

St Michael's CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102034
Local Authority	Enfield
Inspection number	307879
Inspection date	1 May 2008
Reporting inspector	Glynis Bradley-Peat

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3-11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	233
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Juliette Doggett
Headteacher	Miss Cathryn Mann
Date of previous school inspection	18 April 2005
School address	Brigadier Hill Enfield EN2 0NB
Telephone number	020 8363 2724
Fax number	020 8342 2600

Age group	3-11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by an Additional Inspector.

The Inspector evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and investigated the following issues:

- How do leaders ensure that higher attaining pupils achieve as well as possible?
- What impact are leaders having on tackling evident gender issues?
- What impact is teaching having on the achievement of all pupils?

Evidence was gathered from the analysis of school documentation, observation of lessons, conversations with learners, questionnaires returned by parents and discussions with teachers, senior staff and governors. Other aspects of the school's work were not inspected in detail, but the inspector 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

The school is of average size. A quarter of pupils come from a variety of minority ethnic backgrounds. A below average percentage of pupils have English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is also below that usually found. The proportion of pupils identified with a variety of learning difficulties is average as is the percentage with a statement of special educational need. The percentage of pupils joining or leaving the school at other than the usual times is generally lower than average but in some individual year groups this has been high. The school has gained 'Healthy Schools' status, Active Mark and the Recycling Award.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 1

St Michael's Primary School is an outstanding school because excellent leadership and management have ensured that every pupil achieves as well as possible through an expert mix of support and challenge. Standards are significantly above average overall and pupils do particularly well in mathematics and English. This has been the case for the last five years. Achievement is excellent. Pupils enter the school with the skills generally expected for their age, but this tends to fluctuate with each year group. Pupils leave Year 6 with significantly above average attainment. This represents outstanding progress over time. The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage is outstanding. This has improved greatly with the implementation of the school's own Nursery provision. Predicted levels in the imminent national tests at the end of Year 2 indicate that it has had a real impact on the standards attained by the end of Key Stage 1. This is the first year group to have attended the school's own Nursery. The headteacher and her staff are now intent that this rise in standards should now be built upon further in Key Stage 2.

What do parents think of the school? The vast majority praise the school enthusiastically for the way it educates their children. One wrote, 'I think St Michael's is an exceptional school', another, 'The school has an excellent leadership and management team.' Inspection evidence confirms the views of parents. School self-evaluation is highly effective. This is because leaders have developed systematic and rigorous monitoring cycles to ensure that quality is paramount in all aspects of the school's work. As a result of monitoring the quality of teaching, leaders have put into place a highly effective programme of training for teachers which focuses on their individual areas of need. The headteacher's talented leadership has brought about improvements in mathematics through the development of teachers' knowledge and a focus on the way teaching assistants work in the classroom. She has also personally taught groups of higher attainers very effectively. Boys' previous under-performance in writing has been tackled robustly and this year they outperformed girls for the first time in seven years. There has been excellent improvement since the last inspection and leaders show an excellent capacity to improve further. Governors are knowledgeable and ensure that pupils continue to receive the best education they can. They support and challenge leaders confidently.

Because the quality of the teaching is monitored closely and teachers are eager to improve their own practice, pupils benefit from a wide variety of teaching styles. Teaching is outstanding. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour, which is excellent. Pupils say, 'Teachers have a way of making boring things interesting!' In a science lesson, pupils learnt rapidly because the teacher encouraged them to hypothesise and investigate for themselves. Their enjoyment was clearly evident as they talked excitedly in groups as to whether their experiment showed the characteristics of a fair test. Group and paired working contributes well towards pupils' excellent personal development and well-being. They learn to work as a team, preparing them very well for the next stage of their education. Above average standards in the basic skills, including information and communication technology (ICT), supplement this. Whilst raising money for charity, pupils learnt why it is important to keep careful accounts of money, especially other people's, and how to plan a budget.

