



St Michael's Easthampstead CofE Voluntary Aided Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 110010
Local Authority Bracknell Forest
Inspection number 278343
Inspection dates 11–12 December 2006
Reporting inspector John Earish

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Crowthorne Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Easthampstead
Age range of pupils	4–11		Bracknell RG12 7EH
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01344 420878
Number on roll (school)	240	Fax number	01344 300097
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair	Mr S Ridgeon
		Headteacher	Mr S R Litson
Date of previous school inspection	9 October 2000		

Age group 4–11	Inspection dates 11–12 December 2006	Inspection number 278343
--------------------------	--	------------------------------------

© Crown copyright 2006

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

This average sized school is situated in Easthampstead near Bracknell, where social circumstances are more favourable than average. The school serves families from a wide variety of social backgrounds. It is oversubscribed. Almost all pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is below the national average. When children start school, their skills and abilities are similar to those expected of four year olds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is similar to that found nationally.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

St Michael's is a good school with outstanding features. More than one parent commented that, 'St Michael's is a fantastic school where you feel part of a large family'. Pupils' personal development and their care and well being are outstanding. They enjoy coming to school and rapidly acquire the skills to become confident learners. Parents are overwhelmingly supportive. One wrote to express admiration at the commitment shown by staff and added that, 'My children have excellent opportunities for social and emotional development, as well as making good academic progress'.

Standards are above average by the time pupils leave school. Pupils achieve well because they are well taught and have a good range of interesting and challenging tasks which inspire them to work hard. However, some higher attaining pupils in Key Stage 1 are making less consistent progress. Action has been taken to address this weakness. Target setting in English and mathematics is enabling pupils to fully understand how much progress they are making and what they must do to improve. This includes children in the Foundation Stage who collect 'smiley faces' to show how well they are working. Pupils with learning difficulties make good progress and enjoy learning. As one parent wrote, 'my son's difficulties have been overcome by the guidance of his teachers and both he and I are very happy with all aspects of school life'.

Good achievement is rooted in the good quality of the teaching and the outstanding curriculum that capture pupils' enthusiasm and interest. There are very many opportunities for children to develop their curiosity and creativity through, for example, modern foreign languages, activity weeks, sports clubs and residential visits which add greatly to the excitement of learning. This has a very positive effect on pupils' motivation and contributes strongly to their outstanding personal development and relationships. However, opportunities for pupils to learn independently are not as well developed in all lessons.

Leadership and management are good. Very effective leadership by the headteacher gives a clear direction to the work of the school. He has maintained a strong sense of community and team work so that all adults are working purposefully to improve the achievement of all pupils. The senior management team and subject coordinators are working well in partnership to evaluate the school's performance. However, their focus for these activities could be sharper, for example, by concentrating on specific groups such as higher attaining boys at Key Stage 1. Good provision in the Foundation Stage helps young children settle quickly and effortlessly into school life. This is a good preparation for future life and learning.

Given the good progress made since the last inspection and the accurate, if sometimes generous, self-evaluation, there is good capacity to secure further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- Build on the good start at raising the levels of challenge for higher attaining pupils in Key Stage 1.

- Sharpen the focus of monitoring activities to improve the consistency of pupils' progress, especially in Key Stage 1.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Achievement is good overall. Children start school with skills and abilities that are similar to those expected of four year olds. They make good progress in all areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum and by the end of the Reception year most have achieved the standards expected for their age.

Standards are above average by the time pupils leave school. Standards have improved again this year with good numbers of able children reaching higher levels. The value added to pupils' attainment between Year 2 and Year 6 is significantly above average. Most pupils are making good progress and achieving well. However, some higher attaining pupils in Key Stage 1 are making less consistent progress. Those pupils with statements of special educational need are well supported and make good progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils take great pride in their school and talk with enthusiasm about how teachers make learning fun. As one pupil said of their teachers, 'they show us respect and we do the same'. Attendance is well above average because pupils want to come to school. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. Older pupils willingly take on responsibilities to ensure the smooth running of the school through, for example, the 'buddy system' and the school council. As a result, they have a very well developed sense of social responsibility and are very aware of the needs of others in the wider world. As one parents noted 'the school is turning my children into mature, well-rounded people'.

