

INSPECTION REPORT

ST MICHAEL'S CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Highgate, London

LEA area: Haringey

Unique reference number: 102135

Headteacher: Mrs Barbara Smith

Reporting inspector: Jane Lamb
2153

Dates of inspection: 21 - 22 May 2002

Inspection number: 198847

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
School category:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	3-11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	North Road Highgate London
Postcode:	N6 4BG
Telephone number:	020 8340 7441
Fax number:	020 8348 9452
Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr William Nathan
Date of previous inspection:	24 - 28 November 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		
2153	Jane Lamb	Registered inspector
8919	John Kerr	Lay inspector
23385	Suzanne Gerred	Team inspector
28320	Robert Willey	Team inspector

The inspection contractor was:

Cambridge Education Associates Ltd

Demeter House
Station Road
Cambridge
CB1 2RS

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Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Michael's Church of England Primary School is a voluntary aided school which is much larger than average. The school is situated close to the centre of the village of Highgate, in the London Borough of Haringey. There are 433 pupils on roll, 206 boys and 202 girls and 50 part-time nursery children, the equivalent of 25 full-time places. On entry to the school many children show above average attainment in their language and mathematical development. The number of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. The school has identified 74 pupils as having special educational needs, which is broadly in line with the national average. The number of pupils with statements of special educational needs is, however, above average and in some year groups is particularly high. Around six per cent of pupils have English as an additional language, which is above the national average, but there are no pupils at the early stages of learning English. The main languages spoken other than English are German, Italian, Swedish and Chinese. The school loses a significant number of pupils to independent schools, often at times other than the usual time of transfer. At the time of the inspection, the post of deputy headteacher was covered by two members of the senior management team, pending the substantive appointment of one of the acting deputies to the post next term.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good and constantly improving school which is particularly good in providing for the extremely diverse needs of its pupils and offering a broad, rich and stimulating curriculum. Overall standards of pupils' work are often very high and their attitudes to school are excellent. Teaching is very good and the leadership and management of the school is very strong and effective. The very good relationships throughout the school encourage harmony and mutual respect and are a major strength. Taking all these factors into account the school offers very good value for money.

What the school does well

- The leadership and management of the headteacher and governors, well supported by senior staff, are very good
- Standards of pupils' work are generally very good
- Teaching is very good and has a significant impact on pupils' learning and behaviour
- The curriculum taught throughout the school is broad, balanced, stimulating and rich and meets the needs of the pupils very well, particularly of the older pupils by specialist teaching
- The pupils' attitudes and enthusiasm for school are excellent and their behaviour is very good
- The accommodation, both inside and outdoor, is particularly good and is very well maintained and improved.

What could be improved

- There are no issues of substantial importance for the school to improve.

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 inspected last in November 1997 when it was found to be good. Since then it has continued to improve, in some areas very well, and has fully dealt with the issues identified in the previous inspection. Standards in national tests have improved and the overall standards of pupils' work seen during the inspection are also better. The quality of teaching has improved significantly and consequently pupils' learning and attitudes are also better. The specialist teaching for older pupils, which had been started before the last inspection, is now very well established and of high quality; this also contributes to good improvements in curriculum provision. Pupils' attendance is also better. The monitoring of standards of pupils' work and teaching and the roles of curriculum co-ordinators have improved well. There are significant improvements also in the leadership and management of the school and the high quality of refurbishment, redecoration, and maintenance of the school accommodation, including the new computer suite, the outside learning areas for the youngest children and the science room. The procedures for ensuring child protection have improved well and are now 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			
	All schools			Similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	A	A*	A	B
Mathematics	A	A	A	A
Science	B	A*	A	B

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
Average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Over the last three years, results in English and mathematics have been consistently well above average and in science they have improved from above average in 1999, to well above average over the last two years. The improvement trend in the school's results for all three subjects is broadly in line with the national trend. The school sets appropriate targets in English and mathematics and these were exceeded in the 2001 tests. The improvement between pupils' previous test results in Year 2 and their performance in the 2001 Year 6 tests was well above the national average in all three subjects, which shows very good progress. The standards of work seen in Year 6 during the inspection are slightly below those in the 2001 tests but are above average, with many pupils attaining well above average standards. This reflects the higher numbers of pupils in the current year group with special educational needs and the fact that a significant group of higher attaining pupils left the school at the end of Year 5. Overall standards in English and mathematics are above average in Year 6 with particular strengths in standards of speaking, debate, reading and expressive writing in English and in the work in number, algebra, shape and space in mathematics.

