

St Michael's CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101049
Local Authority	Wandsworth
Inspection number	307573
Inspection date	8 October 2008
Reporting inspector	George Rayner

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

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	344
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	60
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Pam Davies
Headteacher	Mrs Ann-Marie Grant
Date of previous school inspection	13 June 2005
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Granville Road Southfields London SW18 5SQ
Telephone number	020 8874 7786
Fax number	020 8870 2257

Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors. The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following areas of its work: achievement and standards; teaching and learning; care, guidance and support; and leadership and management, including the capacity to improve. Evidence was gathered from: lesson observations, discussion with staff, governors and pupils, scrutiny of pupils' work, assessment data and the school's documentation. Parents' questionnaires and additional comments were also analysed. Other aspects were not inspected in detail, but the inspectors found no evidence to suggest that the school's own assessments, as given in its self-evaluation, were not justified and these have been included where appropriate in this report.

Description of the school

This school is larger than most primary schools. Although most pupils have White British heritage, the proportion who do not is above the national average. Pupils of Pakistani origin are the most strongly represented minority-ethnic group. The proportion of pupils who are at an early stage of learning to speak English is above average. While an average proportion have learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD), this includes an above average percentage with statements. Most LDD pupils have difficulty in mastering basic literacy and numeracy. Movement of pupils into and out of the school other than at the normal times is higher than in most schools. The school has two Reception classes to provide for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

This is an outstanding school. The great majority of parents agree. They say that their children make excellent progress here and are very happy. Pupils enter the Reception class with knowledge and skills at broadly expected levels for their age, but a large proportion of those who join the school in Years 1 to 6 arrive with below average standards. All pupils make outstanding progress from their starting points and, by the end of Year 6, their overall standards are well above average. Pupils' strongest subject is mathematics, where standards are very high. Pupils are very good at using their skills to tackle problems independently. In pursuing their ambition to raise standards further, the school's leaders have focused very effectively on improving writing skills. This has improved English standards and also the quality of pupils' work in the other subjects. The impact of the improvement work has been shown by very high overall standards in Year 2 in recent years. It is now being seen in Year 6, where the work of current pupils shows that they are on target to reach very high overall standards by the end of the year. The needs of the pupils who find it difficult to master basic literacy and numeracy skills and those who are at an early stage of learning to speak English are carefully identified and very effectively provided for. As a result, they also make outstanding progress.

Pupils benefit from outstanding teaching. Teachers make learning objectives very clear in all lessons and carefully explain how pupils can succeed in reaching these. Work is carefully planned to meet all pupils' needs. Teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants is very effective in ensuring that pupils who learn at a slower rate than others are able to keep up. Teachers make sure that the most able pupils have work that challenges them. Lessons provide a variety of activities, which help to keep pupils fully involved in their work. At some times, pupils thoroughly enjoy lively activities, for example when a Year 1 class acted out roleplay situations to help them to prepare for writing about being on a beach. At other times, they work quietly and with excellent concentration.

The curriculum provides excellently for pupils' learning and personal development. Pupils study French in all years, including the Reception classes, with the quality enhanced because teachers and support staff have had effective training. The school is justly proud of the high quality of its music provision, taught by specialists. Pupils have excellent access to computers and routinely use these to enhance their work in all subjects. A well-planned personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme and subjects such as science, very effectively ensure that pupils learn how to keep themselves safe and healthy and develop as well-rounded individuals. Many parents commented favourably about the school's outstanding range of very well attended extra-curricular clubs. The school's leaders are improving the curriculum further by developing integrated activities that let pupils bring together skills from different subjects to carry out their own investigations. There are already several excellent examples. For example, a 'Stock Market' activity helps pupils to develop their mathematics, information and communication technology (ICT) and speaking and listening skills, while also keeping them abreast of topical events. Plans are in hand to extend these integrated activities further.

The school provides outstanding care for its pupils. Systems to ensure their safety are very well organised and diligently carried out. Staff have all of the necessary training in child protection and first aid, and this is regularly updated. Several parents praised the close links between the school and themselves, to share information to ensure the very best care. Links with specialist agencies to provide additional care for those pupils who need it are also excellent. Systems for tracking pupils' progress and sharing the information between staff are highly effective. These

help teachers to set challenging targets for their pupils and to choose from a range of effective strategies to help any who are in danger of falling behind their expected rate of progress to catch up.