Pupils feel safe at school and have a very well developed understanding of how to stay healthy, by eating sensibly and staying fit. They thoroughly enjoy and appreciate the numerous clubs the school offers. Behaviour is good and the great majority of pupils show respect for the interests and feelings of others. They are developing rapidly the necessary academic and social skills that will help them to become good citizens in the future.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching is effective because teachers know pupils well, have high expectations of them and plan work that matches their individual needs and capabilities. They use questioning skills well to discover the full extent of pupils' understanding. They use

these responses successfully to consolidate previous learning, clarify new ideas and to move pupils on to more challenging work. However, the level of challenge for some higher attaining pupils in Key Stage 1 could be higher. In the very best lessons teachers' provide very good opportunities for pupils to learn independently and this captures their interest and imagination so they want to learn. However, these opportunities are not as well developed in a few lessons and progress is not as rapid. Teachers make good use of a variety of teaching styles and methods that embrace the new technologies well to make learning immediate and exciting.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 1

The curriculum is outstanding and is enriched with a splendid range of additional activities which pupils thoroughly enjoy. A particular strength is the provision for sport, and pupils achieve notable success in competition against other schools. Opportunities to learn French and German and to participate in residential visits add greatly to the excitement of learning. The curriculum meets pupils' needs very well and includes very good support programmes to boost the progress of pupils who need extra help. The Foundation Stage curriculum covers all the areas of learning and provides children with a good start to their education. Throughout the school there is a strong focus on the development of pupils' skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. Pupils' personal development is promoted exceptionally well through teaching about relationships and is being extended through new programmes of study based on citizenship. The school draws on the expertise of outside agencies very well to support this work. Within the school there is a high commitment to include all pupils in all activities.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

The overwhelming majority of parents believe the school provides outstanding care, guidance and support. A close check is kept on pupils' well-being and they are taught how to take care of themselves and how to make healthy and safe choices. Health and safety and child protection procedures are robust and are reviewed regularly. Pupils have confidence in the staff and the school. They say they feel safe from bullying and know that any worries are quickly dealt with. Pupils particularly appreciate the opportunities to work towards the challenging targets that are set for them. These are shared with parents so that they can support the work of the school and their child's learning. Action has been taken to ensure that targets for some of the higher attaining pupils in Key Stage 1 are suitably challenging. Teachers are extremely good at explaining what pupils must do to improve their work. For example, one of the oldest pupils showed a remarkably clear understanding of what was needed to achieve a Level 4 and a level 5 in mathematics by the time she left the school. This has a very positive effect on pupils' self-esteem, determination, and confidence as learners.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The outstanding feature of leadership and management is the drive and direction provided by the head teacher. The leadership team provide strong and clear guidance to move the school forward. Their work has contributed significantly to the continued rise in standards by the end of Year 6. The school's performance is carefully monitored and evaluated. A clear and shared vision for improvement is based on rigorous self-evaluation. This is translated into a comprehensive improvement plan which is reviewed regularly. In most respects the school has been successful in reaching these goals. However, the monitoring by subject leaders is not as focused as it might be. The governors have reviewed their role and are now increasingly effective in steering the development of the school and challenging its effectiveness. They are playing an expanding role in the school's well established cycle of self review.

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk.

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	-----------------------

Overall effectiveness

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

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Thank you very much for making us so welcome when we visited your school recently. We were really impressed with your friendliness and good behaviour and your sensible and helpful attitudes towards each other.

Here are some of the good things we found about your school:

- your behaviour is good, and you told us that you really enjoy school and we could see that you do!
- all the adults work hard to make sure that the school is safe and you are well cared for
- you are taught well, and when you find work hard you are given the right sort of help
- you are very knowledgeable about staying safe and how to live healthily
- you enjoy taking on responsibility such as being playground buddies and representing your classmates on the school council.

We think that you are given a good education which prepares you well for the next stage of your learning. To make it even better, however, we are asking your teachers to make the work even more challenging, especially for the younger pupils. Your headteacher also wants the teachers to make sure that everyone is as successful as possible.

You can all help by continuing to work hard and to meet the targets set for you.

With best wishes,

John Earish

Lead Inspector