Younger pupils in Year 2 attained results in the 2001 tests which were in line with the average national results in reading, writing and mathematics. When compared with the results of schools with similar intakes, however, the results were below average in reading and writing and well below average in mathematics. The assessments of pupils by teachers in science showed above average results. Over the last three years, however, the results in Year 2 have exceeded the national average in all subjects tested. The group of pupils taking the Year 2 tests in 2001 had more pupils with special educational needs, which accounts for the lower results. The provisional results for the current Year 2 tests indicate that pupils' performance is well above last year's results. Standards of pupils' work in English and mathematics are well above expected levels in the current Year 2. Pupils are achieving well, particularly in attaining the higher Level 3, and in speaking, reading and expressive writing in English and in numeracy and problem solving work in mathematics. Children at the Foundation Stage of learning attain above or well above the early learning goals by the end of the reception year due to consistently good teaching, good expectations of the children's work and good learning which promotes their good progress.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent. Pupils are extremely interested, enthusiastic, curious and respectful of others.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Both within lessons and around the school pupils are cooperative, polite, happy and courteous.

Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils are increasingly mature, understand the impact of their behaviour on others and show very good independence and concern for others.
Attendance	Very good. The attendance rates at the school are well above the national average and the rate of unauthorised absence is broadly in line with the national average.

The pupils' excellent attitudes and enthusiasm, the very good relationships within the school and pupils' particularly good personal development and attendance make a very positive contribution to their achievement.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	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.

The quality of teaching and learning is at least satisfactory in all lessons and a high proportion of lessons at each key stage and in the Foundation Stage show good teaching. A substantial number of very good lessons was seen and there was some excellent teaching at Years 3 to 6. This is a significant improvement from the previous inspection, particularly in the consistency of good or better teaching across the school. The school meets the very diverse needs of its pupils well and outside agencies are also used well to offer specific support; for example for pupils with special educational needs. The teaching of mathematics and numeracy is particularly strong and is consistently good or very good. This reflects the school's adoption of the numeracy strategy and the strong leadership of the co-ordinator in monitoring standards and teaching and giving support to colleagues. Teaching in English, including literacy, is generally good with some very good teaching and an excellent lesson seen. Both the literacy and numeracy strategies have been adopted well by the school and have had a good impact on the quality of teaching and planning. A particular strength is the very good afternoon specialist teaching in Years 3 to 6 which is based on good subject expertise and enthusiasm for their subjects. This broadens and enhances the curriculum significantly and extends also the attainment of gifted, talented and higher attaining pupils. Good opportunity is also given for pupils to have extension activities in subjects such as English and mathematics.

Because of this very good teaching, pupils' learning is often very good and reflects their excellent attitudes to school, the teachers' high expectations and the very good support given by skilful classroom assistants. Teachers help pupils to understand the relevance of what they are doing by sharing the learning objectives for lessons with them and referring back to them to see what progress has been made. The school targets well the additional support for pupils with special educational needs and caters well for those who speak English as an additional language. These pupils are well supported within lessons, resulting in them making good progress towards their own targets. Teachers manage pupils particularly well and generally have good classroom organisational skills. Many lessons are very lively and stimulating and capture the pupils' interest to enhance their learning. This results in pupils being confident and keen to respond; they offer suggestions and put forward their own viewpoints clearly. Good marking of pupils' work by some teachers gives pupils a clear idea of how they can improve and improves their confidence, but this is not yet consistent.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The school offers a rich and stimulating curriculum and is particularly strong in maintaining very good basic standards while also developing high standards in the creative arts and offering a very wide range of extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support and are well included. They generally progress well towards the targets set for them in their individual plans. The high quality of support staff makes a strong contribution.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. These pupils are well supported, achieve well and are included fully in the provision. They make similar progress as their peers and often attain high standards.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Provision for pupils' personal development through the promotion of spiritual awareness, knowledge of social and moral responsibilities and the experience of a wide range of cultures is good overall and is particularly strong in social and moral development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Staff have good knowledge and understanding of their pupils and make good provision for their welfare, health and safety.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher and governors, very well supported by senior staff, have forged a strong partnership, which constantly seeks to improve provision and meet the diverse needs of the pupils.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good. The governors fulfil their roles very well and have high levels of expertise. They fully meet statutory requirements and have a very good understanding of the school's strengths and relative weaknesses.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school effectively analyses its strengths and weaknesses and monitors provision well to decide what needs to be improved.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school uses its resources well and finances priorities for development effectively. The costly maintenance of the extensive school grounds and buildings, part of which are Grade 2 listed, is particularly well managed from existing financial resources and with very good support from parents.

