

St Michael at Bowes CofE Junior School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102026
Local Authority	Enfield
Inspection number	286251
Inspection dates	22–23 May 2007
Reporting inspector	Carmen Rodney HMI

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

Type of school	Junior
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	7–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	346
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs. J Jakobson
Headteacher	Mrs M Jay
Date of previous school inspection	11 March 2002
School address	Tottenham Road London N13 6JB
Telephone number	020 8888 6100
Fax number	020 8889 2899

Age group	7–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspector and two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Michael-at-Bowes is a larger than average school which serves a culturally, religiously and socially diverse community. The majority of the pupils are White, mainly Turkish and Polish heritage. Over a third of the intake are from Caribbean and African descent while less than one third are from an ethnic minority group which is predominantly Asian. The percentage of pupils speaking a first language other than English is high. A well above average proportion of pupils have a learning difficulty or disability and the percentage of pupils entitled to a free school meal is also well above the national average. The number of pupils who enter or leave the school other than at the normal time of transfer is high, particularly in Years 5 and 6. The school holds the following awards: Healthy Schools, Activemark, Leading Parent and Partnership and Investor in People.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

St Michael-at-Bowes is an improving school that provides its pupils with a satisfactory quality of education with some good features. Since the previous inspection, significant changes have taken place under the good leadership of the headteacher and senior team. They have worked tirelessly with teachers, support staff and governors to successfully tackle a challenging programme to improve the weaknesses identified in the last inspection report. There is a clear focus on improving standards as outlined in the mission statement. The school's unrelenting focus on improving teaching and learning has led to significant improvements in the use and analysis of assessment data to raise standards further. This has resulted in pupils making better progress in lessons. Expectations of what pupils can achieve are higher and have resulted in the school setting ambitious targets. The headteacher welcomes new initiatives and this motivates staff to review and modify their practice for the benefit of the pupils. For example, all staff now use data and personalised learning initiatives as effective tools of learning to accelerate pupils' progress. The school has an accurate view of its effectiveness and knows the next steps it needs to take to improve the quality of provision. Its capacity to improve is good.

There is a clear trend of improvement in results in national tests at the end of Year 6, and some pupils exceed expectations particularly in English and science. Standards are broadly average in these subjects but pupils' academic achievement in mathematics is not as good. The dip in mathematics last year has been recognised through working on fundamental problems in planning and teaching. However, overall progress is satisfactory and this is primarily linked to the high mobility at the top end of the school, which tends to erode the impact of various strategies to raise standards further. The school is beginning to tackle this factor well by equipping dedicated teaching assistants with appropriate skills and resources to help late entrants make better progress in lessons.

A comprehensive programme of development, training and monitoring is leading to consistency in lesson planning and teaching. The quality of teaching is satisfactory with much that is good. Although this is ensuring that pupils make significant progress irrespective of their ability or ethnicity, there is still a need to make sure that it is consistently good or better.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good. Their enjoyment of learning is evident in lessons and around the school. The school council emphatically stated that 'pupils come to school to learn... we want to do well'. Pupils illustrate this strong sense of responsibility towards learning in their confident approach to working independently, as part of a team and through taking on responsibilities as mentors. They act decisively as advocates or mediators because these roles are incorporated into the strong Christian ethos and pupils' learning experiences. Such opportunities contribute to pupils acquiring very good social skills in preparation for their future. They have responded well to the provision; their attitudes and behaviour are positive and most attend regularly.

The curriculum is a particular strength. It is reviewed regularly to ensure that it meets the needs of pupils more successfully than previously. Consequently, pupils benefit from a good range of additional support and enrichment activities.

Parents speak positively about the school and see it as a 'very friendly, welcoming school that keeps them well informed....' Other parents said that their children have never had 'tummy ache' about coming to school; instead, they 'enjoy coming' and benefit from the special facilities for the more able as well as those with a special need. The partnership with parents including

the parent teachers' association (PTA) is indeed good; as it is with other partners including the adjoining infants' school and external agencies. Parents recognise the improvements in the provision and noted that their children's are well cared for by 'hardworking and committed staff in a safe and caring environment'.