Academic guidance is a real strength of the outstanding care, guidance and support received by pupils. In a literacy lesson, pupils in Year 4 shared their writing. They then evaluated their own and each other's work. After discussion with the class teacher it was evident that pupils were working at high levels. Teachers take the time to mark pupils' work meticulously and

ensure that they know where pupils have made progress and what they could do to improve their work next time. Challenging targets are set in mathematics and literacy. Pupils know what they are and can explain what they need to do to achieve them. They explained the 'traffic light' system clearly and how the teacher ensures if there are more than three 'reds' they receive extra support. Pupils like the way that they can sign up to 'Make an appointment with a TA' if they need extra help. Vulnerable pupils are catered for extremely well and one parent wrote, 'Our son has special needs and we have been particularly impressed by the way in which the teachers have embraced him and adapted their approach and teaching methods.' Every child matters in St Michael's and none are left behind. Bullying is very rare, but pupils are clear about what to do if it happens. They have suggestion boxes and a 'golden letter box' where they can voice concerns or praise each other's actions. They are confident that any issues will be dealt with effectively, 'Miss Mann sorts things out!'

Pupils praise the extra-curricular clubs, which contribute very well to the outstanding curriculum. Pupils spoke to the inspector about the wide range of clubs available including, gardening, netball, football and tennis. 'There are plenty of them.' Pupils have enjoyed the educational trips they have participated in and have appreciated visitors into school. Pupils are given plenty of opportunities to build on their strengths and develop those things they are less good at. This is because teachers are particularly adept at matching work closely to pupils' needs. Cross-curricular work is well developed. For example, the whole school has worked on 'The Fighting Temeraire' as a topic and pupils have had the chance to demonstrate excellence in art. They have conducted presentations using ICT and evaluated each other's written work.

Pupils know very well how to stay healthy and enjoy doing so. Exercise is high on the agenda and an excellent start to the day was observed during the inspection. 'Take Ten' takes place in the playground and parents, pupils and teachers all participate in dancing to lively music. It was a pleasure to watch all the beaming faces and the palpable team spirit experienced by the whole school community.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 1

Children start school with a range of early learning experiences but most are working at the expected levels for their age. Their achievement whilst in the Foundation Stage is excellent because leaders know exactly where each child's strengths and relative weaknesses are. Teachers then provide appropriate activities to develop each child's skills individually. Children respond enthusiastically to these activities and show great delight in their learning. Some children were dressed up as a builder, doctor, nurse and teacher and spoke excitedly to the inspector about what they would like to be when they grow up. Their perception of the world of work is quite astute and contributes well to their personal development. Children's behaviour is exemplary and they play together confidently and with maturity. Their concentration is well-developed because teachers facilitate independent working. Children choose to work on a wide variety of learning opportunities such as measuring, painting, writing and completing tasks on computers. Teachers ensure that what children are learning is recorded thoroughly to ensure that maximum progress is made. Leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are outstanding.

What the school should do to improve further

- Ensure that the current rise in standards at Key Stage 1 is further built upon at Key Stage 2.

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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 effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	1
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	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 disabilities make progress	1

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	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 the 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

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?	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 tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	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

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

14 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Michael's CofE Primary School, Enfield, EN2 0NB

Many thanks for such a warm welcome when I visited your school recently. I have to tell you that I haven't had such an exciting start to an inspection for a long time! I really enjoyed watching you, your parents and your teachers 'Take Ten' first thing in the morning. It looked to be not only good exercise, but good fun too! An extra thanks to those of you who took the time to talk to me during the inspection. You told me lots of interesting things about your school. You said that you liked coming to school because of all the activities you could take part in. For example, the clubs and visits and the excellent way teachers teach you. You showed that you knew how to keep safe and healthy. I was very impressed by how well you behaved and how polite and well mannered you all were. Well done!

Your parents are extremely pleased with St Michael's and so was I. I think you go to an outstanding school where the headteacher and her staff care very much about how well you do. You regularly do very well in national tests; this is very commendable. Your teachers work extremely hard and plan exciting lessons for you. They mark your work carefully so that you know how to improve it next time. Your headteacher and her deputy also work very hard and do a super job. They are always looking for ways of helping you to do even better.

Since your school opened its own Nursery, the younger children have been doing better and better. I have asked your headteacher to make sure that this great improvement continues amongst the older children now.

All the very best to you all,

Kind regards

Glynis Bradley-Peat

Lead Inspector