



St Michael's Church of England Primary School, Stoke Gifford

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 109228
LEA South Gloucestershire
Inspection number 278159
Inspection dates 13 October 2005 to 14 October 2005
Reporting inspector Helen Barter RISP

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Ratcliffe Drive
School category	Voluntary controlled		Stoke Gifford
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Bristol BS34 8SG
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01454 866781
Number on roll	584	Fax number	01454 866781
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr P Day
Date of previous inspection	27 November 2000	Headteacher	Mr Mark Freeman

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors.

Description of the school

This is the largest primary school in South Gloucestershire. Most pupils live in its immediate neighbourhood and have attended nursery or pre-school groups before starting in Reception. Most pupils are of White British heritage although there are small groups from other ethnic backgrounds. A very small number speak English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is average. The school has been awarded Healthy Schools and Investors in People status.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

The school judges itself to be good. Inspectors find that it is satisfactory but clearly improving. In 2001 and 2002, there was a decline in standards and pupils were underachieving. The headteacher's good leadership and determination to improve the school has reversed the trend so that standards are similar to those at the last inspection. Parents value highly the headteacher's hard work to improve the school, as do pupils, who like school and enjoy their work. The school takes good care of pupils and prepares them well for life ahead.

Pupils' progress, overall, is satisfactory. Good provision in Reception enables most children to exceed the goals they are expected to achieve. They continue this good progress through Years 1 and 2 and standards in reading, writing and mathematics are above average. In Years 3 to 6, pupils make satisfactory progress although the rates of progress vary because of differences in the quality of teaching, which is satisfactory overall. Standards remain generally above average by the end of Year 6 although better in mathematics and science than in English. Outstanding teaching and support help pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities to achieve very well.

The school's improvement plan demonstrates its ability to analyse data and set targets aimed at raising standards. The senior leadership team is developing good monitoring processes to evaluate the school's performance but has not yet been successful in improving inconsistencies in teaching and pupils' achievement. Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory, especially in relation to raising standards. Improvement has significantly gathered pace since the arrival of the headteacher. The school gives satisfactory value for money and is in a sound position to improve further.

What the school should do to improve further

- improve the quality of teaching and learning by more rigorous checking by the senior leadership team so that all groups of pupils achieve well
- develop the use of precise targets so that pupils know what to do next to improve.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Children start school in Reception with slightly above average attainment. They make good progress and nearly all meet their expected goals. Pupils continue this good progress in Years 1 and 2 and attain above average standards. All pupils achieve well although boys do better in mathematics and girls do better in reading and writing.

Pupils do not sustain this good rate of progress between Years 3 and 6. Achievement is satisfactory overall but varies between different groups of pupils. In writing, more able pupils do not make sufficient progress and in mathematics it is the lower and middle ability pupils who do not do well enough. It is these pupils who do not meet the challenging targets set for them by the school. In recent years, standards have also varied. For example, in 2004 the proportion of pupils attaining the higher Level

5 in English in Year 6 was exceptional whereas in 2005 these high levels have not been maintained. Also, in the last two years, standards in science have risen to above the national average with all pupils achieving well, particularly the large number achieving the higher Level 5.

Throughout the school, pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities achieve very well because they receive outstanding support.

Grade: 3

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils are very satisfied with the school. They have positive attitudes and work well. Behaviour is good although outdoor play can be boisterous if not supervised well. Children's personal and social development in the Reception classes is good. One child said, "It's fun here, just like playgroup only you learn to read and write!" Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. In lessons and assemblies, pupils have good time for reflection. Pupils understand that anti-social behaviour towards others is unacceptable. They take responsibility well in the school council and the classroom. The language and cultural programme develops pupils' cultural understanding well.

Pupils have outstanding appreciation of the need for a healthy lifestyle. They run a healthy tuck shop, greatly enjoy sport in and out of school and most walk or scooter to school daily. Good participation in clubs, music and performances as well as good attendance are strong indicators of pupils' enjoyment of learning. Pupils' contribution to the community through participation in church, business and community events, as well as their work caring for the environment in the Green Team, is outstanding. Parents describe the school as "a realistic place which gives children very good preparation for life".

