

INSPECTION REPORT

**ST MICHAEL'S RC VA PRIMARY
SCHOOL**

Esh Laude, Esh, Co. Durham

LEA area: Co.Durham

Unique reference number: 114252

Headteacher: Sister Anna Ryan

Reporting inspector: Mrs Maggie Holling
15977

Dates of inspection: 18th and 19th September, 2001

Inspection number: 195943

Short inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

School category: Voluntary Aided

Age range of pupils: 4 to 11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Esh Laude
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Co. Durham
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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs Julie Stonebank

Date of previous inspection: 19th May 1997

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Michael's RC Primary School is a small village school built in 1795. It has a wide catchment area and pupils come from a range of backgrounds. There are presently 147 pupils in the school. Of these about seventy per cent are from Catholic families. The school is smaller than the average primary school. Pupils are aged from 4 -11 and are taught in six classes each of a single year group except for a small combined class of Year 3 and 4 pupils. Three pupils are learning English as a second language. Fifteen per cent of pupils have special educational needs which is below the national average. A below average proportion of the pupils has a statement of special educational need. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is broadly average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a successful school. Pupils make very good progress and standards of achievement are high. By the time they are eleven pupils reach very high standards of attainment in the national tests in mathematics and science and above average standards in English. This is because there is a shared commitment in the school to high expectations of work and behaviour. The headteacher sets the tone for this by her unstinting dedication and aspirations for pupils always to achieve their best. She successfully communicates these to the whole school community. Teaching throughout the school is of high quality, an exemplary feature of which is the detailed planning for lessons which takes account of where pupils are and what they need to do to make the next steps in learning. Pupils have a mature attitude to their learning, behave well and thrive in the Catholic ethos, which emphasises strong moral values and care and respect for others. The effective partnership between the headteacher and the chairman of governors ensures the good management of the school supported by a committed and knowledgeable governing body. The strong links established with parents enables them to make a valuable contribution to their child's education. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- The school promotes high standards of attainment. Standards are very high in mathematics and science.
- There is high quality teaching throughout.
- The Headteacher provides very good leadership. Her close team work with staff and the good knowledge and support of governors contributes to the continuing improvement in the school.
- Pupils enjoy coming to school. They have positive attitudes to learning and good behaviour which are fostered by the strong Catholic ethos and the very good relationships throughout the school community.
- Parents strongly support the school and are appreciative of the efforts that are made to forge an effective partnership with them.

What could be improved

- Standards in English have not been as consistently high as those in mathematics and science. Boys do better than girls in the national tests for English.

- The school's management plan is not clear. Targets for improvement are not linked closely enough with the budget. The school does not measure its success against its targets with sufficient precision.
- There are some missed opportunities to develop pupils' sense of responsibility and personal initiative.
- Child Protection procedures have some deficiencies.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in 1997. Since that time the very high standards have been consistently maintained in mathematics and science and until 2000 also in English. The fall in results in the national tests in English and mathematics for seven year olds and in English for eleven year olds in 2000 has prompted the school to examine its strategies for teaching these subjects. The school is confident that the average performance of seven year olds in mathematics represents a temporary blip and this is supported by inspection findings. The good standard of teaching noted in the last report has been further improved. Attendance, which was satisfactory, is now good. The school has addressed the key issues raised in the last report. There has been particularly good progress in the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning and good progress in putting in place procedures for the assessment of pupils' attainment and progress. Improvement overall has been good since the last inspection and the school's capacity to continue to improve is also good.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	Compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
English	A*	A	B	C	well above A average above B average C below average D well below E average
mathematics	A	A	A*	A	
science	A	A	A	A	

