



St Michael's CofE Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 110019
LEA Windsor and Maidenhead LEA
Inspection number 278347
Inspection dates 11 July 2006 to 12 July 2006
Reporting inspector Keith Williams AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	School Road
School category	Voluntary aided		Sunninghill
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		SL5 7AD
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01344 622962
Number on roll	208	Fax number	01344 873763
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Mr Gerald Hyder
Date of previous inspection	4 October 1999	Headteacher	Mrs V J Woods

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Michael's is a smaller than average school. Most pupils are of White British heritage, while the remainder are from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. An average proportion of pupils speak English as an additional language, although few are at the early stages of learning the language. The proportion identified with learning difficulties, or with a statement of special educational needs, is similar to that found in most schools. A small proportion of pupils is eligible for free school meals.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

Inspectors confirm the school's view that it provides a good standard of education and gives good value for money. The school is successful because it is well led and managed, teaching is good and pupils enjoy school and are eager to learn.

Given their starting points, most pupils make good progress, achieve well and reach above average standards. They make particularly good progress in English, where standards are significantly above those expected. In particular, staff have worked successfully to improve pupils' writing. The school provides an interesting and varied curriculum and offers a good range of activities to enrich it. Teachers plan work that meets the pupils' differing needs. They mark conscientiously, but do not always give pupils sufficient feedback on how well they are doing and how they might improve.

Pupils' personal development is good and their moral and social development is outstanding. They have an excellent awareness of the importance of healthy lifestyles and how to stay safe. Children in Reception are well provided for and achieve well. Across the school, pupils' behaviour is exemplary and this has a significant impact on the progress they make.

Standards are higher than at the time of the last inspection and the school leaders show they have the capacity to improve further. A close check is kept on pupils' progress in English and mathematics. Tests results are analysed thoroughly and areas for improvement are identified and tackled. The school has begun to record and monitor pupils' performance in other subjects, although this is not consistent and it is too soon for it to have had sufficient impact on their learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide better and more consistent guidance for pupils so they know how well they are doing and how they can improve
- Extend the arrangements for assessing and tracking pupils' progress to all subjects.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

When they first start school, pupils' attainment covers a wide range and varies from year-to-year but, overall, it is broadly average. Children get off to a good start in Reception because they are well taught and enjoy their learning. They achieve well so that most reach, and a few exceed, the goals expected of them. They make very good progress in communication, language and literacy.

This good progress continues in Years 1 to 6 and standards are above average by the time the pupils leave the school. This is reflected in the national test results, which are consistently above average in English, mathematics and science and, in some years, significantly so. The school sets, and pupils regularly meet, challenging targets. More able pupils do well and a good proportion in Year 6 reaches the higher levels. Pupils

with learning difficulties or special educational needs, and the few who are new to learning English, make good progress because they are well supported.

Standards in English are particularly high and pupils' achieve very well. The school has successfully worked to raise standards in writing. Standards in mathematics are above average and are rising. The school is determined that pupils' already good progress in this subject should match that found in English. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) have risen because of better provision and leadership and are now in line with what is expected.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. Excellent progress in their moral and social development contributes significantly to the school's harmonious, purposeful atmosphere. Pupils' behaviour is exemplary because they have a very strong sense of right and wrong and respond very well to the clear and well-understood expectations of staff. They make a good contribution to their local community. The range of cultural experiences provided for pupils has improved since the last inspection and their understanding of cultures other than their own is now satisfactory.

Pupils enjoy school, have positive attitudes and attendance levels are good. As one older pupil put it, 'I'm looking forward to my next school, but I will really miss St Michael's.' Most parents, too, are pleased with the way their children settle in, one saying, 'Moving to St Michael's is the best decision I've made for my child and I wish I had moved her sooner.'

Pupils have an excellent awareness of how to stay safe and healthy. They make healthy choices at lunchtime, play very well together and have a high regard for the safety of others. Pupils' good progress in the basic skills and rising standards in ICT mean that they are well prepared for their future economic well-being.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Good teaching has a positive impact on pupils' learning and personal development. Teachers take good account of pupils' differing needs and provide appropriate levels of challenge or support. Teaching assistants contribute well to the progress of pupils with learning difficulties or special educational needs. The few pupils who are at an early stage of learning English have good support so that they, too, achieve well. Children in the Reception class are taught well and soon settle into school routines and make good progress.

