

# St Michael's Catholic Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	102773
<b>Local Authority</b>	Newham
<b>Inspection number</b>	286489
<b>Inspection dates</b>	5–6 December 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Andrew Matthews

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	244
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr George Power
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Linda McSweeney
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	11 March 2002
<b>School address</b>	Arthur Road London E6 6EF
<b>Telephone number</b>	020 8472 3964
<b>Fax number</b>	020 8821 9157

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

St Michael's is an average sized primary school. It is a popular one-form entry school which serves a multi-cultural community with a wide range of different ethnic groups. Almost two thirds of the pupils in the school have English as an additional language and a significant proportion of children who join the Nursery are at a very early stage of learning English. There is an average proportion of pupils with additional learning or physical needs and an above average eligibility for free school meals. There have been significant changes in staffing in the last two years including the appointment of a new headteacher.

## 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 good school with some outstanding features, and has improved significantly since the last inspection. It is extremely successful in integrating pupils and families from wide ranging backgrounds, cultures and religions and creating an impressively harmonious community. It provides a good education for its pupils and an excellent level of care. The pupils develop very positive relationships with their teachers and each other that help to promote their outstanding personal development. Pupils' behaviour is good because they know the rules and how to make the school an orderly and safe place in which they can work and learn.

From a very low starting point in Nursery, pupils achieve consistently well as they move through the school. Regular assessment of pupils' work enables teachers to plan lessons that have the maximum impact on learning. Any underachievement is quickly identified and steps taken to provide focused support. Standards for the present Year 6 show a clear improvement on the previous year being average in English and mathematics and slightly below average in science. The school has rightly identified writing and science as areas that should be improved further. Pupils also make good progress in music, sport and information and communication technology (ICT).

The leadership of the headteacher is outstanding. She works very effectively with her deputy, and together they have transformed many aspects of the school's provision. Together they ensure that leadership and management are good overall. The school now has a settled staff, a strong team spirit and a united confidence that it can make things better for the pupils. Although the school's tracking of pupils' progress is now good, the targets it sets for pupils are not specific enough to guide teachers. The school has a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses because of its improving self-evaluation procedures. Its priorities for future development are well chosen and accurate and, as such, the school has a good capacity for further improvement. Governors give good support to the school but do not visit regularly enough to find out for themselves how the school is doing or how decisions they have made are being implemented.

The quality of teaching is good. Lessons are well paced and challenging, resulting in well motivated pupils who learn at a fast pace. The needs of different abilities are met by careful planning and the well-focused support of the knowledgeable teaching assistants. Teachers' marking is good. The curriculum is also good and enhanced by high quality music and sports tuition and an exciting range of visits and visitors. The curriculum for those at an early stage of learning English is outstanding, enabling these pupils to make rapid progress.

Parents are extremely supportive of the school's provision and speak highly of the quality of care and support that their children receive. Parents are highly appreciative of the many improvements that have recently been made. This was summed up by one parent who said, 'I have been a parent of this school for fifteen years and there is now nothing I would want to change'.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 1

Children make an excellent start to their education because of the outstanding provision for all areas of learning of the Foundation Stage curriculum. Teachers provide a secure, challenging and exciting environment where children learn quickly and happily. All staff work very

successfully to develop the children's language skills and the early teaching of letter sounds and meaning (phonics) is exemplary. Resources are carefully chosen to ensure the learning is thoroughly reinforced through staff-led activities and children's play. Children learn to collaborate extremely well. Teaching is outstanding. This is due to the very strong team work and enthusiasm of all staff and the excellent assessment, which ensures all learning is accurately matched to individual children's needs. From a very low starting point in the Nursery, children leave Reception with the majority having gained most of the skills expected for their age.

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

- Raise standards in writing and science to be at least in line with those found nationally.
- Ensure target setting clearly identifies how much progress individual pupils are expected to make in a year.
- Develop the role of governors so that they have more first hand knowledge of how well the school is performing.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils achieve well as they move through the school. Standards are now average overall in the present Year 6, showing a clear improvement on last year when standards were slightly below average. The proportion of pupils with above average standards is increasing because of improved teaching and greater challenge for these pupils. Progress in writing and science has been highlighted as a priority and focused work in these areas is having a positive impact on pupils' attainment. However, the over use of worksheets in some classes restricts pupils' progress, particularly that of the more able. The school phonics work is having a dramatic impact on the younger pupils' progress in developing their reading and writing skills. Pupils are achieving well in sport and music because of the effective use of specialist teaching. Provision in ICT has improved, and is resulting in some high quality work, particularly in graphics and multimedia presentations.

