

St Michael's Church of England Primary School

Linden Close, Winterbourne, Bristol, BS36 1LG

Inspection dates 16–17 July 2013

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|--------------------------------|----------------------|-------------|----------|
| Overall effectiveness | Previous inspection: | Good | 2 |
| | 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.

- Attainment for pupils who have been at St Michael's for all their education is above national levels in Year 6, with an increasing number of pupils working at Level 5.
- Most pupils are making good progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- Pupils benefit from teaching which is typically good, with an increasing proportion that is outstanding.
- Staff, parents, carers and pupils share a strong belief in the values of their school. They are proud to be part of it.
- Pupils are very happy at school. Warm and trusting relationships underpin their enjoyment of learning. Everyone is included and respected. Staff know the pupils well.
- Pupils' behaviour is good, both in lessons and around the school. Pupils feel extremely safe in school and are nurtured well.
- The high numbers of pupils who join during the school year quickly settle in.
- The new leadership team has managed the school successfully during a period of transition, ensuring that standards and teaching have continued to improve, and is strongly supported by a knowledgeable and highly effective governing body.
- Pupils have many memorable learning opportunities, including a wide variety of visits and visitors to the school, which contribute strongly to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

It is not yet an outstanding school because:

- The proportion of outstanding teaching is not yet high enough to ensure all pupils' progress is rapid and sustained across all year groups.
- Subject leaders do not always make the most of all opportunities to make further improvements.
- Until recently, pupils' progress in writing in Years 2, 3 and 4 has been inconsistent, with few pupils reaching the higher levels.
- Pupils do not always have the opportunity to respond to teachers' comments in marking and improve their work.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 14 lessons involving nine teachers; five lessons were observed jointly with school leaders.
- The inspectors held discussions with school leaders, staff, governors and a representative of the local authority.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at documentation, including: improvement plans, the systems for tracking pupils' progress, the arrangements for safeguarding pupils and samples of pupils' work. They heard groups of pupils read and spoke with others about behaviour and safety arrangements at the school.
- Account was taken of the 57 responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) and the views expressed by those parents and carers who spoke with inspectors at the start of the school day, or wrote letters.
- During the second day of the inspection all Year 6 pupils attended their 'transition day' at the neighbouring secondary school.

Inspection team

Michael Bartleman, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Sandra Woodman

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This school is smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The majority of pupils come from a White British background.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported through school action is below average as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium (additional government funding for specific groups of pupils, including those known to be eligible for free school meals and those from service families) is below average.
- The Early Years Foundation Stage is made up of one full-time Reception class.
- The school shares its site with Abacus@St Michael's Pre-school, a private provider, which is subject to separate inspecting and reporting arrangements.
- The school has rapidly increased its number on roll since the previous inspection.
- A high proportion of pupils join or leave part-way through their primary school education. More than a third of the Year 6 pupils in 2012 did not start their education at the school.
- There have been many staff changes since the previous inspection. The new leadership team was formed in September 2012.
- A before-school breakfast club, managed by the governing body, runs daily.
- 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?

- Make more teaching outstanding so all pupils make rapid and sustained progress, particularly in Years 2, 3 and 4 in writing, by:
 - increasing the level of challenge in lessons, particularly for more-able pupils, so more pupils reach the higher levels
 - ensuring that teachers' comments show pupils clearly how they can improve their work and that they have time to respond
 - ensuring the basic skills of spelling, punctuation, sentence construction and grammar are reinforced in all lessons
 - ensuring teachers give pupils clear examples of the steps to follow in producing good quality writing, so that pupils can refer to them when completing their own work.
- Further develop the roles of the leadership team, especially subject leaders, by:
 - giving more opportunities to check on teaching and learning and give regular feedback in order to guide the development of teachers' skills
 - ensuring a subject balance within the topics studied
 - involving all leaders fully in data analysis, tracking pupils' progress and monitoring school improvements.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils is good