The success of the school stems from the strong and effective leadership of the headteacher and governors and the shared vision of all involved, including parents. The school improvement plan has been recently improved and revised and links more closely to the action plans of the co-ordinators. The principles of best value are applied particularly well.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Their children like school.• Children are making good progress.• Behaviour is good.• The teaching is good.• The school expects children to work hard.• The school helps children to become mature and responsible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The amount of homework given.• Approaching the school with problems or questions.• Working closely with parents.• The range of activities outside lessons.

The inspectors agree fully with parents' positive views of the school. The school has a clear policy for homework and discussion with staff and pupils showed that this is generally adhered to. The inspectors feel that closer monitoring of the implementation of the homework policy would ensure that it is consistently applied and reassure parents. The school offers a good range of extra-curricular activities both at lunchtime and after school. Discussion with parents, governors and staff indicate that the school is working very hard to ensure that all parents enjoy a positive partnership with the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

The leadership and management of the headteacher and governors, well supported by senior staff, are very good.

1. This is a major factor in the effectiveness of the school and its good improvement since the last inspection. The headteacher and governors have a very strong vision and high levels of commitment and maintain an astute overview of the school. They have forged a strong and effective partnership with the staff in promoting the school's aims and values and seeking constant improvement. From next term a new deputy headteacher, who has a very good knowledge and understanding of the school and the ways in which the needs of the wide variety of pupils can be met, will enhance the leadership further. The ethos and relationships within the school are particularly caring and respectful and reflect the Christian nature of the school's foundation. The school is a multi-racial community within which pupils and staff, who represent a wide variety of cultures within our society, work together in harmony.
2. A particular strength of the management lies in the extremely good focus and determination with which projects are conceived and seen through to completion. For example, very good improvements have been made to the school building, grounds and facilities over the last few years. These have been achieved despite the constraints of the Grade 11 listed status of parts of the building and the expense of maintaining and keeping secure the extensive school grounds and gardens. The improvements to the building and facilities have been carried out within existing budgets, supported by the Diocese and helped by very good fundraising by the parents. The project has been very effectively managed and the resulting improvements provide a high quality learning environment for the pupils.
3. The school has successfully addressed all the key issues from the last inspection. Management systems have been improved so that staff and governors are clearly aware of their roles and responsibilities. There are also good systems for monitoring teaching and standards of pupils' work and progress. Staff have clear job descriptions and are regularly appraised either through the performance management structure for teachers or the system of school appraisal for support staff. Governors have improved the information given in the school brochure and the annual report to parents and these are attractive and lively, giving a very good overview of the school and its work to parents. Target setting for pupils' attainment in the national tests is well developed and these are challenging for the Year 6 pupils; last year the school exceeded its targets. The school now also has good procedures for ensuring child protection.
4. Governors give full support to the school and they work hard to bring about improvements. They maintain very good liaison with the school and are particularly clear about the areas for future development within the constraints of the budget. The chair of governors has good levels of knowledge and is very well informed, which enables his full participation in discussions and developments. Governors have good levels of trust in the headteacher and staff and all involved in the school continue to show a clear commitment to maintaining high standards, providing a rich curriculum and caring ethos. This generates a good pace of improvement, keeping the school moving towards its targets and aims.
5. The newly appointed co-ordinator for special educational needs has good levels of expertise and since her appointment many improvements have been made to the management of this provision. There has been good development towards the implementation of the new Code of Practice in the autumn term and training has been organised for the staff. There is early identification of concerns and support from the nursery onwards and pupils' individual plans have clear and appropriate targets which are reviewed and monitored well. Pupils receive good support from the skilful support staff, teachers and from outside support. The above average number of statemented pupils in the school are included well in the school's activities and receive a modified curriculum appropriate to their needs. The location of half of the school's statemented pupils in

one year group results in a concentration of additional support which is managed effectively by the class teachers. They organise and administrate the additional support well while ensuring appropriate provision for all the pupils. There is also additional teaching support in the school from a member of staff without a class responsibility, to ensure good support for pupils with special educational needs. The headteacher, governors and co-ordinator are rightly concerned that this level of support should continue next term and are looking at ways in which this can be ensured within their existing budgets. There is a high level of commitment to inclusion for these pupils and for those who have English as an additional language, who are also taught well by class teachers and support staff. The school is ensuring also that the needs of gifted and talented pupils are met through many extension activities and the broad and diverse curriculum taught.

