



# St Michael's CofE Primary School

Inspection Report

**Unique Reference Number** 116866  
**LEA** Herefordshire  
**Inspection number** 279926  
**Inspection dates** 14 March 2006 to 14 March 2006  
**Reporting inspector** Geoffrey Burgess AI

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Junior	<b>School address</b>	Bodenham
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided		Hereford
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	5 to 11		Herefordshire HR1 3JU
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed	<b>Telephone number</b>	01568 797241
<b>Number on roll</b>	94	<b>Fax number</b>	01568 797752
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body	<b>Chair of governors</b>	Mrs Jane Jones / Mrs Linda Teeth
<b>Date of previous inspection</b>	2 November 1999	<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Christine Potts

<b>Age group</b> 5 to 11	<b>Inspection dates</b> 14 March 2006 - 14 March 2006	<b>Inspection number</b> 279926
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

St Michael's is a small primary school in the village of Bodenham serving a rural area. Almost all of the pupils in the four classes are White British, including a group of traveller children. Unusually, there are nearly twice as many girls as boys. An average number of pupils have free school meals but many more are so entitled. The number of pupils with learning difficulties increased from average to well above last year on the closure of a very small neighbouring school. This also significantly affected the mobility figures for 2005. When children start school, their attainment is broadly average in most areas of learning. However, with small numbers involved, any one year can be above or below average.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 1

St Michael's is an outstanding school which, because of excellent leadership and management, has improved enormously since its last inspection. However, because it sets itself such high standards, it sees itself as no higher than good. This fact plus the varied and innovative agenda in its plans for improvement give a good indication of its strong desire and capacity to keep getting better. It provides very good value for money and makes a very strong contribution to the local community. Children are given a very good start in the Reception class, many benefiting greatly from the integrated nursery provision hosted by the school. As they move through the year groups, pupils of all abilities and backgrounds make excellent progress in their basic skills because almost all teaching is of high quality. The school's track record in national testing has been first class in recent years but, in the younger classes, standards in writing are not quite as good as other areas. A rich and varied range of activities, very well matched to pupils' needs and interests, helps to ensure that pupils thoroughly enjoy their learning. Pupils' exceptional behaviour, social awareness and attitudes to learning are a tribute to the high priority the school gives to pupils' personal development and the high expectations built up over the years. Relationships and communications are very good and every effort is made to ensure that pupils are safe, secure and doing as well as they can.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards in writing skills in the younger classes so that they match those in mathematics and reading.
- Help teachers to aspire to make all lessons the same high quality as the best lessons.

## Achievement and standards

### Grade: 1

Pupils make outstanding progress during their time in school and achieve well above average standards in English, mathematics and science by the time they leave. The school was ranked in the top five per cent nationally for the past two years for the improvement made by pupils from Year 2 to Year 6. All groups, including traveller children and pupils with learning difficulties, do equally well. Standards in national tests for Year 6 were extremely high in 2003 and 2004 and were still good in 2005, despite the arrival of several lower-attaining pupils in the year group mid-year. Children who begin in the nursery group and join the reception class get a very good start. All children in the Reception class are doing well in all areas of learning. Pupils' overall progress is good in Years 1 and 2. In the 2005 Year 2 tests, standards were well above average in reading and mathematics, and above average in writing. Very good progress and high standards are being maintained in Years 3 to 5. The current Year 6 is a small group with well-above average levels of mobility and learning difficulties. However, the school's records and pupils' current work show that all these pupils are making good progress towards their learning targets.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils' personal development is outstanding. Their behaviour is exemplary, they love coming to school and have sensible and mature attitudes to their work. Relationships are very good, with courtesy, consideration and good manners evident throughout the school community. School lunchtimes are a microcosm of all that is good in this area, with the school providing healthy lunches, older pupils serving, looking after and chatting with their younger schoolmates and the whole being a calm, social occasion for everyone involved. Pupils clearly feel very safe in school. Pupils make an outstanding contribution to the school and the wider community. The school council has helped initiate improvements, for example, to toilets and playground resources. Music and sporting groups regularly represent the school in local events. Pupils' spiritual and cultural development is outstanding. Awareness of other cultures is successfully developed through planned topics and a rich variety of visits and international links. Pupils understand how to live healthy lives and take part enthusiastically in the exceptional opportunities provided for exercise and sport. Older pupils are given all the tools they need, such as confidence, independence and strong basic skills to prepare them for their next stage of education, as well as later life.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 1**