- Children join the Reception class with skills at levels typical for their age. They are well taught and make good progress. A majority of children are now at above expected levels when they start Year 1.
- By the time the pupils leave at the end of Year 6, the proportion of pupils attaining the expected Level 4 in English and mathematics is above average, and an increasing number of pupils attain the higher Level 5. This means that the progress pupils make from their starting points is good.
- However, this good academic progress is not reflected in whole-school data because of the significant minority of pupils who have recently joined the school are working at below age-related expectations.
- The school's own data for 2013 show that attainment has improved at the end of Year 2 in reading, writing and mathematics. Increasing numbers of pupils in Years 1 and 2, including those supported by the pupil premium, are making better progress than previously to reach above average standards.
- Pupils' progress in writing in Years 2, 3 and 4 is slower than in reading. Not enough pupils are reaching the higher levels in their work because some of the tasks in lessons, particularly for more-able pupils, are not challenging enough. A few pupils do not write confidently, often making errors in spellings, punctuation and sentence construction.
- The school has worked effectively to improve the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make). Results in the national phonics screening check at the end of Year 1 in 2012 and 2013 were above average.
- Attainment in reading is currently above expected levels in Year 2 and in Year 6. Pupils have good opportunities to read for a variety of purposes in lessons and enjoy reading a wide range of books.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make accelerated progress due to the additional support being well organised and precisely meeting their needs.
- Pupil premium funding is used effectively to provide additional teachers and curriculum enrichment opportunities. The school's own data show that the attainment of pupils supported by the pupil premium in 2013 was the equivalent of one term behind their classmates in English and two terms in mathematics, which is an improvement on 2012.

The quality of teaching is good

- The teaching is typically good and there are elements of outstanding practice, particularly in Years 5 and 6 where pupils' next steps in learning are well met. Teachers plan imaginative activities that excite and motivate pupils to succeed. For example, during the inspection, Year 6 pupils wrote a persuasive letter about their 'cancelled leavers' concert'.
- The proportion of good and outstanding teaching is increasing well but needs to advance further to overcome past underachievement and slower progress in Years 2, 3 and 4, particularly in writing.
- Teachers have high expectations. Reading, mathematics, phonics and, increasingly, writing are taught effectively. Teachers have increased their knowledge of what makes an effective lesson through the sharing of good practice although they do not routinely give clear examples of what is expected from the pupils' learning, particularly in writing.
- In the better lessons, relationships are strong and teachers question pupils effectively. Good links are made with previous work and other subjects. Pupils have good opportunities to discuss and share their ideas with each other.
- Although teachers' marking is regular pupils do not routinely respond to the comments and so miss the opportunity to improve their work.

- Where teaching is less strong, teachers underestimate what pupils can achieve. This means that some of the tasks for more-able pupils are not sufficiently demanding, time is not used effectively and learning slows.
- Pupils supported by the pupil premium receive well-managed help which enables them to make progress as well as other pupils. The focus on individual needs also ensures that disabled pupils, those with special educational needs and those who have recently joined the school are supported effectively and progress well.
- Teaching is good in the Reception class where adults provide interesting activities which engage children. They intervene at appropriate points to enhance children's learning and regularly assess and record their progress. The high level of engagement allows adults to work with small groups of children to accelerate their learning further.
- Reading is promoted well. Teachers and teaching assistants are successfully promoting the pupils' knowledge of the sounds that letters make and giving additional support to pupils who do not read regularly at home. Library visits further develop a reading culture within the school.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is consistently good. At times the conduct of older pupils is outstanding. Pupils demonstrate positive attitudes that support their learning well.
- Pupils have a great pride in their school. They have a great desire to learn, which contributes greatly to their good achievement.
- School records confirm that pupils' behaviour is good on a daily basis and over time, although it is not yet exemplary because a few pupils find it difficult to manage their own behaviour, particularly when learning slows.
- Pupils told inspectors, 'It is fun at our school; there is a lot for us to do.' They spoke enthusiastically about the school's recent 200 year celebrations and all the activities they had taken part in.
- Parents and carers have great confidence in the care that the school provides and pupils agree that they feel happy and safe in school. A parent or carer described St Michael's as 'a pupil and family friendly school at the heart of the community'. Virtually all parents and carers who responded to the online questionnaire, or spoke to inspectors, judged behaviour to be good and their children to be safe in school.
- Discussions with pupils showed they understand about different types of bullying. They said that, although squabbles may sometimes arise, there is no bullying in school and that, if it were to occur, staff would deal with it immediately.
- Pupils play an active role in ensuring a happy, well-organised school. Older pupils care for younger children and manage the library and school office during lunchtimes. These opportunities, as well as being school councillors, have an extremely positive impact on their personal development.
- Pupils show clear values of respect and tolerance of others. This is because these aspects are central to the school's values and are well supported by the school's motto of 'Learn-Care-Enjoy'.
- The school has close working relationships with a number of outside agencies to support pupils and their families whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable. Attendance is consistently high when compared to the national average.
- Through a well-planned range of activities, pupils are helped to develop strategies so that they are able to manage everyday risks for themselves, such as those associated with the internet, fire and roads.