6. The role of co-ordinators has been considerably enhanced in monitoring standards and teaching and in the development of subject action planning. The development of these action plans into an enhanced and more streamlined school development plan has been initiated by the headteacher ready for next year. Governors fulfil all their statutory duties and have good control over expenditure, ensuring that funding needed for any further improvements is available within their budgetary constraints. They ensure that the school gets best value for money from all areas of spending with the result that it provides very good value for money.
7. A key issue from the last inspection was to ensure that parents are encouraged to act as partners in their children's learning and are helped to understand their role in supporting the school's procedures. The school has worked hard to ensure that parents are kept well informed, that information is presented in a variety of ways to ensure that it reaches all parents and that various ways of contacting staff and governors are available if there is a concern. During the inspection, it was observed that many parents and carers accompany their children to the school, that staff are welcoming and available to see parents and that there is a friendly and welcoming aspect to the school. As well as the more formal methods of communication, there are also many informal social events and parents often help in school. The additional notice board at the school entrance is kept up to date with current information which could affect parents and carers. The headteacher and governors are very committed to ensuring that all parents are involved as partners in their children's education and are very open to any additional ways in which this can be improved.

Standards of pupils' work are generally very good

8. The school's results in the Year 6 tests over the three years to 2001 have been almost consistently well above the national averages, being particularly high in English and mathematics over three years, and in science over the last two years. The 2001 results show also that the school was well above schools with similar intakes in mathematics and above them in English and science. Taking account of the fact that children usually enter the school with above average attainment, this still represents very good progress and achievement. The improvement between pupils' previous test results in Year 2 and their performance in the 2001 Year 6 tests was well above the national average in all three subjects, which shows very good progress during Years 3 to 6. The school sets appropriately challenging targets in English and mathematics for each Year 6 group and these were exceeded in the 2001 tests. Factors which also have an impact on the Year 6 results each year are the number of pupils with special educational needs in each year group and the loss of some higher attaining pupils, particularly boys, at the end of Year 5 to independent schools. The current Year 6 group have a significant number of pupils with special educational needs, one of the highest percentages in the school and a significant number of higher attaining pupils left at the end of Year 5. Because of this, standards in the current Year 6 are slightly below those attained in the 2001 tests. Work seen during the inspectors' visit indicate that in English and mathematics, standards are above expected levels and that many pupils attain above this and are well above average. Other groups, particularly Year 5, also show generally much higher than average attainment.
9. The school has a higher than average proportion of pupils with English as an additional language and an above average number of pupils with a statement of special educational needs. These are

also higher than at the time of the last inspection. These two groups of pupils are well provided for and make good or very good progress. The pupils who have English as an additional language attain similar standards to their peer group and quickly become very competent English users. There are currently no pupils in the school at the early stages of acquiring English. Pupils with statements of special educational need and other pupils with special needs are supported well, make good progress and generally meet the targets set out for them in their individual plans.

10. The younger pupils at Year 2 attained standards in last year's national tests that were in line with the national average in reading, writing and mathematics but below the standards in schools with similar intakes in reading and writing and well below them in mathematics. These poorer results were attributed to a higher number of pupils with special educational needs in that particular age group. The provisional test results for Year 2 for 2002, which had just been completed prior to the inspection week, show a good improvement from 2001 in reading, writing and mathematics results. This is borne out by the inspection findings that pupils at Year 2 are attaining standards that are well above average in these subjects and are achieving particularly well.
11. The factors that account for these very good results over the last few years include the very good expectations and strong teaching, the excellent attitudes of the pupils to their work and the constant driving up of standards by the senior management team and co-ordinators by the use of assessment and tracking of pupils' progress using testing each year. The contribution of parents as partners in their children's learning is also a significant factor. The literacy and numeracy strategies have also had a significant impact on teachers' expertise and consequently on improved standards of work.
12. Children at the Foundation Stage of learning attain above or well above the early learning goals by the end of the reception year and are generally above average in all areas by the time they enter Year 1 due to consistently good teaching, good expectations of the children's work and good learning which promotes their good progress. The provision of a stimulating and well planned curriculum and the constant reinforcement of good attitudes and children's personal, social and emotional development are also important factors. The reception year has two newly qualified teachers who are supported well in their first year of teaching by a very skilful and experienced nursery nurse and a part-time teacher who also teaches in each class. This is a great benefit to the provision for the youngest children resulting in good or very good standards of work and ensures also the continuing professional development of the teachers.
13. Pupils are developing very good standards in speaking and listening throughout the school and are given many opportunities to improve their skills, such as in drama lessons, discussions and in speaking and reading for an audience. Reading standards are often very high and pupils read with enjoyment, good expression, understanding and appropriate attention to grammar and pronunciation. The pupils produce an interesting range of high quality writing, including report writing, poetry and extended expressive writing. Particular strengths of the written work are the generally good presentation and handwriting and the wide range of interesting and thoughtful work covered.
14. Standards in mathematics are often very high and the impact of the numeracy strategy has helped this and has given more opportunity for a wide range of interesting and varied work to consolidate and extend pupils' learning. They are confident in using their numeracy skills in problem solving and investigations and have very good competence in number facts. This was seen in a very lively lesson in Year 2, where pupils were adding money and solving money problems. Pupils are given work which is very well matched to their different needs and teachers generally mark their work well, suggesting ways in which they can improve and praising their good efforts. Pupils are very aware of the learning objectives of their lessons and have a good understanding of their own learning and targets for improvement. Pupils in Year 4, for example, recognised the conservation of area and moved two-dimensional shapes in different orientations, understanding that the area covered was the same. This represented well above average attainment. In the best lessons, the teachers' very effective questioning results in pupils explaining how they arrived at their answers and assesses and develops their mathematical

