



# St Michael's Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School

## Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 115157  
**LEA** ESSEX LEA  
**Inspection number** 279529  
**Inspection dates** 25 May 2006 to 26 May 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Ms. Ruth Frith LI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary	<b>School address</b>	Maple Avenue
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		CM7 2NS
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4 to 11		
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01376 344866
<b>Number on roll</b>	409	<b>Fax number</b>	01376 550842
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs.Helen Hopkins
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	20 November 2000	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mr. Andrew Jones

<b>Age group</b> 4 to 11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 25 May 2006 - 26 May 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 279529
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

St Michael's is a large primary school where approximately a third of the places are reserved for those children whose families attend a local church. Pupils come from a range of socio-economic backgrounds. The percentage of pupils receiving free school meals is below the national average. Children's attainment on entry covers a wide range but overall is broadly average. The percentage of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is below average and seven children have a statement of special educational needs. These pupils have a wide range of learning difficulties and disabilities. Most children come from White British backgrounds with a small minority from various minority ethnic groups. Very few pupils learn English as an additional language.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## **Overall effectiveness of the school**

### **Grade: 2**

Inspectors agree with the school's self-evaluation that St Michael's is a good school. Academic and pastoral support for pupils is outstanding and this helps them to achieve well and make good progress. Recent developments in the Foundation Stage are improving the children's progress, and quality and standards here are excellent, particularly in relation to children's personal, social and emotional development. Standards last year for Year 6 pupils were only average. However, pupils are now making rapid progress and there is strong evidence to show that standards are once again rising. By Year 2, standards are above average in reading and mathematics but only broadly average in writing. Pupils' behaviour and attitudes are outstanding and make a positive contribution to their learning. Teaching and learning are good and, at times outstanding. Teachers have good knowledge of the subjects they teach and set work which matches the pupils' learning needs well. The curriculum and additional activities to enhance pupils' learning are good. The quality of leadership and management is good. The headteacher shows strong commitment to the school and a clear vision. He is well supported by the deputy headteacher, other staff and governors. School priorities for development are clear and areas of strength highlighted. These generally reflect the evidence gained through inspection and indicate a good system of school self-evaluation. However, the information gained from monitoring and evaluation is not always used well to further develop pupils' current effective progress. Good improvements have been made since the last inspection and the school has the capacity to improve further. It gives good value for money.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve standards in writing, particularly in Key Stage 1. - Ensure that the procedures to gather and analyse data continue to be used effectively to respond to pupils' needs and make sure that they progress as well as they can.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

The majority of pupils achieve well and make good progress. From broadly average starting points, results from the Year 6 national assessments last year indicate that pupils had generally made satisfactory progress over time and reached average standards. This is reflected in the current Year 6. However, because of the improvements in teaching and learning and the better use of data to target resources to support pupils, progress is now good. Information provided by the school shows that pupils in Years 4 and 5 are reaching standards above those expected for their age in English and mathematics and making at least good sustained progress. Some pupils, particularly in Year 6 have made outstanding progress this year. Pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 are in line to meet the realistic, yet challenging targets set. Results of the 2005 Year 2 national assessments indicate that pupils made good progress in reading and mathematics and reached above average standards from an average starting point. However, pupils'

progress in writing was only satisfactory and standards broadly average. Here, not enough pupils were reaching the higher Level 3 - a standard above that expected for their age. This is also reflected in the current Year 2 but there are signs of improvement. This is because the school has begun to focus more sharply on increasing opportunities for pupils to write at length, and developed the curriculum to more readily motivate boys. When children start at the school their level of knowledge and understanding is broadly average. Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress in all areas of learning so that by the time they enter Year 1 most have reached the goals expected for their age and some have achieved above this. Children with learning difficulties and disabilities achieve well because their needs are quickly identified and particularly good support provided. Similarly, those learning English as an additional language do well.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding. Pupils thoroughly enjoy school and this is reflected in their well above average attendance. Their attitudes to learning are very good. Relationships and behaviour are excellent and pupils find it easy to co-operate and collaborate, as well as work independently. Such aspects of pupils' development start with the youngest children and build successfully in successive years. Pupils from an early age develop confidence and talk easily. Overall pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are outstanding. They have a strong respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others as shown by the positive way they listen to each other, respond and ask questions. Pupils willingly take on responsibilities and are always keen to do their best. The strong support and interest of parents contributes significantly to pupils' positive attitudes to their lives and learning at school. Pupils' generally have high self-esteem. Pupils feel safe and follow the school routines well. They act sensibly and safely when at work and play. Pupils have an excellent understanding of how to adopt a healthy lifestyle through regular exercise and eating a range of good food. This reflects the particularly good work done by the school. Pupils' contribution to the community is effective. Good links with the local and wider community make a very positive difference to pupils' personal development. Pupils have plenty of opportunities to face new challenges, such as performing in front of a variety of audiences. Pupils are developing good skills which will help ensure personal future economic well-being.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