The results of the National Curriculum assessments were well above national averages for eleven year olds in 2000 for mathematics and science and in English they were above them. For seven year olds results were well above national averages in reading, average in mathematics and below average in writing. Over the last three years, standards for eleven year olds in the National Curriculum tests in mathematics and science have remained consistently very high. In English they fell a little in 2000 but were still above the national average. The results for 2001 indicate that high standards continue to be maintained in English. Assessments for seven year olds over the three years have remained consistently high until the dip in 2000. The test results over the last three years indicate that boys do better than girls in English at age seven and eleven. In work seen during the inspection standards in English and mathematics were at least in line with national expectations for seven year olds and higher than this for the majority of eleven year olds. There was no discernible difference between the achievement of boys and girls in English. In particular the work seen in mathematics is of a very high standard. This is because the mathematics curriculum is very well structured and the teaching is very good. Very little science work of the younger pupils was seen but for older pupils standards are higher than national expectations. Pupils leave the reception class with standards that are slightly above national expectations. They make good progress as they move through the school, including pupils with special educational needs, and achievement throughout is good. The school exceeded its statutory targets in English, mathematics and science for eleven year olds for the second successive year. One hundred per cent of eleven year olds attained the nationally expected level 4 or above.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy coming to school and are enthusiastic learners.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils are clear about the school's expectations. They behave well in lessons and around the school.
Personal development and relationships	There is affection and respect between staff and pupils. Pupils are thoughtful and care for each other. They develop good levels of independence but there are insufficient opportunities for them to demonstrate initiative and responsibility.
Attendance	Good. Attendance is above the national average.

Pupils love coming to school and are reluctant to leave. They respond very well to the school's high expectations of them, soon developing mature attitudes to learning and achievement exemplified by their attitude not only in lessons but towards their homework. In lessons they are attentive and enthusiastic. In lessons and around the school they are polite and well behaved, care for each other and play well together. The quality of relationships between all in the school community is very good and contributes to the very special ethos which the school provides. When required pupils show that they have a good degree of independence but they would benefit by being given more chances to develop initiative and take responsibility particularly outside lessons. Attendance is above the national average. The school frequently achieves and celebrates one hundred per cent attendance.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Very good	Very good	Very good

Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that the teaching is adequate and strengths outweigh weaknesses.

Teaching in the school is consistently good, often very good and sometimes inspirational. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. In English and mathematics, including literacy and numeracy, the teaching is very good. Teachers know their pupils well, set National Curriculum targets for them which are reviewed each term and plan very effectively for the next stages in learning, frequently at an individual level. Plans are detailed and lessons are very well structured. Teachers have a secure knowledge and understanding of the English and mathematics curriculum, the pace of lessons is good and pupils respond to the challenges set for them by their teachers. As a result pupils make very good progress. Pupils with

special educational needs make very good progress because they are very well supported by class teachers and other adults who give extra help. The few pupils who are learning English as an additional language are completely integrated into the school and are progressing well.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. Pupils follow a broad and balanced curriculum overall which is enhanced by residential visits and a good range of after school activities. Within the English curriculum there could be more planned opportunities for pupils to develop speaking and listening skills.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. The curriculum is adapted appropriately and individual targets are carefully monitored and reviewed. The school makes considerable extra financial provision to support these pupils and others who are lower attainers.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good. Pupils are well integrated into the school. Work is planned for them by their teachers with support and advice from specialist teachers.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The school provides many opportunities for pupils to develop into well-rounded young people though more could be done to enable them to exercise personal initiative and responsibility.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares for its pupils very well. Pupils feel safe and secure. Child protection procedures are largely in place but several aspects require updating.

The school lays great emphasis on establishing a partnership with parents and it is successful in this. Assessment and target setting procedures for pupils are well developed and are used effectively to plan for learning. The curriculum overall is appropriate though pupils would benefit from more opportunities in English lessons to engage in a range of speaking and listening activities. Pupils with special educational needs and those who are learning English are very well provided for. The school makes considerable extra financial provision for pupils who, for whatever reason, are not doing as well as they might. In this Catholic school there are many opportunities both within the curriculum and beyond lessons for pupils to develop their spirituality and a strong moral code and there is also good provision for them to develop a range of social skills and cultural awareness. The school cares for its pupils very well but should update several of its procedures for child protection.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides very good leadership and a clear sense of purpose and direction. The staff team, with whom she works closely, function effectively, inspired by her dedication and commitment to the highest standards.

How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors are knowledgeable and fulfil their responsibilities well. They share the headteacher's vision for the school and are committed to its aims and values.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Monitoring and evaluation arrangements and satisfactory analysis of performance data enable the school to see clearly where improvements are needed. The school's written plan for improvement is currently a little too complex.
The strategic use of resources	Financial management is good. Decisions about spending are made wisely with clear priorities in mind though the links between priorities and spending are not very explicit in the school's written plan. In practice the school applies the principles of best value sensibly.

