



St Michael's CofE Aided First School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 125170
LEA Surrey LEA
Inspection number 281907
Inspection dates 14 June 2006 to 15 June 2006
Reporting inspector John Earish AI

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

Type of school	First	School address	School Lane
School category	Voluntary aided		Mickleham
Age range of pupils	4 to 8		Dorking RH5 6EW
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01372 373717
Number on roll	56	Fax number	01372 373717
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	Councillor Ben Tatham
Date of previous inspection	18 October 1999	Headteacher	Mrs Anne Hossack

Age group 4 to 8	Inspection dates 14 June 2006 - 15 June 2006	Inspection number 281907
----------------------------	---	------------------------------------

© 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 one Additional Inspector.

Description of the school

St Michael's is a very popular, small village school near Dorking. It serves families from a variety of social backgrounds, with many pupils from advantaged homes. Almost all are of white British heritage. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well below the national average. When children start school, their skills and abilities are just above those expected of four year olds. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties 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 very popular school. The overwhelming majority of parents believe it is a very caring and friendly school where each child is made to feel special. This is reflected in the words of the school song: 'we take a pride in the things we do...learning together and having fun'. The staff and governors accurately assess the school's effectiveness as good with some outstanding features. However, there is no complacency, and adults will not be satisfied until all aspects of the school's work are outstanding. The headteacher has set about achieving this task with determination. She has built a team where all adults are working purposefully to raise standards and improve the achievement of all pupils. They have focused on analysing what is taught, how it is taught and how accurately achievements are recorded.

Changes have been made to the way learning is organised and this is having a positive effect upon pupils' progress. The curriculum has been revised well to promote greater creativity and enjoyment, to capture the enthusiasm of the different ability groups represented within the school and to increase its relevance to their lives. Children in the Foundation Stage make a good start to their education because there is a much better balance between structured play and taught activities. As a result children quickly develop skills as independent learners.

Teaching and learning were accurately judged to be of good quality. Furthermore, the staff recognise that to be outstanding they must strive for greater consistency so that teaching and learning is good or better at all times. They are now well on the way to achieve this. The rigorous and regular evaluations by the headteacher shows that teachers are now much better at challenging the more able pupils and providing additional support for those who need it. However, there are still occasions when the introduction to tasks is too long and more able pupils spend too much time going over work they already know.

Pupils' personal development is outstanding because they are very well cared for at school and as a result feel secure and happy, a view endorsed by the overwhelming majority of parents. Teaching assistants, alongside teachers, play a vital part in ensuring such high quality provision. Pupils speak confidently about the many trusted adults they can turn to for help and support. Improvements have been made to the tracking of pupils' academic and personal development. As a result, pupils feel happy, secure and have work that is well matched to their abilities so they can all achieve well.

The school is now evaluating the impact of these changes on the standards that pupils attain and their achievements. Teachers are proud that even more children are exceeding expected levels by the start of Year 1. They are pleased that standards remain very good by the age of seven, but want even more pupils to attain the higher level 3, particularly in writing. All adults have started reflecting upon the changes they have made and the impact on pupils' attainment. They confirm the inspector's view that in order for pupils to make outstanding progress teachers must sharpen up their evaluation of recent adjustments to the curriculum and assessment to provide them with additional guidance in maximising the pupils' attainment, particularly in writing.

The capacity to improve is very good as has been demonstrated in the school's good improvement since the last inspection. The school provides good value for money.

What the school should do to improve further

- Sharpen up the school's evaluation of recent changes to the curriculum and assessment to provide teachers with guidance in maximising the pupils' attainment, particularly in writing.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

All groups of pupils achieve well during their time at school. Children in the reception class get a good start to their education. When they start school, their levels are just above those expected for their age overall. They are making good progress and most will exceed the expected levels by the start of Year 1. This is a significant improvement on previous years.

Pupils achieve very good standards in reading, writing and mathematics by the time they are seven, although there was a dip in the numbers achieving the higher level 3 in writing and mathematics last year. Assessments for the current Year 2 show that very good standards have been maintained with an increase in the numbers of pupils achieving the higher level 3 in writing and mathematics. Pupils in Year 3 build well on their previous achievements and continue to make good progress and achieve well. Those with learning difficulties are making good progress because their individual needs are clearly identified and they are given appropriate additional help and support.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 1

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is outstanding. Pupils are very well behaved and show remarkable care and courtesy. From an early age children learn to cooperate with each other, give and receive help and quickly gain the independence to tackle tasks on their own.

