

St Michael's CE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113407
Local Authority	Devon
Inspection number	352854
Inspection dates	12–13 May 2009
Reporting inspector	Mark Lindfield HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005 under pilot arrangements; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	435
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Glenn Smith
Headteacher	Martin Harding
Date of previous school inspection	8–9 March 2006
School address	Church Street Kingsteington Newton Abbot
Telephone number	01626 352854
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Introduction

This pilot inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 18 lessons, and held meetings with governors, parents, pupils and members of staff. They observed the school's work, and looked at pupil tracking data, school improvement planning documents, minutes of governor and staff meetings, professional development records and 155 parental questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at the following.

- Achievement of more-able pupils to determine whether teaching and assessment provide sufficient challenge.
- Progress of pupils across Years 3 to 6 and especially in their writing.
- The quality of the school's improvement planning and implementation in tackling key priorities.

Information about the school

This larger than average sized primary school lies in the centre of the village of Kingsteington and attracts pupils from the surrounding area as well as the village. The school's roll has increased steadily since the last inspection. Most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational need is well above average. Validated data shows the proportion with special educational needs and learning difficulties and/or disabilities is below average; however the school's more recent data shows this proportion has increased significantly in the last academic year. Children's attainment on entry to the Nursery is broadly as expected. Developments since the previous inspection include the addition of nursery provision of 60 part-time places to the Early Years Foundation Stage, which also includes two Reception classes, improvements to the school grounds and the introduction of a creative curriculum. In addition, the school has received numerous awards including the Silver Eco Schools Award, Healthy Schools Award, Basic Skills Quality Mark and Activemark.

An extended service of a before- and after-school and holiday club of 24 places is located on the school site but is managed independently of the school.

Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

2

Capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

The headteacher has a clearly communicated vision of an inclusive school. His drive and enthusiasm, with the good support of governors and a strong senior leadership team, have galvanised the school. Their actions have driven sustained improvements in pupils' attainment, behaviour and approach to learning and in increasing the rates of attendance since the last inspection. In tackling these areas and in its determination, the school's leadership has shown good capacity to continue to make further improvements. Leaders at all levels have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and areas for improvement and have produced improvement plans which are raising achievement. Currently these plans contain too diffuse a range of actions and do not focus sharply enough on the measurable impact these actions will have.

The school provides outstanding levels of care and support for pupils and this helps a wide range of pupils with additional learning difficulties and/or disabilities make good academic progress and blossom in their levels of confidence and self-esteem. This aspect of the school receives strong endorsement from parents. One parent notes their child has 'transferred to St Michael's and has flourished as a result'. Another reports that their child 'since she has been at this school, has gone from strength to strength'. There are very positive relationships with parents and carers who show great trust in and approval of the school. Every effort is made to involve them in their child's learning and include them in the life of the school and there is a high degree of success in doing so.

Teaching across the school is good and contributes to the good academic progress that pupils are making. Activities are planned to meet the different needs of pupils but lesson planning occasionally lacks clarity in identifying the precise learning that is expected, especially for the more able. Consequently teachers' assessments often focus on the completion of a task and rather than on pupils' progress.

The school has addressed community cohesion within the school community well and has forged strong links with the local churches and village community. The school recognises that evidence of its impact with community groups within the United Kingdom is less secure.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that assessments in lessons are based on, and used to set, clear and precise learning targets in each lesson. These targets should be carefully matched to meet the needs of the different groups of pupils and shared with them regularly throughout the lesson.
- Ensure that the school's annual action plans are clearly focused on the school's priority areas and the progress that will accrue. They should include regular checking points during the year when progress can be monitored and verified against pupil tracking data.
- Extend and deepen pupils' understanding of cultures and religions throughout the United Kingdom.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

The good personal development of pupils of all ages is a key factor in making the school such a warm and friendly environment, and in the good progress that most pupils make in their time at school. Pupils behave well in class and contribute to the positive atmosphere through their good approach to learning. The vast majority behave well because they are interested and engaged by what they are expected to do and by the wide range of strategies used by teachers.

During the inspection we took particular notice of the progress of pupils across Years 3 to 6 in developing their writing skills. Whilst pupils' levels of attainment have been rising over time, the national test results of pupils in Year 6 dipped in English in 2008. The strategies implemented by the school are having a positive effect in raising pupils' levels of progress in writing. The school's recent assessment data show that pupils at all levels are now making good progress, and inspectors' scrutiny of pupils' books confirms this. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or physical difficulties receive effective support and challenge from both the teaching and the support staff. They are given targeted support which gives them the confidence to take on new challenges and achieve well.

