

# St Michael's Church of England Controlled Junior School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	116333
<b>Local Authority</b>	Hampshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	290505
<b>Inspection dates</b>	15–16 May 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Anthony Green

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>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary controlled
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	381
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mrs Irene Ashfield
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Madeline Green
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	26 November 2001
<b>School address</b>	Church Lane East Aldershot GU11 3SS
<b>Telephone number</b>	01252 322933
<b>Fax number</b>	01252 331688

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<b>Age group</b>	7–11
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This is a larger than average school. The catchment area extends beyond the local community. The socio-economic circumstances are mixed with some pupils coming from less favourable circumstances. Most pupils are of White British heritage and the remainder are from mainly Nepalese backgrounds. Just over one in ten pupils speak English as an additional language of which a third are at the early stages of speaking English. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities is above average. There have been many staff changes recently.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

This is a satisfactory school with some good features. In recent years the school has found it difficult to appoint experienced teachers. This has hampered the progress made since the last inspection. Standards have fluctuated because of an increasing number of pupils joining the school who are in the early stages of learning English and because of staff mobility. Standards are average and achievement is satisfactory. National test results for 2006 showed that standards in mathematics declined significantly and the school did not meet its targets. Recent staffing stability and key appointments have strengthened the teaching so standards have recovered this year and are rising.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Teachers' planning is generally consistent, although lessons do not always include tasks for pupils that meet all their needs and abilities. Consequently, work is sometimes too easy. Pupils are well managed and are eager to learn. Teachers' marking varies and so pupils are not always aware of what they can do to improve. The school has correctly identified the need to challenge pupils better, especially those of lower ability. Pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities, and those who speak English as an additional language, make satisfactory progress.

Pupils' personal development is good. They are well behaved and enjoy school. They form good friendships and collaborate well in lessons. They have many opportunities to take responsibilities. For example, Year 6 pupils become 'young leaders', and support sporting activities, and the 'pupil team', regularly contribute ideas for improving the school. Pupils have a good understanding of the need to eat healthily and to take plenty of exercise. One young leader said, 'It's good to have exercise and to let off steam at lunchtime, it helps us think'. The care and support of pupils is good, enabling them to develop their self-esteem and personal and social skills. Pupils leave the school with sound basic skills and the confidence they need to move on to secondary school.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher has ensured that the pastoral care of pupils is good so that they feel safe and secure. She is ably supported by an effective deputy headteacher and together they are making the necessary changes to raise standards and achievement. The school generally knows its strengths and weaknesses but is not always accurate in its self-evaluation. For example, teaching is satisfactory overall but the school judges it to be good. Governance is satisfactory. The governors are supportive of the school and work within well-structured committees. However, monitoring and questioning of the school's priorities lacks rigour. Although no evidence was forthcoming on the inspection, a number of parents feel that low-level bullying is an issue. A high proportion also feels that they are not given enough information about the school and their views are not always sought. The school works hard to deal with unacceptable behaviour and information to parents is satisfactory. The school is doing enough to raise standards and strengthen the teaching, demonstrating that it has a satisfactory capacity to improve further.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards in mathematics and enhance pupils' mental and number calculation skills.
- Sharpen the monitoring of lessons by the senior management and subject managers to enable teaching to be consistently good or better.
- Ensure that teachers use assessment results to plan tasks in lessons that are better matched to the abilities of all pupils.

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 inspection before their next Section 5 visit.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Standards are average by the end of Year 6. The achievement of pupils, including those with learning difficulties and disabilities and those who speak English and an additional language, is satisfactory. Pupils joining the school in Year 3 start with average levels of knowledge and skills in English, mathematics and science. In 2006 a number of the pupils who joined in Year 6 were at the early stages of speaking English and so were unable to fully understand the vocabulary for mathematics. National test results in 2006 showed a significant decline in standards in mathematics. The school put in place measures to reverse this through rigorous staff training, and the appointment of the deputy headteacher to manage the subject. Data shows that pupils are now generally making satisfactory progress, though the school recognises that lower ability pupils could do better. However, progress varies in Years 3 to 5 because of inconsistencies in the quality of teaching and use of assessment. However, pupils make good progress in Year 6 because teaching here is consistently good.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Pupils' personal development and well-being, along with their spiritual moral, social and cultural development, are good. They enjoy school and this is reflected in their good attendance. However, some pupils arrive late and lessons do not always start on time. Pupils are polite, helpful and behave well. Relationships are strong and pupils appreciate the support they are given. Older pupils care for younger ones and gain a good understanding of their responsibilities to others. In lessons, pupils work co-operatively, usually listen to one another and work effectively with their 'talking partner'. There is good racial harmony and pupils from the different ethnic groups get on well together.

