

# St Michael's Church of England Primary School

Front Street, Bishop Middleham, Ferryhill, County Durham , DL17 9AL

**Inspection dates** 1–2 May 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Outstanding	1
Leadership and management		Outstanding	1

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- The vast majority of the pupils learn well and attain above average standards by the end of Year 6, particularly in reading and writing. Since the previous inspection the rates of progress made by pupils have increased, are now good overall, and are especially strong in English across Key Stage 2. Pupils leave the school well equipped to continue their education.
- Pupils, who are behind with their reading, writing and numeracy skills, catch up quickly in the Early Years Foundation Stage. Those identified as having special educational needs make good progress.
- Teaching is never less than good. Lessons are stimulating and include interesting activities and experiences.
- Pupils are proud of their school and enjoy the supportive and friendly environment. They say they feel very safe and exceptionally well looked after. Their behaviour is outstanding. All pupils are highly enthusiastic about their own learning. Levels of attendance are above average and consistently improving.
- The headteacher and senior leaders are aspirational on behalf of all pupils and highly effective leaders. Governors play their part in raising standards through rigorous analysis of information, and by holding the headteacher to account. As a result, the school continues to improve. Much has been done since the previous inspection to transform the quality of leadership and governance, tackle weak and instable teaching, and raise achievement.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Standards reached by the end of Year 2 are only just above average, representing broadly expected rates of progress by some pupils, especially in writing, over time. Not all pupils make the progress they might in mathematics across Years 3 to 6.
- In some lessons teachers do not check carefully the understanding of all pupils. On occasions, some teachers are not flexible enough to meet individual children's needs.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed 11 lessons, of which two were carried out jointly with senior leaders.
- Pupils' work was scrutinised during lessons, and pupils were heard reading in lessons. The inspector also listened to three pupils read separately.
- The inspector observed pupils at play, moving around the school and at lunchtime, and met with a representative sample of pupils from Years 2 to 6.
- The inspector met with staff and members of the governing body and conducted a telephone call with the local authority representative.
- The inspector looked at a number of documents, including the school's own data on current pupils' progress, planning and monitoring documentation, minutes of governors' meetings, records relating to behaviour and attendance, and documents pertaining to safeguarding.
- The inspector took into account 12 staff questionnaires, 29 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View), as well as considering a number of separate communications from parents.

## Inspection team

Andrew Swallow, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is much smaller than most primary schools.
- The great majority of pupils are of White British heritage. There are very few students from minority ethnic groups or for whom English is an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding for those pupils who are known to be eligible for free school meals, children from armed services families and children that are looked after by the local authority) is slightly above the national picture.
- An average proportion of pupils with special educational needs are supported through school action. The proportion supported at school action plus is lower than in most primary schools. At present, there are no disabled or statemented pupils in school.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which sets the minimum expectation for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.
- Since the last inspection there have been widespread changes in the leadership, governance and staffing at the school.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that more is outstanding by:
  - ensuring that all teachers systematically check all pupils' understanding in lessons, and are flexible enough to meet any emerging needs, so that pupils learn exceptionally well.
- Accelerate pupils' overall progress in mathematics across Key Stage 2 so that more pupils reach even higher standards at the end of Year 6 by:
  - checking assiduously in all lessons the accuracy and effectiveness of mathematical strategies used by all pupils in problem solving.
- Heighten the rates of progress made by boys and high attainers across Key Stage 1, particularly in writing, by :
  - developing recently introduced creative strategies, to extend further key writing skills through the use of relevant and real-life scenarios
  - maximising opportunities for all children, especially high attainers, to talk through ideas in depth before beginning to write them down.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

