

St Michael's CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	110019
Local Authority	Windsor and Maidenhead
Inspection number	325082
Inspection date	14 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Bernice Magson

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)	213
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Ms Deborah Durig
Headteacher	Mrs Valerie J Woods
Date of previous school inspection	11 July 2006
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	School Road Sunninghill SL5 7AD
Telephone number	01344 622962
Fax number	01344 873763

Age group	4–11
Inspection date	14 May 2009
Inspection number	325082

© Crown copyright 2009

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 two Additional Inspectors. The inspectors evaluated the overall effectiveness of the school and the Early Years Foundation Stage, and investigated the following issues: how the school is seeking to raise standards in mathematics; the effectiveness of the school's provision for boys; vulnerable pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities; and how well leaders and managers are identifying the school's needs and taking robust actions to develop it further. Evidence was gathered from the school's records, planning and policies, from observing teaching and learning, from discussions with pupils, staff and governors, and from a scrutiny of parents' questionnaires. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but 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 in this report.

Description of the school

This is a small Church of England primary school situated in the centre of the village of Sunninghill, close to Ascot. Most pupils are of White British heritage, and a very few are from a range of minority ethnic groups. Children are admitted to the Early Years Foundation Stage in the spring or summer term of the school year in which they become five years of age. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, although similar to that found in most schools, is significant in this small school; these difficulties include physical, behavioural, social and emotional needs, dyslexia and moderate learning difficulties. Above average numbers of pupils have a formal statement of their special educational needs. Recently the school has experienced considerable staff movement, due to illness, maternity leave or relocation.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

This village school, at the heart of its community, provides a good quality of education. The staff are effective in meeting its mission statement to provide a Christian school, built on trust, security and good moral principles. Indeed, they ensure that each pupil is valued and respected by a caring team of headteacher, staff and governors. Parents are appreciative of how well the school engenders good values and promotes a positive community spirit. Reflecting the views of many, one parent commented 'All children love it there, because there is such a great sense of community.'

Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and are confident in making independent choices, because pastoral care and support are outstanding. They feel safe and secure, and relationships and behaviour are exemplary. Pupils are well mannered and polite, and act very responsibly when undertaking tasks around the school. They have an excellent understanding of right and wrong. The school council represents pupils' views very well. Their suggestions have brought about improvements, for example to rules and to activities at lunchtimes. Pupils recognise how their actions affect the lives of others. They give good support to a local day centre, and join willingly in church events. Good contributions to charities help them understand global and national issues. Pupils are well prepared as responsible citizens, and for their next stage of education.

Pupils' achievement is good, because teaching and learning are good. Staff have good subject knowledge and teach confidently. Across the school, there is a strong focus on the teaching of the basic skills of literacy, numeracy, and information and communication technology. From average starting points in the Reception, pupils make good progress and attain above average standards by Year 2, and well above average standards by Year 6. However, results in national tests vary considerably year by year, because of the small numbers in each cohort. In English, pupils achieve extremely well, and significantly more pupils than nationally attain the higher levels by Years 2 and 6. This year there has been an increased focus on developing pupils' skills in mental mathematics in order to raise standards further. Assessments show that pupils are calculating with greater accuracy and speed. Teachers predict that increased numbers of pupils will attain the higher levels in English and mathematics in the 2009 national tests. However, test scores show a much greater difference than nationally when comparing the performance of girls and boys. As a result, the curriculum is now under review in order to provide a more appropriate range of learning experiences that engage all pupils better, especially the boys, and greater links between subjects, so that pupils can apply literacy and numeracy skills in practical situations. The use of a design and technology week, for example, was enjoyed very much by pupils, because, they say, 'the work is fun and gets more exciting and challenging every day'. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are well supported and reach individual targets.

The school knows its strengths and weaknesses well because its self-evaluation procedures are good. The experienced headteacher and the deputy headteacher set challenging targets to raise standards, and progress is monitored regularly. Despite considerable staff changes, the leadership team has maintained pupils' good achievements and well above average standards over time. Recent improvements have included changes to admission arrangements, so that all new entrants have increased opportunities of education in the Reception year. Increasingly, other staff and governors are becoming more involved in developing the school. Closer links with schools and other organisations have led to improved professional knowledge and have

provided useful guidance in moderating the school's performance. The actions of subject coordinators are now well planned and effective, although not always clearly evaluated. The development of community cohesion is recognised as a key priority and is developing well. For example, Year 6 pupils are planning, cooking and serving a meal for staff this term. Parents are very supportive of the school in classrooms, in out-of-school activities, and with financial help. Their recent contribution in financing the building of a climbing wall is very popular with pupils. A small number of parents have concerns about the sharing of information on the curriculum, which the school is seeking to address. The school has a good capacity to improve because of the enthusiastic contributions of pupils and the dedication of the headteacher, staff and governors.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

Children make a good start to school and achieve well. By the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, most are exceeding the learning goals expected of them from starting points in line with those expected for their age. Parents agree that their children settle happily into school because of the strong nurturing environment. They acknowledge that 'under the gentle guidance and direction of the Reception teacher, the children are well prepared for the next stage of their education'. In the classrooms, adults work together well to provide good routines. They have high expectations of behaviour and achievement, and relationships are good. Children play well together, take turns and have a good understanding of routines. In the classrooms, there is a good mix of teacher-directed and child-initiated activities. Children are assessed regularly in their learning, and tasks are matched well to levels of ability. In mathematics, for example, children made patterns of differing complexity and length, and successfully counted the numbers of cubes they had used. Currently, the provision outdoors is limited as there are insufficient resources or cover to enable children to learn outside whatever the weather. The outdoor curriculum offers only a limited range of exploratory play experiences, as in some lessons the best use is not made of teaching assistants or of time in a way that would appropriately support learning. The headteacher and Reception teacher are working together well to develop this stage of education. They have a good understanding of the priority areas for development, and have made good improvements to admission arrangements.

What the school should do to improve further

Develop a more relevant and challenging curriculum to include:

- a greater range of independent and exploratory play opportunities in the outdoors for children in the Reception Year
- an increased number of activities in Years 1 to 6 which involve investigative and independent learning through practical and cross-curricular experiences.

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?	2
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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	2
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

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

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?	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	1
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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**

28 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Michael's CofE Primary School, Sunninghill, SL5 7AD

You may recall that two inspectors visited your school recently. Thank you for being so friendly and welcoming. We enjoyed talking to you and finding out about all the interesting things you are doing. You made a good suggestion for a climbing wall to be built in the playground, and we are sure that it will provide lots of exciting play outdoors. You have a good school.

Here are the best things about your school.

- You are very friendly and welcoming.
- All the adults take very good care of you and make sure that school is a happy place.
- You work hard in lessons and achieve well, particularly in English, where you achieve high standards in national tests.
- You understand well the importance of eating healthily and taking exercise.
- Visits out of school sound very exciting, such as the residential visits in Years 5 and 6.
- You are making good contributions in support of others in school, the community and in Africa.
- The school council is successful in considering your suggestions and introducing improvements, such as at lunchtimes.
- Your parents and carers are very glad that you go to this school.
- Your headteacher, staff and governors are working very hard to make your school even better.

To help your school to improve we would like your teachers to provide more opportunities for learning through discovery, such as in the design and technology weeks, and in the outdoor area in the Reception class.

We hope that you carry on enjoying the interesting things provided for you at St Michael's School.

Yours faithfully

Bernice Magson

Lead Inspector