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

### **Grade: 1**

Pupils develop an excellent enjoyment of learning and this has a very positive impact on their personal development and academic success. High quality assemblies successfully reinforce pupils' excellent spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils develop strong relationships and this supports genuine concern to help others. There is good understanding of how life priorities change according to where you live in the world. Behaviour is very good and is reflected in the considerate way pupils treat their friends and visitors. Attendance is extremely high because of very effective monitoring systems and pupils' enjoyment of school. Pupils have an excellent understanding of the importance of healthy lifestyles and keeping safe. The school council plays an important part in the life of the school, such as selling fruit at break times to encourage healthy eating. Pupils make a strong impact on the community through their music making and support for worthy causes.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 2**

The quality of teaching and learning are improving quickly as a result of effective training and support. There are high levels of mutual respect between staff and pupils and relationships are excellent. High quality questioning successfully develops pupils' speaking and listening skills and helps them learn from each other. Well-trained teaching assistants make strong contributions to learning, especially for those with learning difficulties and disabilities and those in the early stages of learning English. Teachers' marking is both encouraging and informative and leads to clear improvements in the pupils' work. In lessons, pupils produce large amounts of beautifully presented work because of high teacher expectations. The occasional over-reliance on work sheets restricts opportunities for pupils to show initiative and challenge themselves.

### **Curriculum and other activities**

#### **Grade: 2**

The curriculum is improving, its cross-curricular links growing, and its effectiveness regularly monitored. Music, sport and the teaching of French are now strengths because of effective use of teacher expertise. The quality of ICT has improved and is enhanced by a well-equipped computer suite. There is a good range of popular clubs that provide additional challenges for pupils. The curriculum is enriched by visits around London. Highly successful residential visits also make valuable contributions to pupils' personal development. The popular breakfast club heightens pupils' awareness of a healthy lifestyle. Effective planning for pupils with learning difficulties and disadvantages ensures these pupils are fully included in all lessons and make the same good progress as their peers.

### **Care, guidance and support**

#### **Grade: 1**

Pupils achieve well because the school tracks pupils' progress very effectively through much improved assessment systems. Their progress is regularly reviewed and any underachievement quickly identified and addressed. Pupils are very well involved in measuring their own success in lessons, using the 'two stars and a wish' procedure. This gives important information to teachers so that they can plan accurately to meet individual pupils' needs in future lessons. Teachers mark work very carefully and give clear guidance to pupils on how to improve their work. In this way, highly valued, committed staff work extremely effectively to meet the needs of all pupils and this results in very strong and trusting relationships. The school promotes pupils' health and safety extremely well. Staff rigorously apply all child protection procedures to safeguard pupils. School dinners are popular and healthy. The school works very successfully with parents and local secondary schools to ensure smooth transfer arrangements when pupils move schools.

## **Leadership and management**

#### **Grade: 2**

The headteacher provides excellent leadership and management for the school. She has very successfully created an ethos of high expectations where everyone feels valued, respected and

cared for. The highly effective management systems ensure staff know what to do and how to do it. The school has developed effective self-evaluation procedures that ensure planned developments are most effective in helping the school improve. Parents, pupils and governors are consulted and their views carefully considered in this process. The school knows its pupils very well but does not use this information effectively in its target setting process. Pupils' end of year targets are set presuming that all pupils will make the same progress in a year and does not take into account pupils' different rates of learning. Subject coordinators carry out effective monitoring of lessons and pupils' work, ensuring that best practice is shared. Staff development is particularly strong and benefits all the staff. Resources have improved considerably and are used effectively to enhance learning. Excellent use is made of the school's links with outside agencies and other catholic schools to improve its provision. The higher than average financial carry-forward into this year is earmarked for the continued development of the playground areas. Governance is satisfactory. Governors are supportive but do not have enough first hand information about how well the school is doing because they make too few focused visits. As a result, their expertise is not being used to the full.

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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?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	1
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	2

### Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	1
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	1
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	1
How well learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	1
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	2
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?	1

<sup>1</sup> 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**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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

13 December 2007

Dear Children

Inspection of St Michael's Catholic Primary School, London, E6 6EF

Thank you for being so welcoming and helpful when we came to inspect your school. We really enjoyed talking with you at break times and lunchtimes and watching you working with your teachers. It was good to speak with your teachers about how well you do at school. We also enjoyed your singing in assembly. We think that you and your teachers have worked very hard together to improve your school and make it such an exciting place to visit. We think that the school is good because it does many things brilliantly, but there are some things we feel it can do to make it even better.

What we liked most about your school

- Your headteacher is doing a superb job. She knows just what to do to make the school better for you.
- Your teachers and teaching assistants look after you very well and really help you improve your work.
- You have lots of opportunities to say how the school can get better.
- Those of you who are in the Nursery and Reception get very excited about all you do and learn so quickly.
- You really enjoy school, behave well and have very good relationships with each other and your teachers.
- Those of you who find work difficult are getting the right sort of help and you use it well.

What we have asked your school to do now

- Help you do even better in your writing and science work.
- Make sure that your teachers know just how much you can learn in each year.
- Invite your governors in more often so that they can see all the exciting things that you are doing in school.

Andrew Matthews

Lead Inspector