strategies. For example, Year 5 pupils were organising and interpreting data to construct bar graphs and presenting their findings after interpreting them. The teacher constantly checked the pupils' understanding by asking questions and challenging pupils' mathematical thinking. This activity extended their mathematical problem solving skills very effectively and was well taught.

15. The impact of the specialist teaching in Years 3 to 6 also has a very good impact on standards in other subjects such as art and design, music, drama, history, geography and physical education. The inspection team visited some of these lessons, and observed that the standards of pupils' work were enhanced by the strong expertise of the specialist teachers and the enthusiastic teaching seen. Work seen displayed around the school shows a very high quality of art work. Pupils' ability to sing tunefully and in harmony was particularly marked during the school assemblies when pupils sang parts songs and hymns. They also maintain a high standard of instrumental playing.

Teaching is very good and has a significant impact on pupils' learning and behaviour.

16. The school constantly ensures that teachers are supported well and appraised and that their professional needs are catered for. This includes good support for the four newly qualified teachers in the school. Because of this, there has been good improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection, when it was found to be generally good. It is now consistently good across the school, including in the Foundation Stage for the youngest children, and a substantial proportion of very good teaching was seen in Years 1 to 6, with some excellent teaching at in Years 3 to 6. This very good teaching has a major impact on the pupils' excellent attitudes and enthusiasm for their work and their very good learning and behaviour. These contribute to the high standards and very good progress achieved by many pupils.
17. Teachers' subject knowledge is particularly good in developing pupils' writing and expressiveness in English. In a very good Year 6 lesson on poetry writing, pupils were using extended metaphors to depict a person, drawing on the evidence of their senses and using sensitivity and imagination in their use of language. The particular strengths of this lesson were the clear structure for the lesson, the very relaxed but highly productive relationships between pupils and the teacher and the very high expectations with which the teacher carefully guided the discussion and allowed the pupils to produce work of very high quality. Teachers also have great strength in their expertise in teaching mathematics and science and are able to develop the problem solving and investigative aspects of these subjects particularly well. There is also a very good opportunity for teachers to teach their own specialist subjects in the afternoon in Years 3 to 6, when enthusiastic and expert teaching has a significant benefit for the pupils.
18. As well as recognising the need to give pupils a good understanding in English, mathematics and science, the school is keen to ensure that pupils are taught a rich and stimulating curriculum, including very good provision for the arts. This stimulates pupils' interest and broader development and adds to their self-esteem and creative expressiveness. Although not all subjects were seen being taught during the inspection, it was clear from displayed work and one lesson observed that pupils achieve are very well taught in art and design. Pupils also sing and perform very well in music due to the high expectations of the music teacher who also conducts their singing in assemblies and the additional instrumental tuition available. Pupils are encouraged to take part in dramatic productions and benefit from the particular expertise of a drama specialist teacher who gives them great confidence and assurance. This was seen in a good lesson when pupils were working on tableau to represent parts of 'A Midsummer Night's Dream,' in preparation for the end of year performance.
19. Teachers are very confident in sharing and developing the learning objectives for lessons with their pupils. Consequently, pupils understand well what they will learn and have the opportunity at the end of the lesson to think about the progress they have made. The lesson planning for different groups of pupils of different attainment, however, is not as consistent in English as in mathematics and varies more according to the teacher. The particularly good use of classroom assistants, many of whom have high levels of expertise, was also a feature of many good lessons and often gave very good levels of support to pupils with special educational needs and those for

whom English is an additional language. A very good example was seen in a Year 2 lesson where a very skilful classroom assistant supported a group of lower attaining pupils to enable them to understand buying and adding with coins, with particular care being given to include pupils in the class activity at an appropriate level. While some teachers mark work with great sensitivity and encourage pupils to improve further by the useful comments made, other marking is more cursory and the new marking policy needs to be monitored to ensure that it is consistently applied.

