



St Michael's Catholic Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 104377
LEA Wolverhampton
Inspection number 277143
Inspection dates 30 November 2005 to 1 December 2005
Reporting inspector David Cox RISP

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Telford Gardens
School category	Voluntary aided		Merry Hill
Age range of pupils	3 to 11		Wolverhampton, West Midlands WV3 7LE
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01902 556368
Number on roll	277	Fax number	01902 556370
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mrs Rosalie Watkins
Date of previous inspection	6 November 2000	Headteacher	Mrs Catherine Williams

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Michael's Catholic Primary School is a larger than average primary school, situated in Wolverhampton. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds although there are a small number from minority ethnic heritages. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is half the national average. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities is broadly average.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

St Michael's Catholic Primary School provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. The school's view of its effectiveness as good is not supported by the inspection evidence. This is because the school's evaluation of its performance is not accurate enough. Good provision in the nursery and reception ensures children make good progress, with most exceeding the goals they are expected to reach by Year 1. Pupils make satisfactory progress and attain average standards by the end of Year 6. The school has correctly identified that there is a need to raise the standards reached by boys in Years 1 and 2 and to improve the achievement of boys by Year 6. Pupils' standards in information and communication technology (ICT) are below average because the use of ICT across the school is inconsistent. The school is already taking steps to further improve teaching and learning in ICT. Teaching is good in the nursery and reception classes and satisfactory throughout the rest of the school. The pupils are well cared for and safe, and as a result they enjoy their time at school. Pupils develop good personal skills. The quality of leadership and management is satisfactory. The school has addressed most of the issues identified in the last inspection report and has satisfactory capacity to improve further. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise boys' standards and improve their achievement to match that of the girls.
- Use ICT more consistently to develop pupils' skills, improve learning and raise standards.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are average and pupils' achievement is satisfactory by the time they leave school in Year 6. When children start school most have the skills and knowledge typical of three-year-olds. During their time in the nursery and reception, children make good progress, with many exceeding the expected goals for learning by the end of reception. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2 so that by the end of Year 2, standards are above average. By Year 6, pupils' standards are average in English, mathematics and science. These pupils entered Year 3 with broadly average standards and their achievement is satisfactory. However, the ICT skills of the younger pupils are below average because, as recognised by the school's improvement plan, the use of ICT across the school is inconsistent.

Whilst there are no significant differences in the achievement of the different groups of pupils represented in the school, the school has correctly identified that the attainment and achievement of the boys compared with the girls is an area for improvement. The school has started to take action to remedy this difference. The school sets realistic targets for improvement and normally meets these.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are happy to come to school because they feel safe, well cared for and enjoy their lessons and other activities. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils show respect for others and are sensitive to the needs of others less fortunate than themselves. While they have a satisfactory understanding of world faiths, not enough is done to develop their awareness of other races and cultures. The school gives pupils clear guidance on how to behave. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good, and pupils report that there is very little bullying. Pupils say that the school has helped them become 'more responsible' and 'more sensible and reliable'. Pupils' enjoyment of school means that most attend regularly. Attendance overall is broadly average and is steadily improving.

Pupils are learning to adopt healthy lifestyles. Personal and social education lessons make a positive contribution to developing their understanding of how to lead a healthy and safe life. They understand the need to eat healthy foods and benefit from the opportunities to take part in a range of sports activities.

The school council is providing pupils with a basic understanding of citizenship, and rights and responsibilities. Although in its infancy, the council has already generated some positive suggestions to improve the school environment, and pupils feel their views are listened to and respected. Pupils make a good contribution to the wider community through charity work and taking part in local events, recently achieving success in a local choral competition. They develop the skills to stand them in good stead in the next stage of their education, and in their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and have some good features. As a result, pupils are making satisfactory progress. Teaching and learning in the nursery and reception are good. Teachers are knowledgeable about the curriculum for young children and provide interesting activities that meet their needs. Although the quality of teaching and learning throughout the rest of the school is satisfactory, there are examples of good and outstanding teaching. The most effective teaching ensures pupils are well managed and tasks are interesting. For example, in a Year 1 lesson, the teacher engaged the pupils in many different activities. Pupils were highly motivated by the 'word bingo' activity and quickly grasped the idea of how words are formed by different letters of the alphabet.