The headteacher, staff and governors have developed a successful and high achieving school. The headteacher, through her warm and charismatic leadership, effectively communicates her vision for the school and her pursuit of the highest standards for all pupils. Within the school there is a striking shared commitment to this amongst the whole school community. The school's management plan does not fully reflect this because it is a collection of separate documents in which the links between intended improvements and with spending are not very clear. As a key management tool it could be more helpful.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents are pleased with the very high standards which pupils achieve. • They believe that the teaching is good. • They feel that the school has high expectations of work and behaviour. • They believe that the school is well led and managed. • They feel that the school helps to develop children's maturity and self esteem. • They appreciate the partnership with the school and the openness of relationships between themselves and the headteacher and staff. • They appreciate the school's 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A few parents of younger pupils would like to see a wider range of after-school activities. • A very small minority believe that the school does not work closely with parents or that they are well informed about the progress of their child.

<p>approach to homework and the good dialogue which develops, supported by the homework diary and reading record scheme.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• They appreciate the positive attitudes and ethos of the school engendered by the headteacher and shared by the staff.	
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Parents are overwhelmingly supportive of the school and very few concerns have been expressed. Inspection findings support the positive views of the school. In respect of areas that parents would like to see improved, the inspection team feel that the range of after school and extra-curricular activities is good given the size and circumstances of the school. The inspection revealed that the school has a variety of mechanisms in place to maintain links with parents and works hard to keep them well informed about the progress of pupils.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

The school promotes high standards of attainment. Standards are very high in mathematics and science.

1. Children begin school with levels of attainment that are broadly average. They achieve well in the Foundation Stage and enter Year 1 well prepared for their next stage of learning. By the age of seven the results of the National Curriculum tests for the past four years show that pupils reached standards which are well above national averages but whilst these standards were maintained in reading, they fell a little in mathematics and writing in 2000. By the age of eleven the test results show that pupils consistently reach standards which are well above national averages, though in 2000 these fell a little in English. Results over the past three years show that girls do less well than boys in English. It is not easy to see why this should be the case but the school is now setting targets for individual pupils to ensure that they do as well as they can in English and mathematics. Work seen during the inspection shows that pupils in Key Stage 1 reach standards which are at least in line with national averages. Pupils in Key Stage 2 reach standards which are above national averages and are well on target to reach similar standards or above by the end of Year 6.
2. Achievement is good for all groups of pupils. Pupils with special educational needs and those who are learning English as a second language do well because of the good support the school provides for them. The school also makes extra provision for lower attaining pupils in Year 6 in English and mathematics. In this small group they are making very good progress because of the good teaching with well planned and structured lessons carefully matched to their needs. Pupils do well throughout the school because of the good teaching, which is underpinned by the consistently high expectations set by the headteacher and all staff. All are expected to succeed.
3. Children are settling well to their work in the Foundation Stage. Though they have only been in school for less than three weeks many of them already show a good degree of independence and have quickly learned the classroom routines. They are engaging well with their work in number and language and literacy, listening carefully to the teacher and helping each other in their work. Through the skill of the teacher and her collaboration with the nursery nurse, pupils are provided with a challenging curriculum which emphasises achievement and fun in learning.
4. In English pupils make very good progress through the school. By the age of eleven, many of them are fluent readers, able to read aloud with clarity, understanding and expression. Written work is usually well structured and carefully presented with accurate spelling and punctuation. In a Year 6 lesson pupils showed their developing grasp of English grammar by providing some good examples of the correct use of connectives and conjunctions. They can use flair and imagination in writing and are given some opportunities to write at length. Teachers are well aware of the need to endeavour to provide further opportunities across the curriculum to enable pupils to write at length and for a range of purposes and audiences. Pupils are generally not confident speakers. They frequently have to be prompted to express their ideas and opinions clearly and when they do these are often not developed to any length. Pupils' response to the ideas and opinions of others is similarly limited. This aspect of the English curriculum needs to be planned for in lessons more frequently.