Pupils act responsibly and they feel safe and secure in and out of classrooms. They drink water at regular intervals and most eat healthily in school. Healthy lifestyles are promoted through the curriculum and the school gained the Healthy Schools Award in 2004. Provision for physical education and sport is good and benefits from good links with local secondary schools. Many pupils are able to express their views with confidence and contribute towards the making of decisions within the school. They make good progress in developing the personal qualities that will enable them to contribute effectively to the community.

## **Quality of provision**

### **Teaching and learning**

#### **Grade: 3**

The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Good and outstanding teaching is evident but there is a lack of consistency. In Year 6 teaching is consistently good because of well planned and well paced lessons that meet the needs of pupils well. Good relationships encourage most pupils so they apply themselves productively to the work set and are eager to learn. Planning is sound with appropriate objectives for the lesson, but these are not always communicated clearly to the pupils. Subject knowledge is a strength. There is a good range of learning resources

and information and communication technology (ICT) is increasingly being used to enhance learning. Teaching assistants are well deployed to support pupils with learning difficulties and disabilities. Teachers' questioning is good and extends pupils' thinking. However, in a significant minority of lessons, there is a lack of pace and challenge. This results in satisfactory progress overall and contributed to the dip in mathematics in 2006. This has now been addressed by the good support for mathematics given by the deputy headteacher and the local authority mathematics team. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly but it is not consistent and does not always provide sufficient comments to show how pupils can improve.

## **Curriculum and other activities**

### **Grade: 3**

The curriculum is satisfactorily matched to learners' academic needs. There is appropriate planning for literacy and ICT, and numeracy planning is developing. In Year 6, pupils are grouped by ability for English and mathematics to support their learning. This has a good impact on their progress. There is good enrichment of the curriculum through visits, visitors and links with the local secondary schools. The school is rightly proud of its musical achievements. Pupils have good opportunities to learn about the local and wider community by, for example, learning French and through visits to the local senior citizen's home by the choir. Charitable fund-raising develops their awareness of the needs of others. A well planned programme of personal, social and health education helps pupils to develop a sense of responsibility and an appreciation of others. The curriculum is being adapted to meet pupils' interests by, for example, a study of Nepal. This also enhances their awareness of their own and other cultures.

## **Care, guidance and support**

### **Grade: 3**

Care, guidance and support are satisfactory overall. The school places good emphasis on pupils' emotional well-being and they feel confident about talking to adults and other children about their worries and concerns. One pupil said, 'I had to be courageous this week because my rabbit died and I got a needle stuck in my finger'.

Personal support is good and pupils feel safe and secure. There are good links with outside agencies to support pupils. Child protection procedures are fully in place. Academic guidance is satisfactory. There are sound procedures for assessing pupils but they are not always used sufficiently to plan work that is well matched to individuals. Not all pupils know their individual targets so that they can fully understand what they need to do to improve.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The headteacher is ensuring good pastoral care for pupils and, together with senior managers, is addressing underachievement, especially in mathematics, with vigour. Half of the class teachers have attended a five day training course in mathematics and staff are focusing on developing pupils' mental mathematics and problem solving skills. At present only the headteacher and deputy formally monitor teaching and learning. Subject managers have had few opportunities to work alongside their colleagues or observe lessons in order to raise the quality of teaching and learning. The senior management team has a satisfactory, but not always accurate, view of the school's strengths and weaknesses.

They have identified concerns about teaching and learning. However, the information is not yet being used well enough to identify precisely where teaching and learning varies between classes in Years 3 to 5, and how to ensure it is always good or better, in order to ensure all pupils make good or better progress.

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## Annex A

## 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>
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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>	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	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	3
The standards <sup>1</sup> 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

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	2
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

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

<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>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
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	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**

4 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Michael's Church of England Controlled Junior School, Aldershot, GU11 3SS

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and for being so polite, friendly and helpful. We enjoyed looking at your work and listening to the Marimba Band and the choir. Your school is providing you with a satisfactory education. This means that we saw good things in the school but also things that need improving.

What we liked about your school is:

- you behave well and are keen to take responsibility. We like the way the 'pupil team' and the 'young leaders' contribute to the life of the school and also help your neighbouring infant school
- you enjoy your lessons and work well together
- there are lots of interesting things for you to do out of lessons
- all adults in the school are kind and caring and they look after you well.

What we have asked your school to do now to help you is:

- improve your skills in mathematics
- make sure that all teaching is as good as the best that we saw
- use the information from your marked work and tests to ensure that you all do as well as you can in all lessons.

Thank you again for being so helpful and friendly. We hope that you continue to work hard and do your best.

Anthony Green

Lead inspector