

# St Michael's Church of England Primary School

Lower Church Road, Sandhurst, GU47 8HN

**Inspection dates** 2–3 July 2013

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	<b>Requires improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
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

- Teachers are not always ensuring that pupils are given challenging work or are expected to work quickly.
- Pupils do not all make enough progress in writing and mathematics. In writing, boys in particular, make errors in spelling and punctuation and do not always take care with their handwriting. In mathematics, more able pupils do not always complete hard enough work.
- Pupils are not expected to take immediate action when given advice through teachers' marking.
- Subject leaders are not monitoring teaching and learning sufficiently to ensure that they are consistently good or better, or taking swift and effective action when they are not.

### The school has the following strengths

- Children make outstanding progress in the Reception Year because work is consistently challenging and exciting.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make good progress because their needs are identified and they are well supported.
- Pupils behave well and enjoy coming to school.
- Good provision is made for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, enabling them to be kind and to respect others.
- The headteacher, other senior leaders and governors know what needs to be done to make the school good.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 17 lessons; eight of these were observed jointly with the headteacher or acting deputy headteacher.
- Meetings were held with senior leaders, teachers, pupils, members of the governing body and representatives from the local authority.
- The inspectors took into account 53 responses to the online Parent View survey and held informal discussions with a sample of parents and carers.
- A range of information supplied by the school was scrutinised, including the school's own information about how well pupils are doing, planning documents, checks on the quality of teaching, the school development plan, records relating to behaviour and attendance and safeguarding documents.

## Inspection team

Alison Cartlidge, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Philip Littlejohn

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is of average size compared to other primary schools.
- About one in 14 pupils are disabled or have special educational needs and are supported through school action. This proportion is below average. The proportion of pupils supported by school action plus, or by a statement of special educational needs, is broadly average.
- The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for the pupil premium (additional funding provided to the school to be used for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals, looked after children and children with a parent in the armed services) is much lower than the national average. The school has no looked after children.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics in Year 6.
- There have been major changes to the school's senior leadership and teaching staff over the last two years.

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

- Ensure that teaching is consistently good or better, by:
  - providing pupils with sufficiently challenging work throughout each lesson
  - expecting pupils to always work quickly
  - enabling pupils to follow up advice given through marking straight away.
- Raise achievement in writing and mathematics, by:
  - making sure that boys, in particular, are always expected to do their best writing and to improve their handwriting, spelling and punctuation
  - providing consistent challenge for more able pupils in mathematics.
- Develop the role of subject leaders, by making sure they check up on teaching and learning in their subject areas and take effective and immediate action in response to dips in pupils' progress.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Achievement has been falling since the last inspection and attainment is broadly average by the end of Year 6. Pupils do better in reading than in writing and mathematics. Progress between Years 1 and 6 requires improvement because, while it is improving this year, it remains uneven between subjects and classes. In writing, boys in particular do not always take enough care with their work, resulting in errors in spelling and punctuation and weaknesses in handwriting. In mathematics, pupils, especially the more able, are not consistently completing sufficiently challenging work throughout each lesson.
- Most children enter the Reception Year working within the levels expected for their age. They make outstanding progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage, especially in literacy. For example, when carrying out experiments on eggs in containers of water, children demonstrated their confidence in sharing their ideas when making predictions such as 'the yolk might burst and it will be orange' and that the test was fair because 'the water is the same size' in each container.
- The progress of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs has improved and is now good. These pupils are given skilful help by teaching assistants, especially when part of an additional support group.
- The progress of the very few pupils in receipt of the pupil premium funding requires improvement. In the end of Year 6 assessments in 2012, their attainment was similar to that of other pupils in mathematics, but the gap had not closed in English, where they were a term behind other pupils at the school.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teaching is best in the Reception Year, where members of staff provide outstanding challenge for all children, especially in literacy. There is a tangible buzz of excitement in this classroom as children write independently on tasks they have chosen for themselves, and they develop speaking, listening and social skills exceptionally well during the frequent visits to a local woodland.
- However, teachers throughout the rest of the school do not always ensure that work is consistently challenging for all pupils and when this happens, pupils often lose interest and do not learn quickly. For example, in one lesson, not all pupils were inspired to work as well as they could when writing similar story settings, as some found the tasks they were asked to complete too easy. In another lesson, pupils found ordering parts of a story unchallenging and this affected their progress in developing their literacy skills. Pupils tend to do their best writing when working on topics they have chosen for themselves.
- As lessons progress, teachers do not always adjust work when it is clear that pupils are ready to move on to something new. For example, in part of a mathematics lesson at Key Stage 1, all pupils were counting on in twos, when more able pupils could already count on in sixes.
- Improvements have been made in marking following a whole-school priority, but not all teachers are making sure that their valuable comments on how pupils can improve their work are being put into immediate action. Consequently, some pupils go on making the same mistakes time after time.
- Relationships between members of staff and the pupils are strong and support pupils well in their good behaviour. Teachers are good role models in being polite and friendly and, as a result, pupils are keen to mirror these positive attitudes.
- Teaching assistants provide valuable support for individuals and groups of pupils, especially disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs. For example, in Year 5, the teaching assistant helped pupils to talk about how they could improve their sentences by using metaphors.