5. Pupils make very good progress in mathematics because of the good teaching and very well structured curriculum. By the age of eleven, they are developing a very good mathematical vocabulary which they are able to use in their work in adding, subtracting, multiplying and dividing. They have good problem solving skills as shown in a lesson where they were required to use a range of computation operations and combine these to arrive at an answer. This lesson also demonstrated pupils' enjoyment of mathematics.
6. By the age of eleven, pupils' attainment in science has been consistently well above average over the past three years. These very high standards are reflected in the work seen during the inspection. Pupils experience the full range of the curriculum. They are gaining a very good knowledge of life processes and living things and have a good grasp of scientific vocabulary. By the age of eleven, they confidently conduct scientific enquiries. For example, in one lesson where they were able to demonstrate their grasp of the recently introduced concept of the fair test in answering questions arising from their own investigations of forces in action.
7. Throughout the school pupils are confident in their use of information and communication technology and are developing a range of skills beginning at an early age. For example, in a Year 1 lesson where pupils were learning to use the recently installed interactive whiteboard to type in their own words, enlarge the font and underline. Displays of pupils' work and other evidence indicate that attainment in all the subjects of the national curriculum and information and communication technology is at least in line with national expectations.
8. Literacy and numeracy lessons are being implemented throughout the school. Coordinators have a good knowledge and understanding of requirements, have attended regular training sessions and regularly monitor teaching and learning. Lessons in other subjects often mirror the structure of these lessons and this is having a positive impact on pupils' learning.

There is high quality teaching throughout.

9. The very good teaching throughout the school enables pupils to learn effectively and make very good progress. The teaching is energetic, knowledgeable and sometimes inspirational. Examples of inspirational teaching were found in several different lessons. Such lessons were characterised by a number of key features including the teacher's ability to capture the interest of pupils and enable them to experience high levels of curiosity and motivation. For example, in a science lesson where pupils were learning about invertebrates with reference to snails. In this lesson, curiosity was a key feature in enabling pupils not only to learn about invertebrates but also to reflect sensitively on the importance of caring for and respecting living things. This lesson also contributed very well to pupils' spiritual and moral development.
10. The teaching is defined by several very good features. One of the key ones is very good and often excellent planning for lessons. The approach to planning is consistent across the school. It is rigorous and detailed. Plans indicate what pupils are expected to learn. Teachers articulate these learning objectives clearly to pupils so that they understand what they are expected to gain from the lesson. The planned work is carefully differentiated for the different groups of pupils and a good match with appropriate challenge is achieved. Lessons are frequently carefully evaluated by the class teachers themselves and the results of these evaluations are used to inform planning for future lessons. The regular monitoring of plans by the headteacher contributes to the high standard of planning in the school.

11. Another key feature of lessons is the consistently high expectations of work and behaviour which all teachers have of pupils. This is an example of how the headteacher effectively communicates her aspirations of the highest standards to all teachers and enables them to take this on. In lessons, pupils are expected to succeed. They are continually exhorted to do their best and work hard and this results in the mature attitude which all pupils have to their work both in school and towards their homework.
12. The pace of lessons is good, enabling pupils to consolidate and reflect on their learning and move onto the next stage. The quality of ongoing assessment is also a strength. Teachers know their pupils well. They use this knowledge to inform their planning for subsequent lessons, often at an individual level, and to set regular targets in English and mathematics against the National Curriculum levels.
13. Other aspects of successful teaching are also in evidence such as good subject knowledge and good classroom management and organisation. Teachers use specialist support well. For example, there is very good collaboration in the reception class between the teacher and the nursery nurse and, in other classes, adult helpers, including parents, are well briefed and are able to contribute positively to pupils' learning.
14. There are no significant weaknesses in teaching in the school. Lesson evaluations show that the teachers are sufficiently reflective to pinpoint their own strengths and weaknesses and make improvements. They are supported in this by regular monitoring by the subject coordinators and by the headteacher. Governors also have a subject monitoring role. Occasionally the pace of the lesson is such that insufficient time is given for pupils to consolidate and reflect on their learning. Occasionally, because the lesson is so highly structured, it can become too teacher directed and this can have the effect of inhibiting the personal development of pupils by providing limited opportunities for pupils to use their initiative and exercise responsibility.

There is very good leadership by the headteacher. Her close team work with staff and the good knowledge and support of governors contributes to the continuing improvement in the school.

