

# St Michael's Primary and Nursery School

Inspection report

---

<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	114817
<b>Local Authority</b>	ESSEX LA
<b>Inspection number</b>	311716
<b>Inspection dates</b>	6–7 December 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Jackie Cousins

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

---

<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	151
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mr William Rea
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Janine Carter
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	27 June 2005
<b>School address</b>	Camulodunum Way Berechurch Hall Road Colchester Essex CO2 9RA
<b>Telephone number</b>	01206 546412
<b>Fax number</b>	01206 369871

---

<b>Age group</b>	3-11
<b>Inspection dates</b>	6–7 December 2007
<b>Inspection number</b>	311716

---

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

This school is a smaller than average in size. Most pupils are from White British backgrounds with a few from minority ethnic groups. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is above average. Attainment on entry is below the national expectations for three year olds. A few pupils are in the early stages of learning English as an additional language. The proportion of pupils who join or leave part way through the school year is significantly above that of most schools. In 2007, the school gained the National Healthy School Award and the Active Mark. The school offers children a breakfast and after-school club.

## 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's Primary and Nursery is a satisfactory school and gives suitable value for money. In recent years the school's leadership has placed a great deal of emphasis on improving achievement and raising standards. Pupils achieve satisfactorily because teaching and learning are sound. Teachers set good expectations of pupils, and use information and communication technology (ICT) well to make lessons lively. These factors help to ensure that progress is steady and standards are broadly average by the end of Year 6. The more able pupils are extended adequately. The school has rightly identified that standards of writing by Year 6 are not as high as those of mathematics and reading. Pupils with learning difficulties make satisfactory progress because they receive effective support. A satisfactory curriculum ensures that pupils develop their basic skills. Pupils' personal targets and teachers' feedback are not always used well. This means that they do not fully understand how they can improve their work and attain higher standards.

The school has an effective partnership with parents and other agencies. This helps new pupils to settle quickly in all year groups and make a good start in the Nursery and Reception classes. A high proportion of parents who responded to the questionnaire were very positive about the school. They really appreciate the new home/school diaries. One parent said, 'My child has always been extremely happy at St. Michael's. I feel her voice is always heard by all members of staff. She has great respect for her teachers, and looks forward to going to school every day.'

A strength of the school is the pupils' good personal development. This is mainly as a result of the school's leadership placing a high priority on integrating pupils from all backgrounds and abilities into school life. One pupil summed it up by saying, 'Teachers encourage you to do your best and children are friendly, even when you are new.' Pupils have positive attitudes to others and good levels of concentration. They behave well because staff manage them effectively.

Care, guidance and support of pupils are good. Emotional development is supported well through personal, social and health education sessions. Pupils adopt healthy lifestyles well because the school encourages them to eat a balanced diet and take regular exercise. They play many active games on the playground with a very good range of resources. Pupils bring in a healthy snack to school most days and especially on 'Fruity Friday.' They are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of their education because of their reasonable levels of understanding in English and mathematics and their well developed social skills. Attendance is satisfactory overall but the progress of a few pupils is held back by their unsatisfactory rate of attending.

Good leadership from the headteacher and senior leadership team and satisfactory management have brought about reasonable progress since the last inspection. This has been significant in a few aspects, for example progress between Years 3 to 6. The school's leadership set challenging targets with staff and, in 2007 they met them successfully for pupils' attainment in Year 2. School leaders contribute well to self-evaluation. Staff feel part of a strong team. The school is in an acceptable position to continue to improve in the future.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 2

Children make good progress in Nursery and Reception because staff use effective teaching methods. Standards are in line with expectations by the start of Year 1. Children develop their creative skills well because resources are used successfully. For example, they learn to tell imaginative stories about reindeers and Christmas because resources are thoughtfully organised. Their personal development is good, because staff care for them effectively. Children from minority ethnic groups make good progress. All children learn to do things for themselves well due to high staff expectations. The leadership is good and children have rich opportunities to learn in the inside areas. Currently, the use of the outside area is being further developed.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Raise standards of writing by Year 6 to the levels of other key areas of learning.
- Develop the consistent use of feedback and pupils' personal targets so that they better understand how to improve their work.
- Improve the attendance of the few pupils whose rate is currently below that of the great majority.