What the school should do to improve further

- raise standards and achievement further for all pupils particularly the more able by ensuring the quality of teaching and learning is consistently good or better
- ensure that personalised programmes of work are embedded in the provision for pupils who join the school at different times in order to accelerate their progress.

A small proportion of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Pupils' academic progress is satisfactory and standards are broadly average overall. Pupils come to the school with broadly average levels of attainment; and although teachers build well on this secure foundation, progress by the end of Year 6 is satisfactory rather than good because of some factors outside the school's control. Over the last five years since the last inspection, standards in the national tests have fluctuated from year to year primarily as the school regularly loses and gains over one third of pupils particularly in Years 5 and 6. Standards, though broadly average have improved in English and science since the last inspection when they were well below the national average. They are however low in mathematics. The school's analysis of pupils' work and results showed that pupils did not have a good grasp of basic and advanced number skills. The school is now using a number of well selected resources and teaching strategies to tackle the gaps in pupils' understanding. For the current Year 6, the work seen in lessons and assessment information, indicate that pupils will meet the school's targets in mathematics. Pupils are however unlikely to reach the targets in English because a higher proportion of them are at the very early stage of learning English.

In the 2006 tests, while pupils of Asian heritage and those with a statement of special need made slightly better progress than their peers, those of African and Caribbean descent made slower progress than other pupils. Generally, too few pupils reach the higher levels at the end of Year 6.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils' personal development and well-being are good because they behave well and show good attitudes to their work. As one pupil said, 'This is a very good school because they teach us properly and we do not mess about'. Spiritual and cultural development remain good. Pupils benefit greatly from the cultural diversity within the school. Moral and social development are now good because of a respect for right and wrong and the increasing awareness of social responsibility in their school life, such as buddying and peer mentoring. Years 5 and 6 pupils also act as buddies for pupils at a nearby infant school. Year 6 pupils showed a mature understanding of personal values when discussing their relationship with family, friendship and cultural influences. Pupils understand the importance of leading a healthy and safe lifestyle.

Pupils enjoy and feel safe in school and know who to turn to if they have any worries. Bullying is not seen as a problem although isolated incidents occur from time to time. Attendance is now satisfactory. A small minority of pupils do not attend regularly because they are taken out of school on extended holidays. Stringent measures such as not endorsing holidays in term time is beginning to work, albeit gradually. Additionally, weekly attendance and punctuality awards linked to achievement fully reinforce the importance of good attendance. Pupils' make satisfactory progress towards their future economic well-being through the respect they show for others and their satisfactory acquisition of key skills

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning is satisfactory overall with some good features. Teachers have good relationships with pupils. They create a good atmosphere for learning and pupils are enthusiastic in the best learning opportunities. Pupils show good attitudes to learning and work enthusiastically when they understand the activities planned for them. When imaginatively planned and structured lessons are clearly introduced to pupils, they respond positively. Teachers make good use of open-ended questions that make pupils think carefully before they answer. In these lessons, assessment is used well to identify skills learnt. Where teaching is less successful pupils take time to settle into learning because activities lack pace and they do not always listen well or learn from one another. Also in these weaker lessons, pupils are not always well managed in developing secure attitudes to learning. Work is not always marked consistently. Comprehensive monitoring of teaching by senior staff and subject leaders confirms improvement in teaching whilst considering carefully the impact on learning. Across the school information communication technology (ICT) is used to support independence in learning effectively. In most lessons teaching assistants play an integral role to ensuring that pupils are able to successfully complete their tasks.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

