

St Michael with St John C of E Controlled Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	119356
Local Authority	Blackburn with Darwen
Inspection number	313265
Inspection dates	2–3 October 2007
Reporting inspector	Andrew Saunders

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School	461
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mr Ibrehim Mubarruk
Headteacher	Ms Kathleen Cant
Date of previous school inspection	1 October 2003
School address	Swallow Drive Blackburn Lancashire BB1 6LE
Telephone number	01254 665190
Fax number	01254 268731

Age group	3–11
Inspection dates	2–3 October 2007
Inspection number	313265

© Crown copyright 2007

Website: 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 three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Michael with St John Primary School is a larger than average church school, with a Nursery. Almost all pupils speak English as an additional language and are of British Indian or British Pakistani heritage. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is well above the national average, as is the proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Against the national trend, numbers on roll are rising significantly. The school has faced an extended period of refurbishment as well as staff changes, but the situation is now stable.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

This school provides a satisfactory quality of education. It also has some aspects of its work that are good. Following a period of turbulence, the staff team is now settled, morale is high and there is a focus on improving achievement. The school is highly regarded within the community and pupils are welcoming.

Achievement is satisfactory, although standards are below average by the end of Key Stage 2. Children start school with knowledge and skills much lower than is typical for their age but they make good progress in the Foundation Stage. Progress is satisfactory overall in Key Stages 1 and 2, although it is slower in Key Stage 1, particularly for some of the most able pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress.

The headteacher and local authority identified that the school needed help to raise some pupils' achievement, especially those at an early stage of learning English. A support programme was agreed in September 2006 and an agenda for improvement has been set. This is now leading to the necessary raising of achievement.

Pupils speak enthusiastically about how they enjoy school; they have opportunities to help others and their views about the school are positive. They support each other to develop friendships and play happily together. The healthy school lunches are very popular. Pupils contribute their ideas and become involved in decision-making through the school council.

Parents report that they are well informed about their children's progress. Where pupils have particular needs, parents are helped to understand this and encouraged to support their children. The school makes available a range of learning opportunities for parents, including learning alongside their children. This makes a valuable contribution to the community.

The curriculum is satisfactory overall. Pupils develop a good knowledge and understanding of how to live healthily and safely. Satisfactory sports provision and a range of educational visits enrich the curriculum. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall and occasionally good, although work is sometimes not challenging enough. Information about pupils' progress is being used to set targets, although these are not always specific or clear enough to help pupils move forward effectively. Teachers' marking of work does not always clearly indicate how pupils can improve.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. The senior leadership team are clear about how to track pupils' achievements effectively. They monitor the quality of teaching and learning regularly and teaching is improving. The developing confidence of the senior leaders has helped them make an accurate evaluation of the school's effectiveness. The governing body is committed and supportive, and is developing its role. The school has satisfactorily addressed the area for improvement raised in the last inspection report.

Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Provision in the Foundation Stage is good. Many of the children start with little or no understanding of English and some have developmental delay in their first language. Their personal, social and emotional development is often well below what is typical for this age group. Due to the effective induction programme they settle quickly, showing enjoyment and developing independence.

Children achieve well in the Foundation Stage and make good progress towards the learning goals set for them, especially in communication and personal and social skills. Teaching and learning are good. Staff plan and work well together. Very good bi-lingual support helps children to develop their language skills. Good use is made of the indoor and outdoor environment with a wide range of well planned, structured activities to stimulate learning.

Children are well cared for, guided and supported. There are helpful procedures in place to enable the children to settle quickly and parents are fully involved and encouraged to participate in their child's education whenever possible. The Foundation Stage is well led and managed by the Foundation Stage leader, ably supported by an effective team.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve achievement, particularly for the most able pupils in Key Stage 1, by ensuring that work is sufficiently challenging for all pupils.
- Ensure that the marking of pupils' work makes it clear to them what they need to do to improve.
- Make better use of information about progress to set pupils' targets and tasks that help to accelerate learning.

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

Achievement is satisfactory overall. On entry, children's skills are well below typical levels for their age. They make good progress through the Foundation Stage towards their learning goals, although many do not reach the expected levels by the end of Reception.

Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress across Years 1 to 6, although progress is slower during Key Stage 1 than Key Stage 2, particularly for the most able pupils. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make satisfactory progress.

Over recent years, teachers' assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 have shown that standards are below average, although there have been improvements in reading, writing and mathematics recently. National test results at the end of Year 6 show pupils leave school with standards that are below average, although there was a marked improvement in 2006. Work in lessons and the school's assessments for the current Year 6 indicate pupils' progress has continued to improve. Better tracking of pupils' progress, targeted support and the new more creative curriculum with an emphasis on writing are beginning to help the school raise standards and accelerate progress.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Strengths in pupils' personal development lead to a happy school. Parents are pleased that their children enjoy their time here. Many classes wrote their own rules, which emphasise respect for each other. At play anyone left without a friend is quickly spotted and brought into the group. Good behaviour enables lessons to run smoothly. Theatre visits impress on pupils the importance of not bullying and keeping safe. Pupils say, 'We turn bullies into good people by

our example of being kind'. Pupils talk sensibly about dealing with danger. Attendance has improved significantly and is in line with the national average.