When teaching is less effective but still satisfactory, teachers do not provide tasks that sustain boys' concentration enough. As a result, they do not make enough progress. The teachers' use of ICT to aid pupils' learning is inconsistent. When good, it motivates pupils well. However, the school does not always plan the most effective

way of using the ICT facilities. For example, in one lesson, half the class worked on the computers and the other half practised their handwriting skills, with insufficient time being allowed for both activities. This resulted in both groups not making enough progress with either of the activities.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The school provides pupils with a satisfactory curriculum. It includes the full range of subjects, including personal, social and health education, which supports their personal development well. The wide range of stimulating activities and imaginative use of resources in the nursery and the reception curriculum enable children to achieve well. In Years 1 to 6, the numeracy and literacy strategies are tailored effectively to pupils' needs. The 'Maths in Motion' scheme engages the enthusiasm of pupils in Year 6 in solving problems. Science, geography and history benefit from first-hand experiences such as learning about life in a Victorian classroom. The school is correct to identify that it needs to improve the provision for gifted and talented pupils. Pupils' experience of ICT varies considerably as the use of ICT across the school is not yet embedded fully. A good range of extra-curricular activities is provided for pupils. Pupils are keen to participate in the activities developed through the 'Extended Schools Project'. They understand how to keep themselves healthy through physical education, good diets and a 'walk to school' week.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The overall level of care is good, particularly that for pupils' personal development. Pupils from all backgrounds are valued and known well to staff who are responsive to their needs, and help them to develop their self-esteem. Pupils trust their teachers and say they would turn to them if they had a problem. Child protection procedures are clear, known and understood by all members of staff. Staff are vigilant in watching over, caring for and supporting children. Well-planned health and safety, including risk assessment procedures, are rigorously implemented. The good quality of care and support is recognised by parents, with a good number praising the way in which the school has helped to develop their children's confidence.

Standards are assessed regularly, and although the systems for tracking pupils' progress are thorough, the information gathered is not always used effectively to move pupils forward in their learning. While some pupils are aware of their personal targets for improvement, others are less certain of the steps they should take to do better. Recent changes to the school's provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are ensuring that those at risk are identified earlier and appropriate strategies put in place to support them. These are at an early stage and have yet to be consistently implemented in all classes. Where pupils have specific needs, the school works successfully with outside agencies to support them.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The headteacher has a good grasp of the strengths and areas that need to be improved and is fully committed to bringing these improvements about. The school development plan is satisfactory and identifies the most important areas for development such as improving attainment in ICT. Pupils' standards and their level of attendance have been rising steadily since 2001 and the school has demonstrated a satisfactory capacity to improve. Monitoring systems to identify strengths and weaknesses in teaching are in place and further developments are planned. However, at present the outcomes of lesson observations are not evaluated rigorously enough to bring about the required improvements in teaching and learning. Evidence from the school's own observations indicates that the evaluation of the teaching is not linked closely enough to the progress that the pupils make. The school is successful in ensuring that all pupils are treated equally well.

The school's evaluation of its work provides a detailed picture of the school. However, the judgements reached by the school are often rather generous as the achievement of pupils is graded as good when it is actually satisfactory.

Governors hold the school to account and make sure all statutory requirements are met. However, their role in monitoring the school's work is not rigorous enough. Parents speak highly of the school and comment on how proud they are of it. Their views are sought through parental surveys and they feel part of the decision making process.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	2	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	3	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

St Michael's Catholic Primary School Telford Gardens Merry Hill Wolverhampton West Midlands
WV3 7LE

1 December 2005

Dear Pupils

As you know, we visited your school recently to find out how well the school is doing. We would like to thank you for looking after us so well. Thank you also for talking to us about your school, the work you have done and how much you enjoy coming to school. Particular thanks goes to the choir for their excellent performance which the inspectors enjoyed.

What we liked about your school

- Your school is a healthy and safe place to be.
- Many of the younger children do well and get off to a good start.
- You come to school regularly, enjoy your lessons and behave well.
- Teachers and other staff in the school look after you well.
- The headteacher is making sure that you have lots of extra activities to do before school, at lunchtime and after school and you are encouraged to make full use of these opportunities.
- The teachers who run your school know what it does well and what needs to get even better.

What we have asked your school to do now:

- Help boys to reach higher standards.
- Help you to improve your standards in ICT.

Yours sincerely

David Cox and the inspection team