## The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour and safety are good and pupils and their parents agree. Pupils enjoy school and attend regularly. They are especially enthusiastic about using the skills they have learned to follow up their own ideas. As one pupil put it, 'You do work and have fun at the same time, because you choose what to do.'
- Pupils cooperate well with each other and work hard most of the time, but they do not always do their best writing when they are not interested in a topic or are not given hard enough work or expected to work quickly. One pupil clearly preferred 'more challenges' and 'pushing myself to do something more complex'.
- Pupils are well mannered and friendly. They are confident and articulate and enjoy talking about their work and helping with tasks in class and around the school.
- The school's supportive set of values enables pupils to make the right choices in their behaviour, to have equal opportunities and to feel free from discrimination. Pupils say that they feel safe at school and are knowledgeable about various types of bullying and danger, including the importance of not using certain websites.
- Pupils do not express any concerns about the minor instances of bullying that occur and are happy with the way these are dealt with by adults.

## The leadership and management requires improvement

- Since the last inspection, when staffing was stable, leaders have had an overwhelming number of changes and difficulties to deal with that have consumed their time and slowed the rate of progress. The roles of subject leaders are insufficiently developed to enable them to make sure that teaching and learning are consistently good in their subject areas across the school.
- However, the headteacher and other senior leaders have increased the rigour with which they are checking up on how well pupils are progressing and consequently are clear about what needs to be done to improve the school's overall effectiveness. This clearly demonstrates the school's capacity to improve in the future.
- The school has developed effective systems for developing teaching this year, and members of staff are keen to improve. They are given specific improvement targets linked to their own needs and those of the school and success is gauged by using a wide range of information on how well pupils in their class are doing.
- The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength and enables pupils to develop into well-rounded individuals. Pupils are especially appreciative of opportunities to celebrate the creative arts and enjoy learning about nature when working outside.
- The school has designed its own curriculum, and interesting additional activities, including outdoor learning, have a positive impact on pupils' attitudes towards learning. The wider range of additional activities is proving of great interest to all pupils, including the more able.
- Safeguarding arrangements meet requirements and members of staff are checked for suitability for working with pupils and are fully trained in their care. Most parents are pleased with the school and are positive about the way members of staff look after their children. As one parent said, 'They teach children to respect each other and to be kind.'
- The school works closely with other schools in the area and the local community to strengthen provision. The local authority has increased the level of support provided to the school appropriately, following the downturn in achievement.
- The school makes suitable use of pupil premium funding to provide staff training, resources and extra help for individuals, and financial support with school visits.
- **The governance of the school:**
  - Governors have an increasing knowledge of the school. They are very supportive and keen to ask questions about what they are unclear about. They understand how the school's performance compares with other schools. Governors also know how weaker teaching is supported or challenged and teachers' pay aligned with their performance. Governors recently

carried out a review of their own effectiveness leading to changes in procedures. Consequently, they are managing the performance of teachers better than in the past, by ensuring that teaching and learning are being monitored more rigorously. The budget, including funding for pupils in receipt of the pupil premium, is monitored thoroughly.

## 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>	109973
<b>Local authority</b>	Bracknell Forest
<b>Inspection number</b>	412485

This inspection of the school was carried out under section 5 of the Education Act 2005.

<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>	211
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Christopher Harris
<b>Headteacher</b>	Maire McGrory
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	27–28 April 2010
<b>Telephone number</b>	01252 873360
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