Through lessons and activities pupils learn to be good members of the local and wider community. For example, pupils in Year 6 understand the importance of protecting the environment, referring to the 'terror of transport' in topic work. School council meetings involve pupils in making decisions that make a difference to their lives in school. Pupils show initiative in lessons and when unsupervised during library sessions at lunchtime, share computers and research books in a sensible way. Pupils adopt safe and healthy lifestyles and know the benefits of regular physical activity and healthy eating. Learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are extremely polite, friendly and courteous. The satisfactory progress in basic skills gives pupils a sound preparation for the next stages of learning and life in their community.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Teaching and learning are satisfactory and some good teaching was seen. Learning is often effective because activities are fun, lively and imaginative, as a result of good planning. This leads to pupils being well focused and enthusiastic. However, teaching does not always move at a brisk pace and some tasks are less imaginative so that progress is slower. Some teachers' use of questioning and discussion is not yet strong enough to challenge the pupils' thinking and ensure effective learning for all. Teacher assessment is not always used effectively to ensure that work is correctly targeted to pupils' ability, and this especially affects the learning of the more able pupils in Key Stage 1. This is evident in some of the pupils' books and in the overuse of worksheets that are not fully extending learning. Marking is completed but comments do not always tell pupils how to improve. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who are at an early stage of learning English are well supported by the teaching and bi-lingual assistants.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The curriculum meets requirements and also includes teaching French. Changes to curriculum planning are helping to develop literacy and numeracy skills in all subjects, through bringing more creative activities into the curriculum. This is making learning more purposeful, although the full impact has yet to be seen.

Information and communication technology (ICT) skills are taught well and better resources in some areas means opportunities to practise these skills in lessons are developing effectively. All pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, and those learning English as an additional language, receive a curriculum that meets their needs. However, more able pupils are not always as well catered for.

Good provision for personal development means pupils know how to keep safe, to be healthy and accept responsibility. This programme includes visits from the Life Caravan, helping pupils to consider choices and act responsibly. The pupils enjoy a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities that contribute to their development and skills in ICT, sport and music. These emphasise

that everyone should have the opportunity to take part. Educational trips give pupils more opportunities to learn outside the classroom.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 3

The school provides good quality pastoral care for its pupils. Pupils say they feel safe and their parents agree, and this adds to the happy learning environment. Safeguarding procedures are secure. Good links with other agencies provide effective advice and support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those needing help in speaking English.

Teachers know the pupils well. Based on these caring relationships, behaviour management is good which allows lessons to run smoothly. Pupils finding it difficult to behave well receive caring guidance, which has improved behaviour throughout the school. Systems for providing academic guidance are satisfactory and improving. A good start has been made in spotting pupils who need an extra boost to their learning. However, these systems are not always being used well to analyse the impact of the support provided or to track the progress of specific groups, especially the more able pupils. This has led to some underachievement going unnoticed in the past.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

Leadership and management are satisfactory. After a period of change the leadership and management team is now stable and focused on raising achievement. The new structure of three assistant headteachers is developing well and is providing appropriate support for the headteacher.

With senior staff, governors and local authority advisors, the headteacher has identified accurately the school's main strengths and areas for development. Strategies have been put in place to move the school forward in these areas, and these are beginning to have an impact. For example, subject leaders are starting to use data analysis and other information effectively to plan targets. The key appointment of a full time behaviour and intervention teacher, who team teaches with other staff, is having a significant impact on improving practice.

The governing body is highly committed and supportive of the school and is developing its role to question and challenge the performance of the school. The school manages its finances well to provide a good staffing ratio and continue its programme of refurbishment and equipping the school. The local authority is continuing its supportive involvement with the school, particularly in checking the effectiveness of staff development. The school provides satisfactory value for money and has addressed the areas for improvement identified at the last inspection appropriately. It has a satisfactory capacity for improvement in the future.

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.

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 ¹ 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	2
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?	3

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?	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

4 October 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Michael with St John C of E Controlled Primary School, Blackburn with Darwen, BB1 6LE

I am writing to thank you for making the inspectors feel so welcome when we visited your school. We enjoyed hearing about the interesting things you do and what you think about your school. You told us that you like your teachers and learning, you enjoy going to school and you feel happy and safe there. We think the teachers help you develop well. These are things we liked in your school:

- your behaviour in lessons and around the school is very good. You try to do your best and your attendance has improved. You deserve a big round of applause for all that!
- you get on well with the adults and with each other, and you help each other to do better
- you enjoy the activities at lunchtime and after school.

We found some things that we think can be better in your school. We have asked the school:

- to make sure that the work you are given is challenging for you, so that you make better progress
- to make sure that your work is carefully marked so that you know what you need to do to get better at it
- to use information about how you are getting on to give you work that helps you learn even better.

You can also help by continuing to behave well and working as hard as you can.

We wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Andrew Saunders, Lead inspector

Jean Havard and Jennie Platt, Additional Inspectors