Grade: 2

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Good teaching in the Reception classes enables children to learn well. Throughout the school, strengths in teaching include teachers' confident use of interactive whiteboards to make lessons more interesting. Marking is usually helpful to pupils. For older pupils particularly, it offers good ideas for improving the content and structure of their work. However, the quality of this guidance is not consistent throughout the school.

Teachers do not always ensure that the needs of the full range of pupils' abilities are provided for. Consequently, it is often the case that more able pupils do not receive enough challenge in their written work and lower and average groups do not receive

sufficient support in mathematics. These pupils do not achieve as well as they might. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities receive excellent support when working in small groups and in class. Teaching excites and motivates them to learn and achieve well. Pupils are heard to say "Ah! This is fun!" as they confidently use the interactive whiteboard to demonstrate their knowledge of sounds. Over time, they frequently match the attainment of their peers.

Grade: 3

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum meets the needs of pupils satisfactorily and is effective in supporting pupils' personal development, including their health and safety awareness. Provision for pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is outstanding because it is focused on ensuring that pupils gain basic skills while engaging their enthusiasm and interest to learn. The programme for music and the arts is strong and well supported by a wide range of visits and visitors.

Links between different subjects have been identified but these are not yet fully developed. Provision for literacy and numeracy is satisfactory. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used effectively in other subjects, for example, using a design program to create pictures in the style of Mondrian. Pupils greatly enjoy the good range of lunchtime and after-school clubs. Strong links with the Church and the local community, including local businesses, enhance pupils' learning. A large number of volunteers regularly listen to pupils read. Grade: 3

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

The school cares well for pupils. Good attention is paid to their health and safety and well-being. The importance of healthy eating and taking exercise is promoted extremely well. Pupils are confident that there is always an adult to turn to if they need help or support. Child protection procedures are firmly established and well known by staff. There are good procedures to deal with any bullying or racism should it occur.

Pupils' academic development is satisfactorily monitored. However, targets set are not yet sufficiently precise and individual for them to raise pupils' achievement. In Years 5 and 6 pupils have begun to set their own targets and demonstrate understanding of what they need to do next to improve but this is not yet happening across the school. Pupils' personal development is monitored well and they receive good guidance. The school works very well with parents and uses professional medical expertise to support pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities.

Grade: 2

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The headteacher's leadership is a considerable strength. He has high aspirations for the school, is managing the pace of change well and is determined to raise standards through rigorous systems to check how well pupils are taught and achieving. As a result, standards have improved although there remain variations in the achievement of different groups of pupils.

The lead given by senior managers and subject leaders is variable. In science, the effective checking of teaching and learning has resulted in marked improvement in pupils' standards and achievement. However, new English and mathematics subject leaders have not yet developed this process sufficiently well to ensure that all groups of pupils achieve as well as they can. The leadership of the special educational needs coordinator is outstanding in ensuring that the needs of pupils with learning difficulties or disabilities are met.

The governing body is supportive and knows what needs to improve through their reviews of the school's work and consultations with parents and pupils. The school's ability to know its strengths and weaknesses well has led to improvements, particularly in science. Equality of opportunity is well promoted although it does not yet satisfactorily address all pupils' achievements. The school manages its finances well and uses staff and resources effectively. The school is in a sound position to improve further.

Grade: 3

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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	2	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	2	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	2	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	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1	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	3	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	2	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 Church of England Primary School Ratcliffe Drive Stoke Gifford Bristol BS34 8SG

13th October 2005

Dear Children,

Thank you for making us welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you and hearing about the lessons and activities that you like. These are some of the things that we think are particularly good about your school:

you behave well, work hard and are happy at school

you like all the clubs that teachers run for you, especially gym and football

we are extremely impressed that many of you walk or use scooters to come to school

you participate very well in lots of community activities, such as recycling

you like the way teachers care for you if you are upset or not well

you like lessons, such as science, that have fun and interesting activities to help you learn

we think your headteacher knows what to do to help you learn even better.

To improve your school even more, we have asked your school to:

make sure that all of you learn as well as you can in every subject, but especially in English and mathematics

help you to understand what you need to do next by giving each of you targets to work towards.

Thank you again for being so helpful to us during the inspection. We wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Helen Barter Lead Inspector