15. The leadership of the headteacher is pivotal in the school. She is warm, approachable and charismatic. She promotes the highest standards of achievement and behaviour amongst pupils and inspires a strong sense of team spirit amongst the staff and the whole school community. As one teacher remarked, "we don't work for the head, we work with her". She leads by example, displaying unstinting dedication to her work, and the staff and governors share her aspirations for the pupils and the school and work very hard to attain them.
16. Management of the school is good. The decision not to replace the deputy headteacher when she left last year means that there is no management team. This is largely compensated for by the close team work within the school but also the strong support and commitment of the chairman of governors. There is thus an effective means of ensuring a collective response to the school's development and decision making. The governing body is knowledgeable about the school and conscientious in fulfilling its various duties. The committee structure works effectively.
17. There is a strong commitment to continuing improvement. Monitoring and evaluation of the school's work, including performance data analysis, contributes effectively to

securing this. The school is aware that girls do not do as well as boys in English and is concerned at the fall in the English results in 2000. As a result, it is re-examining its teaching and learning strategies in English and has put in place target setting for individual pupils not only in English but in mathematics as well throughout the school. Setting in English and mathematics has recently been introduced in Key Stage 2. An additional teacher is employed part-time to support the work of lower attaining pupils in Year 6. The headteacher and governors feel that such support was a key factor in all pupils being able to attain at least level 4 in last year's National Curriculum tests for eleven year olds.

18. The priorities identified in the school's management plan are appropriate. They include the need to raise attainment in English and the ongoing development of information and communication technology linked to the recent external funding. The large underspend in the school's budget has recently been used to purchase several interactive whiteboards which are already proving to be a valuable resource for pupils and teachers. The staff and governors are involved in the generation and review of the school's development plan, which is a small part of the management plan. Taken as a whole, the management plan is a collection of documents which, because of its volume and disparate nature, is not as helpful as it might be as a key management tool in moving the school on. Financial management is good but links between budget formulation and planned improvements could be made more explicit so that cost-effectiveness can be evaluated more easily. The criteria by which the success of intended improvements will be evaluated are not precise enough.

Pupils enjoy coming to school. They have positive attitudes to learning and good behaviour. They are well cared for and relationships throughout the school community are very good.

19. Parents commented on how much their children enjoy coming to school and this was confirmed by pupils. As one Year 6 pupil remarked, "the worse thing about this school is having to leave at the end of the year". Attendance is good and the frequent occasions when there is one hundred per cent attendance are noted and celebrated. Pupils respond very well to the school's high expectations of them. They are attentive and enthusiastic in lessons and work hard. They grow in maturity as they move through the school and are conscientious in their approach to their work, including homework which they regularly receive.
20. The school successfully fosters these positive attitudes. The strong Catholic ethos is warm, open and caring and is underpinned by the very good relationships between adults and pupils and between the pupils themselves and an emphasis on a strong moral code. Pupils are taught to be polite and respectful and to care for each other. The headteacher and staff provide strong role models in their day to day dealings with pupils. Pupils are well cared for. They are well known by the Headteacher and staff and their welfare and progress are monitored appropriately. The required child protection procedures are in place but have not been updated since new staff joined the school. The policy is not specific to the school.
21. Behaviour is good. No poor behaviour was seen during the inspection. In lessons, pupils are usually attentive and listen well to teachers. They behave sensibly at lunch times and play times. Pupils' attitudes to school have a very real impact on what they are able to achieve. The school works very hard with pupils and their parents when behavioural problems occur. Despite this, one child was permanently excluded from the school, the first time this has ever happened.

22. Pupils are taught to be independent from the age of four when they enter the school. They become confident learners, able to apply themselves in lessons and in researching topics to support their homework. This is reinforced to an extent as they move through the school but there are missed opportunities for pupils to demonstrate initiative and responsibility and so develop these attributes further.

Parents strongly support the school and are appreciative of the efforts it makes in forging an effective partnership with them.

23. The school is successful in establishing a partnership with parents, a principle to which it is wholly committed. At the pre-inspection meeting, parents expressed overwhelming support for the school and this was also the case through the questionnaires where the strong support far outweighed the few concerns raised. Of these the most common was that the range of activities available outside lessons was not sufficient. The school runs a number of after school activities including music lessons, French and a range of sports. In addition to this, pupils take part in school concerts and take these to elderly groups in the community. They take part in competitive sports activities with other schools and participate in visits to the theatre, galleries and museums as well as residential visits. The inspection team feels that given the size and circumstances of the school, the range of after school activities and other opportunities provided to enhance learning is good.
24. The school works hard to maintain good links with parents and keep them informed of their child's progress. As well as the usual parents' evenings and reports, the school operates an open door policy where parents are able to discuss any concerns with the class teacher either before or after school. Parents also value receiving the termly curriculum plan as it enables them to help more effectively with homework. Other helpful sources of communication are the reading record book and the homework diary. Parents are encouraged to add their comments in these so contributing to an effective dialogue between home and school. There is a very supportive Friends of the School Association run by parents and parents often help in classrooms.
25. The good measure of accord between parents' views and the inspection findings indicates that parents know the school well. They have a high degree of confidence in it.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

Standards in English have not been as consistently high as those in mathematics and science. Boys do better than girls in the national tests for English.