The leadership and management are good

- Since the previous inspection, the governing body and more recently the new leadership team have continued to lead the school well during a period of transition with many staff changes which resulted in some slowing of progress. There are clear and high expectations of all staff.
 - Leaders regularly check that all pupils are on track to make good progress from their starting points. However many subject leaders are new to their roles and are not yet having enough opportunities to check on school improvements, the quality of teaching and pupils' progress.
 - The headteacher has managed the pace of change, the increase in the school's roll and the number of pupils joining the school at times other than the start of terms effectively so that there is a common sense of purpose and staff morale is high. The school is well placed to improve further.
 - Regular lesson observations and a successful programme of training and coaching have ensured that most teaching is good, with an increasing proportion that is outstanding. The performance of teachers is managed effectively, although teachers do not routinely have feedback on observations that helps them improve their practice systematically.
 - The school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination well. There are no recorded incidents of harassment. Pupil premium funding is managed well so that eligible pupils make good progress.
 - The headteacher's and deputy headteacher's presence around the school is highly effective in cementing strong relationships.
 - The school's 'open door' policy is greatly appreciated by parents and carers, who feel informed about, and involved in, their children's learning, although a few expressed a wish for further information on their children's progress. Transition into and out of the school is effective and well managed.
 - Topics bring together different subjects in a way that the pupils describe as 'fun', although there is not always a subject balance to the topics covered. The range of activities contributes strongly to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Visits, including residential visits, performances, sporting activities, themed days and the development of artistic skills add further enhancement.
 - The local authority provides regular support for school leaders, teachers and governors which has helped them to evaluate the school's performance accurately and to develop a clear strategy to improve the school further.
 - **The governance of the school:**
 - The well-trained governing body, led by a knowledgeable and effective Chair of the Governing Body, supports and monitors the work of the school effectively. Governors understand the school's performance information well and how the school has improved. They have been a stabilising force during a period of transition. They provide good support to leaders because they are able to ask the difficult questions about how decisions will have an impact on pupils' learning. The governing body is kept informed about how teaching is improving. Governors visit the school regularly to check on performance. This has led to good decisions being made on the rewards that teachers receive, the allocation of the school's finances and the pupil premium, which it monitors effectively. The governing body carries out its statutory duties effectively, ensuring, for example, that procedures for safeguarding pupils are well managed, regularly reviewed and fully meet the regulatory requirements.
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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

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| Unique reference number | 109225 |
| Local authority | South Gloucestershire |
| Inspection number | 403087 |

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

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| Type of school | Primary |
| School category | Voluntary controlled |
| Age range of pupils | 4–11 |
| Gender of pupils | Mixed |
| Number of pupils on the school roll | 204 |
| Appropriate authority | The governing body |
| Chair | Peter Hitchman |
| Headteacher | Adrian Vye |
| Date of previous school inspection | 10 June 2008 |
| Telephone number | 01454 867105 |
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