is good

- Standards have risen significantly by the end of Year 6 since the previous inspection. This was evident in Year 6 lessons and in pupils' work. Standards are now above average overall. They are well above average in reading and writing, although standards are not as high in mathematics. Some pupils do not yet make the progress they are capable of across Years 3 to 6 in mathematics. As a consequence, overall progress across Key Stage 2 is good, rather than outstanding.
- Standards have also increased at the end of Year 2, and are just above average. They are higher in mathematics than in writing. Given pupils' broadly average starting points, and their good achievement in the Early Years Foundation Stage, overall progress is now better than expected, although not yet securely good. For example, the school recognises that a small proportion of boys, and high attainers, do not make the progress of which they are capable. This is especially the case in writing.
- Significant changes in staffing, and positive developments in the quality of teaching since the previous inspection have brought about these good improvements. Effective changes to the curriculum have also led to better learning. In particular, the regular sounding and spelling of common words, real-life contexts for learning, and opportunities for pupils to explore and share ideas have enthused and motivated more learners. In some instances, teaching changes have not yet had sufficient time to take full effect.
- Pupil premium funding is being used wisely to make sure individual pupils who are entitled to the funding get the right sort of support. For example, the school has increased teaching assistant time to support Year 6 children known to be eligible for free school meals. In addition, 'catch-up' numeracy training has been delivered for staff. These initiatives have resulted in significant gains in the average points scores in mathematics and writing for Year 6 pupils known to be eligible for free school meals. Training for staff in 'catch-up' reading strategies has also led to marked improvements in such pupils' reading ages across the school.
- Pupils who have special educational needs, and the very few from minority ethnic backgrounds, make good progress because of well-targeted activities in lessons, and generally good support to develop key literacy and calculation skills.
- Most parents who responded to Parent View believe that their children are making good progress. Pupils believe that they learn a lot most of the time. The inspection found this to be so. For example, in a Year 5/6 English lesson, pupils collaborated enthusiastically to pool ideas and descriptive language, with which to depict the fictitious character Mr Spink. Similarly, in a Year 3 science lesson, pupils were excited about showing their understanding of the different changes involved in the transformation of rock to soil.
- Pupils throughout the school show a readiness to learn in lessons, with high levels of motivation and self-discipline.

### The quality of teaching

is good

- Teaching has improved since the previous inspection and is now good. As a result, most pupils make good progress and achieve well. The teaching of reading is a particular strength.
- Teachers' planning ensures that lessons provide stimulating and interesting activities and experiences that ignite the curiosity of most learners. Teachers have high expectations and create good atmospheres in lessons. Pupils are provided with increasing opportunities to think for themselves. As a result, they are fully committed and really enjoy their learning. Teaching assistants are usually managed effectively, supporting individuals and small groups of pupils with special educational needs well, both in and out of lessons.
- Exciting resources and contexts for learning motivate pupils in all years. For example, Year 1 and 2 pupils were entranced by the thought of estimating, then calculating, the size of a giant's

footprint, having read the story of Jack and the Beanstalk. Year 4 pupils were equally engrossed in the writing of a 'catchy' newspaper headline, to entice readers to read about local village history.

- In the most effective lessons, teachers routinely check pupils' understanding, intervening when necessary with notable impact on the quality of learning. Regular opportunities are provided for pupils to discuss and question, share ideas and justify opinions. In scenarios that require accurate mathematical understanding, teachers ensure that all pupils are confident in measuring and oral calculation skills.
- In some lessons, teaching falls short of outstanding because not enough pupils make outstanding progress. This is largely due to shortfalls in the care with which pupils' achievements are checked, resulting in activities that are not always adapted to meet their changing needs. As a consequence, pupils are sometimes provided with the same work regardless of ability so that it is either too easy or too hard. On occasions, some pupils do not have sufficient time to deepen their knowledge and understanding, for example through sharing ideas with their peers.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are outstanding**