Pupils of all ages and ability work hard and are eager to learn although, occasionally, some become restless when asked to sit on the carpet for too long. Teachers make

sure that pupils know what they are expected to learn and keep a close check on their understanding, particularly those who have difficulty learning. In an outstanding lesson in Year 6, the teacher's excellent use of individual whiteboards and rapid-fire questioning enabled her to deal with misconceptions and extend pupils' understanding of prime factors.

Teachers mark work conscientiously, but the quality of feedback varies from class to class and individual targets for pupils are not routinely set. Consequently, pupils are not always sufficiently aware of how well they are doing and how they can improve. Pupils in Year 6, however, receive good feedback and have a clear understanding of their progress.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

A broad and balanced curriculum ensures that pupils experience an enjoyable and varied programme. The school has focussed strongly on the development of literacy and this, together with above average standards in mathematics, enables pupils to make good progress in other subjects and prepares them well for the future. Improvements in the planning for ICT have raised standards and pupils report with enthusiasm their enjoyment of the new technologies. Children in the Foundation Stage benefit from good planning that exposes them to all areas of learning.

A good range of activities, with a particular emphasis on sport and music, enhances the curriculum. Residential visits are enjoyed by older pupils and, in the summer term, younger pupils benefit significantly from the swimming pool funded by parents. Initiatives, such as the 'early bird' mathematics club, are helping to raise standards, particularly amongst those who lack confidence. The school works closely with other local schools and participates successfully in sporting events. Pupils benefit from very strong links with the local specialist sports college to which most transfer.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good. The school takes every step to secure pupils' health, safety and protection. Support for pupils' welfare is very strong and the moral and social guidance they are given contributes significantly to their progress. Those pupils with special educational needs, and the few who are at an early stage of learning English, are well supported. The guidance given to pupils to support their academic progress is satisfactory. Teachers know the children well, plan appropriate work and respond to their needs sensitively. However, the variability of feedback means that pupils' knowledge of their learning and how they can improve is sometimes limited. Pupils' progress in English and mathematics is monitored closely. New systems to assess and track their performance in other subjects are beginning to provide information to enhance the guidance pupils are given, but are not yet used with sufficient consistency.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher, deputy and governors provide good leadership. They have managed a period of unsettled staffing well and have ensured good improvement since the last inspection. Standards, including those in ICT, are higher and a closer check is now kept on teaching and learning. There is no complacency. Pupils' performance in the national tests is monitored closely and strengths and areas for development are identified and tackled. Consequently, the leadership team have an accurate view of the school's performance and what needs to improve and they make a significant contribution to the pupils' good standards, achievement and personal development. Given its track record, the school has the capacity to improve further.

Staff share responsibility for many aspects of the school's work. Effective leadership in the Foundation Stage contributes to the good start made by the youngest children. The well organised provision for pupils with special educational needs, and for those who are new to learning English, means that these pupils achieve well. Subject leaders have greater influence on their areas of responsibility although, in many subjects, the results of assessments are not available to help them to guide developments. Links with outside agencies are good and make a significant contribution to the pupils' development.

Most parents are very supportive of the school, some describing the staff as 'friendly and approachable' and describing the leadership as 'strong' and 'caring.' Most feel that their views are heard, although a few parents do not feel that sufficient account is taken of them. While inspectors found that consultation with parents is similar to that found in many schools, the school recognise parents' concerns and has suitable plans to deal with them.

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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?	2	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	2	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?	2	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2	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	1	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	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?	2	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2	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?	2	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	2	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	2	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

Pupils

I am writing to thank you for the very friendly way that you welcomed us to your school and to tell you about what we found out. We enjoyed talking to you and what you told us has given us a lot of helpful information.

Many of you told us how much you enjoy school and how well you think you are doing. We agree with you that yours is a good school and you are right to be proud of it. Your headteacher and teachers do a good job and you play your part by being so keen to learn. Your work is better than we see in many schools and you are doing particularly well in English. We are pleased to see that your writing has improved and many of you told us how much more confident you are in mathematics. We have asked your teachers to give you more information about how you can make your work even better and to keep a closer check on how you are doing in subjects like history, geography and music. The staff want you to do your best, but they also want you to be happy and safe. You help them with this because your behaviour in lessons and on the playground is excellent. This means that your teachers can get on with teaching you new and interesting things. You told us how much you like the meals at lunchtime and we were pleased to see so many of you make healthy choices and bring healthy food in your lunch boxes. You are very sensible around the school and this helps make it a very safe place.

We know that you will continue to work hard and we are sure that you will help your teachers to make your school even better. We enjoyed being in your school and wish you good luck for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Keith Williams

Lead Inspector