Pupils clearly enjoy their learning. Attendance levels are very good and pupils are rightly proud of their written work and artistic endeavours. This is further evidence that they are happy at school. Pupils know about the importance of a healthy lifestyle and staying safe. They speak enthusiastically about healthy eating and are very aware of the importance of drinking plenty of water and regularly walk to school as part of the 'walking bus' scheme.

Pupils develop well their understanding of how to play their part in the community through, for example, the school council. Councillors know they make a difference. For example, they have collected pupils' views about healthy eating and have used this information to help the caterers develop healthier and more appetising midday lunches. Pupils greatly value having extra responsibility and they enjoy helping others. For example, they willingly take on extra duties to support the smooth running of the

school and enthusiastically recycle the school's waste. Pupils rapidly acquire literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills that will equip them for later life and learning.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

Teaching and learning are good. Pupils make good progress and are keen to learn because lessons are interesting, relevant, well-planned and based on practical experiences. Pupils confidently talk of enjoying a variety of lessons including ICT, mathematics, sport and art. In order to be outstanding, the school is striving for greater consistency in the quality of teaching so that it is good or better at all times. This means they are tackling well the occasions when introduction to tasks are too long and the more able pupils spend too much time going over work they already know.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good. It meets the needs of all pupils, including those with learning difficulties. The teachers have revised the curriculum to promote greater creativity and enjoyment, to capture the enthusiasm of the many groups represented within the school and to increase its relevance to their lives.

The school ensures that all pupils have many opportunities to participate and enjoy a wide range of enrichment activities and after school clubs. Such experiences, together with learning in personal, social and health education, and the emphasis on staying safe and healthy, teach skills that contribute well to their future economic well-being.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

Care, guidance and support are outstanding. Pupils described their school as a happy place, where everybody is valued and cared for exceptionally well. The overwhelming majority of parents praise the school's work and feel their children are safe and well cared for. Child protection procedures are robust and widely understood. As a result, pupils feel safe and secure. Systems to ensure pupils' health and safety are effective and reviewed regularly. Their academic and personal development is carefully monitored and, as a result, their needs are met very well. Pupils with learning difficulties are cared for very well and additional provision is well matched to their needs.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Good leadership and management contribute significantly to pupils' outstanding personal development and their good academic achievement. The effect of the very good leadership of the headteacher is that all pupils and staff feel valued. Team work is a strong feature of this school and all adults are fully committed to playing their part in raising standards.

The school's self evaluation is of good quality, although judgements about personal development and care are modest. Nevertheless, the teachers and governors have a clear understanding of what the school does well, particularly in teaching and learning, and have used this knowledge to make changes to the curriculum and ways of recording pupils' assessment information. However, teachers have yet to rigorously and systematically evaluate the effectiveness of these changes to ensure the maximum benefit to pupils' learning, particularly in writing. The governing body is good at supporting and challenging the school and in meeting its statutory responsibilities.

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

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
--	-----------------------	--------------

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?	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	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

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?	1	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	1	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

Following my visit to inspect your school I would like to tell you what I think about how well you are getting on and how well your school is helping you to learn. I enjoyed being with you, seeing you work and listening to your experiences and views.

There are lots of things that I liked about your school. Some of them are: * you are able to learn in a very friendly and caring school. Your behaviour is excellent and you get on very well with each other* the headteacher and the teachers are good at helping you to do your best* you listen carefully to what your teachers have to say and try very hard in your lessons* the school council represents your views very well and you all help the school run smoothly* your teachers spend a lot of time looking at what you have done in class and working out how to help you to make your work even better * you like all the clubs, visits and after school activities the school has organised for you. I was impressed with the quality of the vegetables you grow in your garden* you enthusiastically recycle school waste and help care for the local environment as Junior National Trust Guardians.

I think your school is already good. To make it even better, however, I am asking teachers to think carefully about how new ideas and projects are helping your learning. I enjoyed being in your school. I hope that in the future it is even more successful in helping you to do as well as you possibly can.

Yours sincerely,

John Earish

Lead Inspector