- Pupils' behaviour is exemplary both in and out of lessons. They display outstanding attitudes to their learning. This means that they are always attentive to the teaching, and are ready to engage fully with the planned activities and experiences. Teachers are highly skilled in using the school's rewards system to generate high levels of cooperation among pupils. Pupils are clearly ambitious to achieve the different awards. Around the school pupils behave exceptionally well towards each other, and are extremely polite and courteous to adults and visitors. Scrutiny of behavioural records shows that behaviour is outstanding over time.
- Parents are unreservedly positive about their children's attitudes towards school and say how much they enjoy their learning. As a consequence, their attendance is above average and rising. Pupils told the inspector that they attend regularly because they really enjoy school, the teachers are always helpful, and everyone is friendly all the time.
- Pupils have a very good understanding of potentially unsafe situations and are confident in identifying and in dealing with them. They are assured in talking about cyber- and homophobic-bullying. Through their roles as mediators, buddies and members of the school's 'pupil voice' team, they take active steps to ensure that bullying does not happen in school. They are particularly proud of the class and school charters they have helped to produce. As a result, school is a harmonious community.
- Pupils say how much they feel safe in school, and that adults are always there for them. Teachers and assistants secure very effectively the well-being of pupils whose circumstances may render them vulnerable.

### **The leadership and management are outstanding**

- The headteacher is hugely aspirational for all pupils and has raised the expectations of staff and governors over time. Since the previous inspection she has robustly tackled inadequate leadership, governance and teaching, overcome instabilities in staffing, and developed a team of effective teachers and teaching assistants. At the same time, new tracking systems have brought about more reliable and accurate information about all pupils' progress. They are being used by all leaders and managers to pinpoint pupils' underperformance and accelerate pupils' progress with increasing effectiveness. The full impact of all of these actions has taken longer than expected to achieve. This is due to continued changes in staffing, until of late. All staff are now fully committed to raising achievement further, so that all pupils make outstanding progress.
- Everyone at the school shares the headteacher's ambitious plans for the future. They communicate high expectations, ensure that checks on how well the school is doing are accurate, and that major improvement actions are concerted and carefully planned.
- The performance management of staff is exceptionally well organised and identifies clearly individuals' precise development needs. Leaders and managers check the effect of training

thoroughly to ensure maximum success. Areas for improvement in the work of teachers are followed up with high quality training and support. The headteacher makes the right decisions, when appropriate, about teachers' movements up the salary scale on the basis of the quality of their teaching.

- The school's curriculum takes into account pupils' interests and ideas, including those who have special educational needs. Full advantage is taken of the many visits to local places of interest, and the many visitors to school, to motivate pupils with real-life scenarios and resources. The school's Comenius project with five other European countries deepens pupils' understanding of different cultures and faiths. Opportunities to solve energy problems in school, as part of the Eco award, wide-ranging Fair Trade activities, excellent links with the local church, and a host of extra-curricular experiences make very strong contributions to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They raise pupils' self-esteem and successfully promote their personal qualities. At the same time, they very successfully support the school's drive to promote equality of opportunity and to tackle immediately any discrimination that may arise.
- Parents feel that the school is very welcoming and say how well their children are cared for. Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements. Excellent partnership arrangements exist with local primary schools, the local secondary school, and with community services. The local authority provides good support through a School Development Officer and specialist practitioners, particularly in evaluating the performance of the school, and in supporting the overall development of teaching.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governance has been transformed since the previous inspection when it was judged to be inadequate. Governors ask challenging questions of the headteacher and senior staff, including about the quality of teaching in the school. As a result, they know which groups of pupils most need additional support, and how well the school is doing. The headteacher has made sure that governors are perceptive in their discussions about the value of spending decisions and the impact these have had on pupils' learning and progress. This has led to some good decisions about what the school spends the pupil premium funding on. For example, governors have authorised additional numeracy and reading training for key staff, and extra teaching assistant time for pupils who have not kept pace with others in their classes.

## 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

<b>Unique reference number</b>	114258
<b>Local authority</b>	Durham
<b>Inspection number</b>	401417
<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	99
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Lyn Bilsborough
<b>Headteacher</b>	Lindsey Vollans
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	22 September 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01740 651482
<b>Fax number</b>	01740 651482
<b>Email address</b>	bishopmiddleham@durhamlearning.net



Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk). If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit [www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk), or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk).

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate  
Store St  
Manchester  
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234  
Textphone: 0161 618 8524  
E: [enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk)  
W: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

© Crown copyright 2013