Teaching and learning are good. At times, teaching is outstanding. The school has recently introduced effective measures that focus closely on how pupils learn. These measures, coupled with the very good relationships between teachers and pupils, help to ensure that pupils are well motivated and interested in their learning. Teachers have

good knowledge of the subjects they teach and pupils benefit greatly from this knowledge. This is clearly seen in Year 5 when classes are taught by teachers working together, each focussing on their specialist area. When teaching is outstanding, lessons progress at a very good pace and pupils' interest and enthusiasm is captured and maintained, for example, in the teaching of French and in the Foundation Stage. Many teachers set work that matches pupils learning needs well. They ensure that pupils are fully aware of what is expected during lessons and have a clear picture of the progress they have made. Teachers also celebrate pupils' efforts and progress and provide them with helpful advice about how to improve their work. The thorough and detailed marking of pupils' work makes a significant contribution to this process. Sometimes, teachers do not present pupils with sufficiently challenging questions or ask them to explain the thinking behind the answers they give. At other times, the level of teachers' questioning challenges pupils well. That said, in some lessons, pupils are not given sufficient time to plan their answers to questions or given enough guidance about what is expected when they present their answers. Teachers make good use of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is broad and balanced and meets the needs of most pupils. The integration of pupils from all backgrounds is a strong feature throughout the school, for example, pupils from minority ethnic groups, those with learning difficulties and those with English as an additional language are all well supported and progress well. Consequently, pupils are prepared well for their future education. However, pupils do not often have opportunities to write at length and produce extended pieces of writing. The curriculum is enhanced by the provision of specialist teaching in French, a wide range of support and personal development groups. This is also enhanced through good quality extra-curricular activities, including a very wide range of equipment for use at break times. The curriculum is well organised and planned so that special themes are included which enhance pupils' understanding of specific topics whilst also maintaining good coverage of each subject. For example, a recent topic on mini-beasts involved an artist and an environmental scientist working in school to extend the effectiveness and range of pupils' learning, interest and enjoyment. This approach is effective in helping pupils to understand their learning and, in particular, how subjects and knowledge naturally link up. The well-being of pupils is promoted extremely well as the school has significantly improved its physical activities and effectively promoted healthy lifestyles. There is a well-resourced outdoor area for reception pupils, which is used particularly effectively to enhance learning across all areas. The curriculum for writing in Years 1 and 2 is satisfactory and allows pupils to only make satisfactory progress.

## Care, guidance and support

### Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding and the school makes very effective provision for pupils' personal, social and emotional development. The arrangements to ensure that pupils are cared for and protected are very good. Consequently, they feel safe and cared for very well. An excellent, confidential mentoring service is provided by a learning support assistant for those pupils who face significant challenges in their personal lives. This service is greatly appreciated by pupils. The pupils are proud to serve on the school council and it provides a very good forum for them to express their views, which are taken very seriously. Provision for pupils who have learning difficulties and disabilities is very good and the support from the special educational needs co-ordinator and learning support assistants is really effective. Additional programmes to improve the progress of these pupils are very effective. Liaison with parents and carers and with external support agencies is also very good. Procedures to assess pupils' attainment and progress are good. Assessments are frequent, thorough and accurate. Teachers make good use of assessment information to set targets for the next stages of pupils' learning and to keep them well informed about their progress.

## Leadership and management

### Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher shows strong commitment to the school, and has a clear vision for its future. He has been particularly successful in developing a team of appropriately trained and experienced staff who share his vision, are keen to develop their practice and further raise standards. Staff enjoy working at St Michael's School and morale is high. The headteacher and deputy headteacher form a strong team and help other staff to take on management and leadership responsibilities successfully. This has resulted in outstanding personal and social development and pastoral care, good teaching, a stimulating curriculum and good progress. There are effective systems for checking how well the school is doing and identifying what it could do better. Over the last year, staff have improved the way they collect and analyse data and are now using this information more effectively to highlight the attainment and progress of pupils. More time is needed to ensure that these systems are fully embedded and understood by all. The views of all members of the school community are taken into consideration and most parents feel that their ideas will be listened to and acted upon. The vast majority believe the school provides a good standard of education and is well led and managed. Financial management and planning are effective and ensure that school developments are adequately financed. The chair of governors shows outstanding leadership and has a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement. Governance is good and governors fulfil their roles well in the way they support the school and ask challenging questions, when appropriate. The school has dealt successfully with the issues from the previous inspection, in particular by improving the quality of teaching, the curriculum and how the school plans for future development. The school's leadership is starting to improve the way it uses information on pupils' performance. Because of the recent good work

of the headteacher, deputy headteacher, staff and governors, and better pupil progress, the school's capacity for further improvement is good.



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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>	<b>School Overall</b>	<b>16-19</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	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	1	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

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	2	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3	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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	1	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1	NA
The behaviour of learners	1	NA
The attendance of learners	1	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	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	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

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

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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

<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which learners make a positive contribution</b>	
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
<b>The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being</b>	
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**

I am writing on behalf of the inspection team to say how much we enjoyed visiting St Michael's. Thank you for making us feel so welcome and for talking about your school and the work you have done. Good things about your school include: - you obviously enjoy school very much and your attendance is very good - you are keen to do good work and generally make good progress and standards are rising - all the staff work very well together as a team to make sure that you learn a lot - teachers enjoy teaching you and the teaching is good - you behave very well indeed and are learning to co-operate and work well together - you have particularly good attitudes to learning - the curriculum is good and this helps to make lessons fun - you have an excellent understanding of how to live healthy lives - staff look after you extremely well and you say you feel safe in school - the school is well led and managed and governors support the school well - your parents feel that St. Michaels is a good school. They say you enjoy school, make good progress and behave well. We have agreed with the headteacher and governors that your school will be even better if you all try to improve standards in writing, particularly in Key Stage 1. Staff will continue to develop the ways they track your progress over time and use this information to plan what you should learn next.