. Members of the governing body are not confident enough in the use of data to hold leaders fully to account for the performance of the school.
- The headteacher, supported by his deputy, has worked to secure improvements in pupils' attainment since the previous inspection. They both have a clear vision about how they want the school to develop and demonstrate a determination to further raise the quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils. Consequently, the school has the capacity to move forward and improve. This vision has been embraced by the teaching staff, who are behind the efforts of the senior team to develop the school further.
- A new team of subject leaders is now in place and they are beginning to analysis and effectively use pupils' progress data to identify underperformance. However, it is still too early to see the full impact of this on the learning and progress of pupils. Class teachers are not as yet using this information to plan learning opportunities that match the needs of all groups of learners.
- The headteacher has benefited from the support of the local authority to develop the new leadership team and draws on the experience of another headteacher, who is a National Leader in Education, in identifying priorities for improvement. The support provided from both sources is helping the school to eliminate inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and in pupils' achievement.
- Lesson observations and work scrutiny have been used to monitor the quality of teaching and learning within the school. The judgements about the quality of teaching and learning by the senior leadership team are secure, with strengths and development points identified to staff during feedback. The appraisal process is linked to school development priorities and training opportunities for staff. This is helping to bring about improvements in teaching and is ensuring that salary increases are linked securely to teacher performance and pupil outcomes.
- The school's curriculum is broad, balanced and developing. It provides pupils with opportunities that widen their experiences and provide memorable moments, such as visits to London and

Switzerland. Through the curriculum and input from the local church, the pupils are encouraged to be reflective and develop a greater awareness of themselves and the others around them. This contributes to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

- Although few responded to the online Parent View survey, informal discussions with parents and carers provided evidence of their views on how inclusive and supportive the school is in its efforts to develop the potential of the pupils attending St Michael's. The school does demonstrate a commitment to ensuring equality of opportunity for all of its pupils.
- Safeguarding procedures are thorough and pupils are kept safe.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- The governing body is increasingly offering challenge to the school to secure the best outcomes for the pupils who attend St Michael's. It has a good awareness of the strengths and areas still to be developed in the school and in the governing body itself. It has actively sought support and training from the local authority. Governors are very involved in school, visiting regularly and meeting pupils and staff. Safeguarding policies and procedures are reviewed and updated, and are implemented effectively. Governors monitor the progress of groups of pupils, including those in receipt of additional support through the pupil premium funding, from the data provided by the school. They are not skilled enough in reviewing pupils' progress data, including national published data, themselves to offer the necessary challenge to the senior leadership team and support them in their efforts to improve pupils' achievement. The governing body is aware of how teachers' performance is linked to the levels of promotion and salary reward in school and closely supervises the school's finances so that it makes the best use of available resources.

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	109155
Local authority	Bath and North East Somerset
Inspection number	405221

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	173
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Chair	Dr John Gilmour
Headteacher	David Goucher
Date of previous school inspection	24–25 May 2011
Telephone number	01225 421888
Fax number	01225 481617
Email address	stmichaels_jun@bathnes.gov.uk

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