Pupils' personal development and well-being are outstanding, as is their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils say emphatically that they enjoy school. They show this through the excellent attendance and behaviour of the great majority and by enthusiastically joining in with all that the school has to offer. Pupils know that they are very well cared for and, as a result, feel very secure. Several parents commented on how well pupils contribute to this quality of care themselves when writing, 'It's wonderful how well the older pupils look out for the younger ones'. Pupils live active lives and know why it is important to eat and drink sensibly. They contribute to school life by conscientiously carrying out a wide range of roles, such as being 'early morning monitors'. They are proud that the adults listen to their good ideas, expressed through the school council. This has recently resulted in improved equipment in the playground. Pupils' progress in all of their subjects prepares them excellently for their futures. They understand their roles as members of their local community, significantly supported by the school's close links with the parish church. They are also knowledgeable about other communities and show this by, for example, their willingness to raise funds for good causes elsewhere in the world.

Leadership and management are outstanding. A major strength is an absolute absence of complacency. The headteacher has a strong determination to provide the very best for all pupils and a clear vision for securing this. The quality of teamwork of staff working at all levels is extremely high. All staff with managerial responsibility share in monitoring quality and performance and are strongly encouraged to contribute their ideas for further improvement. Governors are knowledgeable, highly committed and willing to challenge the school's leaders when necessary. Rigorous self-evaluation has given a very clear view of areas that could be even better. The well-focused initiatives arising out of this are succeeding in further improving upon the significant strengths reported by the last inspection. The track-record since then demonstrates an outstanding capacity for further improvement.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

The highly stimulating indoor and outdoor environment is used creatively to build firm foundations for children's learning. As a result, children make outstanding progress from their starting points and are very secure in all of their areas of learning by the end of the Reception year. The staff have excellent understanding of how young children learn. Focused activities strongly improve children's knowledge of letter sounds and writing skills. For example, the children, enthused by the story of Jonah and the whale, took great pleasure in drawing pictures of what Jonah would be able to see inside the whale. They used their phonic skills to write the initial letters of words such as fish, crab, and seaweed. There is an exemplary balance of teacher-directed activities and those that children choose themselves. Resources are thoughtfully organised to help develop independence.

Several parents commented upon how quickly and happily their children settled in, due to the quality of help that the school provides for this. Close partnership with parents and external agencies helps to meet the needs of all children. One parent commented, 'Nothing but praise for the school. Fantastic parental involvement'. Children behave impeccably, concentrate and are enthusiastic about their work. Their personal, social and emotional skills are exceptional. They have highly positive relationships with adults and other children. Assessments are rigorous

and used consistently to plan the next steps in learning. Children are encouraged to assess their own and other's work. This helps them to develop a sense of responsibility. Children's welfare is given a high priority. As a result, children feel very secure and confident. The provision is extremely well led and managed. Leadership is experienced, enthusiastic and, while recognising strengths in provision, still very committed to securing further improvement.

What the school should do to improve further

- While there are no areas requiring major improvement, the school's leaders are correct in seeking to extend opportunities for creative and investigative learning so that they are equally good in all subjects.

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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?	1
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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	1

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	1
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	1
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	1
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	1

Achievement and standards

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

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are 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
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	1
The behaviour of learners	1
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	1

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	1
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	1
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	1
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	1
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	1
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	1
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	1
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	1
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	1
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	1
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

Annex B**Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

17 October 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Michael's CofE Primary School, London, SW18 5SQ

Thank you for welcoming the inspectors to your school recently. We enjoyed meeting you. We are grateful for the help you gave, by talking to us and showing us your work. We were able to see that yours is an outstanding school. You make excellent progress in your learning. You reach standards that are higher than those that we see in most schools. You are really good at using your skills to do your work, even when the adults are not telling you what you have to do.

The teachers help you a lot by teaching you extremely well. They are very good at checking how well you are all doing, so that they can give you work that is just right for you. They give you interesting things to do and make sure that you have different types of task. We could see that you really enjoy working together, for instance when you do role play, although you are still able to work quietly when this is needed. The teachers are starting to give you more work that lets you do your own investigations and bring together all of the things you learn in different subjects. A really good example that we know about is the 'Stock Market' project. Your teachers are going to give you more of this type of work, and we have asked them to do this as often as possible.

The adults are proud of you and look after you very well. Some of you told us that you know this and this makes you feel safe and happy. You help your teachers a lot by coming to school regularly, behaving very well, working hard and joining in with the things that they plan for you. All of these things are important reasons why you do so well. Although your school is so good already, the headteacher and other adults still want to make it even better. They have some good ideas for doing this and we know that you sometimes help with your own ideas.

Very well done to you all and very best wishes for your future lives.

Yours sincerely

George Rayner

Lead Inspector