The excellent quality of teaching is shown by the very good progress pupils make as they move through the school and the high standards achieved year on year. Further evidence comes from the enthusiasm pupils show for learning, their confidence and self-esteem and their willingness to attempt challenging work. From the Reception class on, children are encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning. Pupils' contribution to their own learning is exceptional. Expectations of behaviour and of the standards all pupils are capable of attaining are very high. Almost no time is wasted on classroom management. Work is very carefully planned to interest and challenge pupils of all abilities in the mixed-age classes. Very skilled teaching assistants, working closely with teachers, make a very good contribution, notably working with children who find learning difficult. Teachers routinely use very effective assessment procedures to check on pupils' progress and refocus their teaching where necessary to consolidate or extend pupils' learning. Pupils are clear what they need to learn and are very proud when they achieve their learning targets. However, although teaching overall is highly effective, a few lessons fall a little short of the school's very high expectations.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 1**

An outstanding curriculum enables pupils to study a broad and interesting range of subjects and topics, including foreign languages. Excellent provision made for English,

mathematics and science contributes well towards the progress pupils make in these subjects. The school is rightly proud of all the opportunities pupils have in music and physical education. Good, thoughtful links are made between subjects when appropriate. Activities in the Reception class are planned imaginatively, with plenty of opportunity for children to be physically active, make choices and become independent learners. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities are provided with a very suitable range of relevant and interesting work. There is a very strong emphasis throughout the school on developing pupils' personal and social skills. An exceptional range of educational outings and extra-curricular activities is provided, which the pupils support in great numbers. The Eco Club, in particular, is most enthusiastic about the tasks it undertakes.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 1**

The school's care for its pupils is outstanding. Pupils are very happy to be in such a welcoming and lively environment. Their welfare is at the heart of the school's work and a significant strength. Impressive guidance and support in class give pupils the skills to become effective learners. The needs of pupils with learning difficulties are carefully identified. Thoughtfully structured work and the valuable support of teaching assistants help them to achieve very well. Arrangements for child protection are exemplary and staff are alert to signs that any pupil might be anxious. Teachers take every care to ensure that pupils work in a safe environment. Older pupils are also involved in ensuring their schoolmates feel safe and secure, for instance, taking their roles as playground 'buddies' very seriously. The wide range of activities planned to encourage responsibility and independence, and to promote personal development, contributes most effectively to developing pupils' life skills.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 1**

The leadership and management are outstanding. Since the last inspection, the headteacher, governors and staff have successfully overseen six years of continuous improvement in provision and standards. Standards have risen from below average to well above, teaching has improved from satisfactory to excellent, a 'weak' reception class has become highly rated and a 'broadly satisfactory' school has become outstanding. Underpinning all these improvements have been the willingness and the ability of leaders and managers to identify what is or isn't working and to involve the whole-school community in the process of making things better. Governors, staff and pupils have the confidence to be self-critical and open about how well they and the school are doing. The outcomes of very strong monitoring and consultation arrangements continue to be used to set the school's improvement agenda. Underlying all this has been the drive for individual achievement and high academic and personal standards. The contribution of the headteacher has been outstanding. By ensuring that everyone has the opportunity and support to make a positive contribution, she gets the best out of those with whom she works. This is particularly the case with the

two deputy heads who, with the head, form a powerful senior management team. The governance of the school is very good, especially the contribution members of the governing body make to the many extras the school provides, such as the nursery, out-of-school provision and school meals. The high quality education provided represents very good value for money.

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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>	1	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1	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>	1	NA
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	1	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	1	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	1	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	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	1	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	1	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	1	NA

### The quality of provision

<b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?</b>	1	NA
<b>How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?</b>	1	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>	1	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	1	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	1	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	1	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**

Dear Pupils, We really enjoyed our time at your school and would like to thank you for making us feel so welcome. You will probably know by now that, like you, we think St Michael's is a really good school. This is what we liked most about your school

- You are very polite and well behaved. Everybody gets on well together.
- Everyone tries hard and is very positive. A lot of you make very good progress.
- You take a real pride in your school and thoroughly enjoy all the exciting activities your teachers and helpers provide for you.
- All the adults help and look after you very well. You know you are safe.
- All the people running your school, but especially the head, are doing a fantastic job. To make things even better, this is what we have asked your school to do now
- See what more your teachers can do to help you to write as well as you read and do maths.
- Make all your lessons as good as the best. Once again, well done.

We know that you will carry on helping all the grown ups to make sure St Michael's keeps on getting better. Yours sincerely, Geoff Burgess Lead Inspector