20. The teaching in mathematics and numeracy is particularly good; all lessons seen were at least good and a substantial proportion were very good. Tasks and activities are very well matched to the pupils' different levels of attainment in both planning and teaching and there is a good focus on teaching a wide range of methods to support both written and mental calculations. The teachers provide interesting and varied tasks in mathematics to consolidate and extend learning, including problem solving and investigations. These provide pupils with good opportunities to use and extend their existing skills and knowledge and pose and answer their own problems. In a Year 4 numeracy lesson, pupils were given the task of measuring angles with protractors and gave very clear explanations of their investigations. For example, a pupil who was measuring angles knew that 47 degrees was two more than half of 90 degrees, so that the other angle being measured must be two degrees less and therefore 43 degrees. This was as a result of close and focused questioning by the teacher. The structure of the National Numeracy Strategy is adhered to very closely in lessons and the balance of work provides a suitable focus on all elements of the mathematics curriculum. The impact of this on pupils' learning and standards of work has ensured that standards have been consistently well above the national average in tests at Year 6 over the last three years.
21. Teaching in English including literacy is generally good, with some very good teaching and an excellent lesson also seen. For example, particularly high expectations and lively and clear teaching in an excellent Year 5 lesson ensured that pupils were very interested and confident in finding ways of forming complex sentences using different connectives, including subordinate clauses. This led to standards of pupils' work in that lesson being well above expected levels. English lesson planning, particularly in the planning for different groups of pupils, is satisfactory overall but is less consistently developed than that in mathematics. The literacy strategy has been adopted well. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported by setting, some withdrawal groups and specific support from a range of school-based and external support staff.
22. Teachers generally have very good subject knowledge in literacy and numeracy. They use different sections of the sessions well to develop and consolidate pupils' skills and knowledge. The teachers who are in their first year of teaching have good subject expertise and, when necessary, are well supported planning for and managing their lessons by more experienced staff.
23. Pupils' learning is often very good and reflects the pupils' excellent attitudes and hard work, the high quality of teaching and the very good support given by classroom assistants and nursery nurses. Many lessons are very lively and stimulating and capture the pupils' interest particularly well to enhance their learning. Expectations of pupils' behaviour are consistently very good and pupils are encouraged to do their best. A particular strength of the best teaching is the clarity and depth of explanations given to the pupils and the thorough and consistent way in which their tasks are developed, supported and discussed. This results in pupils being independent and confident, enthusiastic in their responses and well able to offer suggestions and put forward their own views in a calm and respectful atmosphere where their viewpoints are taken seriously. For example, in the end of lesson discussions about their work, many pupils show a high level of thoughtfulness and clarity in discussing how they have achieved and how they could improve further. The samples of homework seen and the discussions with pupils showed that provision is generally consistent between classes but the school needs to monitor its homework policy more closely to ensure this.
24. Teachers and support staff work well together as a team and take a pride in their pupils' achievements. This is particularly evident in the high quality of displayed pupils' work which contributes positively to the pupils' self-esteem, creates an aesthetically pleasing and stimulating

learning environment and enhances learning. Pupils make good or very good progress because of the high expectations of the staff, the provision of a broad, balanced and stimulating curriculum and their own hard work, very good behaviour and excellent attitudes to learning.

The curriculum taught throughout the school is broad, balanced, stimulating and rich and meets the needs of the pupils very well, particularly in the specialist teaching for older pupils.