26. National test results for eleven year olds indicate that standards in English are below those in mathematics and science. In 2000, standards were above national averages and in line when compared to similar schools. However, fewer pupils reached higher levels of attainment than in mathematics and science. The proportion of pupils reaching level 5 in English was in line with the national average whereas in mathematics and science it was well above the national average. Prior to 2000, standards in the English tests were similar to those in other subjects. Work seen during the inspection indicates that pupils are reaching similar above average standards in all three subjects.
27. For seven year olds, standards fell slightly in reading where they were in line with national averages compared to similar schools. In writing standards were below

national averages and well below when compared to similar schools. In mathematics, standards were in line with national averages but lower than this when compared to similar schools. Prior to 2000, standards were well above national averages in English and mathematics. From the work seen pupils are reaching standards which are at least in line with national expectations in both subjects. The work of pupils from the previous school year indicates that standards are often higher than this.

28. The school has analysed all available performance data conscientiously, including results against its own assessments of individual pupils within a small cohort of fifteen in Key Stage 1 in 2000. The outcome of the analysis is that the majority of seven year olds reached standards expected by the school. Nevertheless in the light of these results and those of eleven year olds in English, the school has put a number of appropriate strategies in place to ensure that all pupils do as well as they can as they move through the school in both English and mathematics. These include the tracking of individual pupils against National Curriculum levels and the setting of targets for pupils which are shared with parents and reviewed each term. Findings help to inform the planning for lessons. In Key Stage 2, setting has recently been introduced in English and mathematics with the higher attainers from each particular year group joining the year above for their lessons. A lower attaining group from Year 6 is taught separately but fully within National Curriculum requirements. This is the second year of this particular initiative and the school has judged this to be a successful stratagem in raising attainment given that all pupils have reached the nationally expected level in all three subjects for the past two years.
29. Writing in Key Stage 1 and literacy throughout the school are currently key priorities in the school's development plan. Possible areas where pupils are under-performing within the English curriculum have been identified, including text analysis and extended writing and are being targeted. The Co-ordinator has rightly identified that some pupils in Key Stage 1 have poor listening skills and this was confirmed during the inspection. Some pupils in Key Stage 2 are not confident in expressing their views and opinions to any length. Overall there are not enough planned opportunities to develop these skills in lessons and this may be a contributing factor to pupils doing less well in the other aspects of English, especially writing.
30. The school is aware that boys are doing better than girls in English against the trend nationally. Because of the small cohorts in each year group this often represents one or two pupils. The headteacher is very conscious of the importance of positive role models in the school and the school is fortunate in having been able to recruit both male and female teachers in equal numbers. This positive role modelling may be having a favourable impact on the level of attainment of boys both in English and overall. The school feels that its system of tracking individual pupils, supported by the monitoring programme for teaching and learning will help to ensure that all pupils achieve their capabilities. There was no discernible difference in the attainment and achievement of boys and girls in lessons.
31. Indications from the national tests for pupils aged eleven in 2001, are that standards in English have already improved though national comparators are not yet available.

The school's management plan is not clear. Targets for improvement are not linked closely enough with the budget. The school does not measure its success against its targets with sufficient precision.

32. The school's management plan currently comprises a collection of documents which includes the school's development plan which is central to the continued improvement

of the school. This central document is satisfactory as an expression of the intended improvements that the school wishes to make in the coming year and how these improvements are to be achieved. Weaker aspects of the plan are the criteria by which the school will judge the success of its initiatives and the costings which underpin these. The other documents that are included in the management plan relate to this central issue but links between these, for example staff development or finance, are not made clear. The plan as a whole is not easy to understand because of this and also because it is presented in a range of different formats which render it difficult to make these links. Much of the information included would be more helpful if it were summarised and key aspects included in the school's improvement plan for the year, rather than appended to it. More precise links between budget formulation and intended improvements would help to confirm cost effectiveness when the plan is evaluated.

33. A clearer and more concise plan would help in focusing the school's attention on intended improvements and enable more effective participation of staff and governors in its generation, review and evaluation. It would then become a more valuable tool for the management of the school.

There are some missed opportunities to develop pupils' sense of responsibility and personal initiative.