Curriculum provision is good overall. All requirements are met. Careful reviews link the skills of subjects to one another with good measures of success. Pupils clearly know how to stay well and healthy through their personal, social and health activities. These include effective input from the school nurse on sex and drugs education. Computer and technology facilities enhance learning in a number of subjects. A good range of activities, including learning about other cultures, takes place both in lessons and outside the school day. These support pupils' learning positively. Visitors such as those from the Don Giovanni opera project bring new dimensions to pupils' learning. All classes travel on day visits that are carefully linked to curriculum. A residential visit for Year 6 pupils ensures that independent skills are well fostered before they move to the next stage of education. Membership of the school council develops pupils' negotiating skills thoughtfully.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Care, guidance and support are good because the school is committed to the well-being of pupils and monitors their academic and personal development well. This leads to good levels

of guidance in pupils' personal development, especially in the work of the learning mentor with vulnerable pupils. Pupils value greatly the access they have to support, such as mentoring and Talking about Problems(TAP) sessions, where pupils can talk to peer mentors about any problems. The school makes good use of outside agency expertise. Information is used well to direct effective support by classroom assistants and set targets for the next stages of learning and for addressing weaknesses in work already done. The school encourages parents very well to support their children. For example, parents value the consultation on target setting as this helps them to support and track their children's progress. Health and safety procedures are robust and the school fulfils all its responsibilities for security checks on adults having frequent contact with pupils.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has successfully overcome challenging circumstances and is ably supported by the deputy head. Together with the senior team, they maintain the momentum to raising standards further through: giving a clear steer on all aspects of the school's work, providing and spreading the benefits of training and initiatives among all staff, sharing good practice and rigorous monitoring which identifies strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning. Senior and middle managers act as good role models by demonstrating the standard of work required to move the school forward. For example, it is not unusual for them to model planning and demonstrate good observation techniques. Similarly, data is now well managed and used to improve performance. This is as a result of the senior team developing and training staff to use data analytically in relation to pupils' gender, ethnicity and ability, so that all groups have the same opportunities to achieve. This has led to all staff sharing the responsibility of keeping the school's performance under review. As a school that is continually striving to accelerate pupils' progress, some middle managers have developed well conceived practical initiatives to raise standards that are being used successfully by parents and the local authority. Planning for improvement is extensive but self-evaluation and improvement planning though accurate could be more incisive.

Governance of the school is good. Governors carry out their statutory duties well; they now provide challenge and hold the school to account.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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?	3
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	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?	3
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

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.

Annex A

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	2
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	3
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

6 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Michael at Bowes CofE Junior School, London, N13 6JB

We recently spent two enjoyable days with you in your school. During the short time, we found out a lot about your school and especially why it means so much to you and your parents. So, thank you for your warm welcome and for sharing your views about life at St Michael-at-Bowes.

We agree with your parents that your school is improving all the time and it is giving you a satisfactory education with much that is good. St Michael-at-Bowes is becoming more successful every year because you come to the school with positive attitudes, wanting to learn. You seize opportunities to display your maturity and confidence. We were impressed with the way you carry out your work as mentors in the TAP sessions and the role some of you perform in the playground as leaders. You show respect for each other's opinions in lessons and listen very well to grumbles before giving advice and support to each other.

Your teachers want the best for you and we agree with your parents that they care very well for you and are determined that you should make fast progress every year. Your teachers keep a check on how well you are doing by giving you clear targets which you and your parents understand. The targets really motivate you to do well particularly in English and science. This is because the teachers involve you in a lot of practical work and discussions which help you to understand the work and most of you attend regularly.

You like the way your teachers support you and clearly enjoy the wide range of visits, clubs and visitors. All of these activities help you to improve your learning and understanding of other people and ways of living and working.

The headteacher, staff and governors know that the school could be even better. They know what works well and what needs to improve. They are working on making every lesson imaginative and good so that you can make even more progress. They are also working on improving opportunities to help those of you who join the school late make good progress. You can help by attending regularly and continuing to do your best in lessons.

Yours sincerely

Carmen Rodney
Her Majesty's Inspector