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

Children make good progress in the Nursery and Reception. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Years 1 and 2. This means that standards are average by the start of Year 3. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection when standards were well below average in writing and below average in mathematics. Standards are broadly average by the end of Year 6. However, standards of writing are significantly below average, partly because pupils do not have a full understanding of how to develop and reach higher levels of skill. They achieve satisfactorily in Years 3 to 6. Considering the high proportion of pupils who join part way through the school year, some of whom have had considerable disruption to their education, they make satisfactory progress.

## Personal development and well-being

### Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy their time in school, as demonstrated by their good behaviour and caring attitudes. Attendance is now satisfactory because the school has taken effective measures which have improved the attendance of most pupils. Pupils feel safe in school; they say that bullying is not a problem. They choose healthy food at breaks and lunchtimes. They also understand the need to carry out activities safely, such as when they handle items of school equipment carefully.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They readily take on responsibilities in the school, and they are involved in a number of fund-raising activities. Pupils also take part in a number of sporting activities and their involvement in the local community is satisfactory.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Teaching is satisfactory. Consequently, pupils make sound progress in their learning. Time is used effectively because lessons are planned thoughtfully. Good features in teaching include the use of methods that develop pupils' basic skills. Criteria against which pupils can evaluate their success are used well. For example, pupils learn to study their own work and consider whether they have met the criteria when they write formal letters. Pupils who are learning to speak English as an additional language are satisfactorily supported and so they make adequate progress.

Assessment activities are used satisfactorily to identify those pupils who are exceeding expectations or underachieving. The use of skilled teaching assistants with a small number of pupils means they receive a considerable amount of individual attention. Occasionally, teachers do not use pupil targets and specific feedback, orally and in their marking, so pupils are not clear about areas for development in their work.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

The curriculum contributes to pupils' satisfactory progress. Links between subjects are currently being developed and refined, with a particular emphasis on the increased use of literacy, numeracy and ICT. Pupils with learning difficulties are carefully identified and are provided with a suitable range of tasks and activities. There is a wide range of outings, residential visits and clubs that pupils much appreciate and which they support with enthusiasm. Good use is made of specialist sports coaches to support the work in physical education.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 2

The commitment of all staff ensures that pupils receive good care and guidance, especially for their personal needs and welfare. This ensures that pupils develop into responsible young people. They are encouraged to lead healthy lives and take safety issues seriously. For example, they understand clearly what to do if there is an emergency and they know how to leave the building safely. The school works carefully to safeguard pupils and all relevant procedures meet requirements. Arrangements to settle them into the school are very good, whether they join in the Nursery or at any other time. Pupils who arrive part way through the taught year are supported well and they achieve satisfactorily. Tracking pupils' progress is effective on a termly basis and so the school identifies pupils who would benefit from further support.

## Leadership and management

#### Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory and the headteacher leads the school with enthusiasm and skill. She is well supported by the deputy headteacher and other senior leaders. There is a strong desire to make the best possible provision for the pupils and to develop the school further. The school has satisfactory systems for finding out how well it is doing. These

assessments have accurately identified the school's strengths and appropriate areas for development. For example, the work to raise pupils' achievement shows signs of having a positive impact. Senior leaders correctly recognise the need to further improve standards in writing. The subject leaders for English, mathematics and science demonstrate a clear understanding of their subjects. They have actively initiated strategies for making improvements.

Governance is satisfactory. Governors are suitably involved in planning and monitoring, for example, the budget. However, they have not always held the school effectively to account for the progress being made by the pupils. They are currently developing their understanding of pupil performance data.

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**

## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

### 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
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?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	2
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	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

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 extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	3
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	3
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?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2

<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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	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**

7 December 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St. Michael's Primary and Nursery, Colchester, CO2 9RA

Thank you for helping us when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed watching lessons, talking to you and listening to your singing. You are lucky to attend such a happy and friendly school. The positive things we discovered about your school are that:

- you behave well and concentrate thoughtfully on your work
- your headteacher and deputy headteacher have effective ideas about ways to improve the school
- teaching is satisfactory and staff work hard to make lessons interesting
- you know how to lead healthy and safe lives
- a good partnership is in place between the school and your parents
- teachers and staff care for you well.

I have asked your school to look at how they can make things even better. I hope that you will help teachers by listening to them carefully. The most important things are:

- improving standards of writing by Year 6 to the levels of other key areas of learning
- developing the use of teachers' feedback and your personal targets so that you understand better how to improve your work
- improving the rate of attendance of a few pupils who do not attend as often as they should.

Keep working hard at St. Michael's Primary and Nursery School.

Jackie Cousins Lead inspector