25. The school has continued to improve its curriculum provision since the last inspection and this is now very good at all stages and is a significant strength. The weaknesses identified in the provision for geography in the previous report have been improved well and resources and provision for the subject are now appropriate. The school provides a particularly broad, relevant and stimulating curriculum which offers very good opportunities for pupils to extend their learning and is extremely strong in the creative arts. The school also meets fully the requirements of the National Curriculum and provides additional teaching, for example, in Italian lessons and specialist instrumental tuition. The youngest children are well provided for by a curriculum which meets their developmental and emotional needs as well as covering the requirements of the Foundation Stage of learning. There are good facilities for outdoor learning and the staff use both play situations and direct adult teaching well to allow the children to develop within a context that is interesting and stimulating. Very good attention is also paid to the development of children's social and emotional growth and learning skills.
26. The strategies for literacy and numeracy are embedded well into the work of the school and national developments in the teaching of science and information and communication technology have been adopted well also. Resources have been significantly enhanced to support these initiatives, for example, in the good quality of English and mathematics resources, the recently updated library, the outside pond area and in the dedicated and well equipped science room and computer suite.
27. A particular strength of the curriculum is the way in which a specialist curriculum, involving teachers teaching classes other than their own, has been developed since the headteacher's appointment. The inspectors looked particularly at this aspect of the provision at the request of the school and found high quality provision and extension work across a wide range of subjects. Particularly good lessons were seen in extending mathematics work in Years 4 and 5 and in teaching art and design and drama to Year 6. The particular strength of these lessons was that they were taught by specialists with high levels of expertise and enthusiasm and that their high expectations extended pupils' achievement far beyond what might be normally expected, for example, in the expectations of pupils' skills in ceramic work when producing beautifully executed and sensitive depictions of the school in the clay tiles being made. The drama lesson also showed particularly good confidence in pupils' abilities and introduced pupils to the annual school performance of a Shakespeare play, in this case 'A Midsummer Night's Dream', with a musical score. This also extended pupils' understanding of the wide range of literature and the challenges of live performance and brought together a range of creative arts.
28. This breadth of provision is also effective in including the needs of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, pupils with English as an additional language, most of whom are very competent in English and their home languages, and higher attainers and gifted and talented pupils. Extension activities for the highest attainers allow them to work at an appropriate pace and there are high expectations of these pupils which encourage their achievement, including Level 6 attainment in science and mathematics last year and other aspirations for potential Level 6 pupils this year. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and the curriculum is modified when appropriate to ensure that they are included and that the targets outlined in their individual plans are met. There is good support from teachers, support assistants and specialist external support for those with more specific needs.
29. Pupils' learning and their social development is enriched through a good range of activities outside school time, which is very appropriate for the ages of the pupils. Current activities include

recorder groups, orchestra, French, dance club, choir, drama club, chess, kwik cricket, premier soccer, and Saturday football. There is also an after-school study club, a weekend drama club organised by an independent provider and on-going instrumental tuition from the Haringay Music Scheme. The school arranges residential visits for pupils in Years 4 and 6, and a variety of visits out and visitors into school extend the breadth of provision. There is also very good emphasis on pupils' personal development through the provision for their personal, social and health education and through class discussions in 'circle' time. During some lunchtimes there is a school council meeting in which pupils discuss issues relevant to school improvement and their own learning. Currently the school council is arranging sponsored fund raising to buy additional playground equipment.

30. There is wide cultural diversity within the school population and among the staff, with many different races and nationalities represented. The school community is harmonious and all are treated with respect, their diversity being valued and celebrated. Good emphasis is placed on cultural development, particularly in English, art and design, music and religious education and in resources and displays which reflect our multi-racial society. This has improved since the last inspection.

The pupils' attitudes to and enthusiasm for school are excellent and their behaviour is very good.

31. The pupils' attitudes and behaviour have an immediate impact on any visitor to the school and are one of its major strengths. The previous inspection also found that pupils' attitudes and behaviour were very good and that they were a strength of the school. There has been further improvement since then, in that pupils' attitudes are now excellent and their very good behaviour has been well maintained. These factors make a major contribution to pupils' very good learning and their particularly good achievement, the very good teaching and high expectations having a major impact on all aspects of pupils' development.
32. The youngest children in the nursery and reception classes show a great curiosity and interest in everything that is going on around them and are encouraged to discuss their experiences and views from a very early stage, which further encourages their enthusiasm. For example, children in the nursery had planted seeds and were very keen to describe their seeds' progress as well as commenting on those of other children. The teacher gave the children good time to talk and discuss and very skilfully steered the children's enthusiasm into good learning opportunities. All staff, including the very experienced nursery nurses, make a major contribution to the younger children's very good attitudes and developing learning skills.
33. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 are also very interested, enthusiastic and willing to participate and do not miss any opportunity to comment on and discuss things they have observed, thought or experienced. This is always done in a refreshingly polite and sociable way and they are keen to elicit the views of visitors, including the inspection team, and to explain what they have done, with great pride in their own and others' achievements. They are generous and kindly with others and during the inspector's visit were unfailingly polite and helpful in a very natural and unforced way. These qualities have a major impact on their learning as they encompass a love of new ideas and concepts, interest in challenging tasks and great confidence in approaching new work and utilising their existing skills and knowledge in new learning. The very good behaviour seen both in lessons and at playtimes and lunchtimes is a reflection of high expectations from all adults in the school, and the respect and care shown by the pupils in their treatment of property and the concerns and feelings of others. It is also of great credit to the parents of the pupils who are very interested in their children's learning and make great efforts to encourage their enthusiasm and participation.

The standard of accommodation, both inside and outdoor is particularly good and is very well maintained and improved.