34. Pupils are confident learners and can work well independently in lessons and with homework. However, outside lessons and around the school they are not given many opportunities to apply these skills in other situations or develop them further. There are examples of pupils carrying out some fund raising, for example putting together aid boxes for Rumanian and Russian orphanages, but overall these are occasional events. Pupils have been able to participate in putting together class rules but they are not regularly given a voice in the school, for example, by putting together a school newsletter or participating in a school council or planning their own assemblies. Lessons provide further opportunities for pupils to develop these qualities but these are not exploited as fully as they might be. For example, pupils do not act as monitors. Books and other materials are frequently laid out for them at the start of each lesson. Taken together these represent some missed opportunities to enable pupils to develop a sense of responsibility for themselves and towards the wider world or to allow them to demonstrate initiative in participating in such activities.

Child protection procedures have some deficiencies.

35. Statutory child protection procedures are in place and are satisfactory overall. The headteacher is the designated person in the school who oversees all child protection matters. She and a governor of the school have attended recent training to update their knowledge. However, teachers who have joined the school over the past few years have not yet received the necessary training.
36. As required, the school has a policy for child protection which sets out the procedures to follow if any incidents occur. This policy is not specific to the school and therefore it does not set out the school's own response to dealing with these issues. In its present form it is not helpful in ensuring that there is a clearly understood and consistent approach to these matters across this school as a whole

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

37. St Michael's is an effective school with considerably more strengths than weaknesses. In order to maintain the high standards it achieves and its continued improvement the school should:

(1) Continue the process of raising standards for all pupils in English by:

- the ongoing analysis of assessment information, including test results and using this to set targets for individual pupils;
- continuing the exemplary planning for lessons which includes the differentiation of work for different groups of pupils;
- the continued investigation of relative weaknesses within the English curriculum, such as analysis of text and extended writing and addressing these in lessons;
- providing more planned opportunities for pupils to develop their speaking and listening skills, for example, through role play and drama, by conferencing, discussion and debate both within the English curriculum and in other subjects.

(2) Produce a more coherent, accessible and helpful management plan by:

- making explicit the links between the various initiatives and intended improvements such as for example, improving writing, staff development and performance appraisal;
- showing specific costings for all of these;
- providing more precise criteria by which the success of these improvements can be evaluated.

(3) Provide more opportunities for pupils to develop responsibility and demonstrate initiative in and around the school.

(4) Address the deficiencies in child protection procedures by:

- re-writing the policy to make it specific to the school;
- ensuring that all teachers are trained in child protection procedures.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	15
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	11

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	8	7	0	0	0	0
Percentage	0	53	47	0	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. [When the total number is substantially less than 100, add] Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one [two, three, etc] percentage point[s]. [Where the total is close to or greater than 100, use only the first sentence.]

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		147
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals		8

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		16

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	11
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	3.7
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	4	7	11

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	4	4	4
	Girls	6	6	6
	Total	10	10	10
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91 (100)	91 (100)	91 (94)
	National	83 (82)	84 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	4	4	4
	Girls	6	6	6
	Total	10	10	10
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	91(100)	91(94)	91(94)
	National	84(82)	88 (86)	88(87)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	7	13	20

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	7	7	7
	Girls	13	13	13
	Total	20	20	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	100 (96)	100 (96)	100 (96)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	7	7	7
	Girls	13	13	13
	Total	20	20	20
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	100 (81)	100 (85)	100 (92)
	National	70 (68)	72 (69)	79 (75)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	3
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	118
Any other minority ethnic group	

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White		1
Other minority ethnic groups		

This table gives the number of exclusions of pupils of compulsory school age, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21:1
Average class size	24.3

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	2
Total aggregate hours worked per week	27

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	
Total number of education support staff	
Total aggregate hours worked per week	
Number of pupils per FTE adult	

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	April 2000/ March 2001
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	£
Total income	269223
Total expenditure	264646
Expenditure per pupil	1838
Balance brought forward from previous year	16192
Balance carried forward to next year	20769

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

147

Number of questionnaires returned

69

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	67	28	4	0	1
My child is making good progress in school.	72	24	3	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	78	19	3	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	57	38	4	0	1
The teaching is good.	84	15	0	0	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	75	21	3	1	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	88	9	3	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	94	6	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	75	21	3	1	0
The school is well led and managed.	90	9	1	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	84	15	0	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	58	28	4	3	6