34. St Michael's celebrates its 150th anniversary this summer and occupies a site close to the historic village centre in Highgate and covering almost three acres of land, with extensive fields, a conservation area and pond and hard surface play areas for older and younger pupils, with well equipped outside play areas for the nursery and reception children. The school grounds adjoin the grounds of a local independent school and a good relationship exists between the schools with some reciprocal sharing of facilities, such as the other school's swimming pool, which benefits both institutions. On the site is the original Grade 11 listed school building, a modern building in which Years 3 to 6 are taught, an administrative building and various other buildings including a pavilion. The school and grounds have been extensively refurbished over the last four years, which was a big undertaking for the school and the Diocese, due to the listed status of part of the building and the high cost of maintaining and improving the extensive outside areas. Part of this area forms a nature trail with a fenced off pond area which is home to many species of plants, trees, birds and small creatures. Overall, the accommodation and outside areas provide an excellent resource for pupils' learning and have an impact on their very good achievement and standards of work.
35. These major improvements to the school's facilities and buildings were funded by the school budget augmented by contributions from the London Diocesan Board, many parents and the St. Michael's School Association. Effort, time and commitment came from all sections of the school community. The school has a school grounds group which meets monthly to coordinate activities and arrange fund-raising events. This group also organises a half-termly school grounds Saturday, when all are invited to help with the care and maintenance of the grounds.
36. The school now offers excellent accommodation, which is particularly well maintained and cared for. The vision and strong leadership of the headteacher and governors and the high levels of support received from the parents and staff are key factors in bringing about this improvement. The site manager and cleaning and maintenance staff keep the building in very good condition and are vigilant in addressing concerns quickly. The governors are also very conscious of the need to ensure that the extensive site is safe and secure. A particular concern of the school is the supervision of older pupils in the grassed areas during lunchtimes, with the school constantly trying to recruit additional supervisors, but with little success.
37. Recent improvements to the school's facilities include a well equipped and dedicated science room, a well furnished computer suite, a refurbished and restocked library, extended outdoor learning facilities for the youngest children in the reception classes and the nursery and improvement in the overall learning resources of the school. As well as the computer suite, there are appropriate numbers of computers within classrooms to ensure that there is easy and immediate access for pupils also. There is a newly formed administration area, attractive medical room and very pleasant staffroom and work area in the original headteacher's house. The decorative order of the school is good and this is enhanced by informative and attractive displays of pupils' work to provide a stimulating and aesthetically pleasing learning environment. For example, in one hall there is a large and beautiful wall hanging, which was made for the Millennium celebrations and which represents the hard and high quality work of many pupils.
38. The exceptional nature and high quality of the building and resources are a great benefit to the pupils in their time at the school. They also represent a significant budgetary and administrative cost to the school in the constant maintenance and up-keep required, and this challenge is very well managed.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

39. The inspection identified no issues of substantial importance for the school to improve further. Any minor weakness have already been identified by the school for improvement.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	25
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	12

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	5	15	4	0	0	0
Percentage	4	20	60	16	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. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents four percentage points.

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)	25	408
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0	19

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	12
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	7	67

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	27

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	19
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	32

Attendance 2000/2001

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.0
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.2
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
	2001	28	31	59

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	25	25	25
	Girls	24	27	28
	Total	49	52	53
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83 (90)	88 (92)	90 (93)
	National	85 (84)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	24	24	25
	Girls	25	27	29
	Total	49	51	54
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83 (85)	86 (90)	92 (95)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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
	2001	28	32	60

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	26	25	28
	Girls	30	28	32
	Total	56	53	60
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	93 (94)	88 (90)	100 (96)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	24	24	26
	Girls	31	27	30
	Total	55	51	56
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	92 (81)	85 (90)	93 (92)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	12
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	11
Indian	4
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	3
White	339
Any other minority ethnic group	37

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	18.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.5
Average class size	29

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	20
Total aggregate hours worked per week	418

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	28
Number of pupils per FTE adult	12.5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	7.6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	8.6
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	1	0

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

Financial information

Financial year	2001-2002
	£
Total income	1,240,505
Total expenditure	1,210,710
Expenditure per pupil	2,789
Balance brought forward from previous year	-785
Balance carried forward to next year	29,010

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	433
Number of questionnaires returned	140

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	61	34	5	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	46	41	9	1	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	46	51	3	1	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	28	44	18	8	2
The teaching is good.	53	39	6	1	1
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	37	42	17	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	46	31	14	9	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	38	51	8	1	1
The school works closely with parents.	36	33	19	11	1
The school is well led and managed.	35	43	8	6	9
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	51	39	2	1	7
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	27	42	17	8	6