Pupils look forward to coming to school and have good levels of attendance which have improved further during this year. They have a good understanding of living healthy lifestyles and have responded well to a number of the school's initiatives to encourage them to be healthy. Several use bikes and scooters to come to school and others make good use of the park and stride arrangement. Pupils are fully aware of how to access help if they are worried and feel that their concerns will be acknowledged and dealt with. They respond well to being given responsibilities and were happy to take on small tasks around the school without being asked.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	2
How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	2
To what extent do pupils feel safe?	2
How well do pupils behave?	2
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	2
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	2
Pupils' attendance ¹	2
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	2
What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers make good use of a wide range of resources, including the school grounds and information technology, to stimulate pupils and enhance their learning. Teachers are consistent in expecting pupils to behave well. Opportunities to discuss their learning with classmates are used well to help pupils to build on their understanding and encourage them to use correct technical vocabulary.

Regular and accurate assessments are used to inform planning which generally meets the needs of all groups of learners. Pupils' writing is frequently assessed against set criteria and provides helpful and constructive information to pupils on how best to improve their work. This strategy is helping to set clear expectations and, allied with the subject leaders' careful monitoring, is having a positive effect on pupils' writing.

The school has recently broadened the programme of work and this is beginning to ensure that the curriculum is increasingly relevant and stimulating for pupils. There is an outstanding programme of extra-curricular opportunities offered by the school; few schools in the country can boast a scuba diving club! This extensive range of clubs has a very positive impact on pupils' attitudes to school and their personal development.

The school's counselling service provides a good example of the excellent care and attention given to successfully building pupils' self-esteem and confidence and of the school's work with families. Very well-targeted support for all pupils has enabled them to make the best of the opportunities provided by the school.

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
The use of assessment to support learning	3
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Leadership and management of the school are good. There is a good climate for improvement and the staff are committed to the provision of exciting learning opportunities. The systems for reviewing the school's strengths and weaknesses are good and lead to improvement. The tracking of the progress of individual pupils is derived from accurate information which is regularly updated. The school's targets which are based on this information provide an appropriate and realistic degree of challenge and ensure that gaps between the performance of different groups of pupils are closing. The school recently reviewed the effectiveness of its safeguarding procedures which now place an increased emphasis on those most at risk and are in line with government requirements. These revised procedures have been shared with staff and although as yet untested, are realistic in their approach.

The role of subject leaders has been strengthened and they are actively involved in tackling key areas of weakness. The improvements in writing are attributable to the rigorous monitoring of pupils' written work and the setting of clear expectations of performance. Good use is made of governors' professional knowledge and expertise to evaluate the work of the school. They have a clear view of their role in supporting the school and providing challenge, and through their regular visits they play an active part in school life. The school has addressed community cohesion within the school community and immediate area well through a comprehensive audit and a range of actions with clear results, whilst evidence of its impact with community groups within the United Kingdom is less secure.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in communicating ambition and driving improvement	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	1
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children benefit from the good support from adults and the close working relationships of staff. The quality of the classroom and outdoor environment is good and children have access to a wide range of interesting and stimulating resources. Children use information technology well, microscopes are used to project images onto large screens and children show fascination in what they see. Children really enjoy school and this is clearly evident in the way that they arrive and quickly choose an activity to engage in. They behave well and show their friendly approach by sharing and taking turns with the play equipment and role-play costumes.

All children make good progress in all areas of their learning and personal development. Staff make good use of ongoing assessments and observations to plan for the range of individual needs. A systematic phonics approach across all classes ensures children make good progress in reading. Children become increasingly independent and are free to make good use of the outdoor area to build on their physical development and explore their creative ideas. Parents and carers feel confident that they are welcome to work and play alongside their children. Those in charge of the Early Years Foundation Stage have a secure understanding of the progress that children are making and have put strategies in place to ensure that summer born children are well supported. Leaders and managers show a strong determination to promote children's welfare and to ensure that they make good progress in their learning and development.

Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

Of the high proportion of parents who responded to the questionnaire and the group who spoke to HMI, the overwhelming majority were very positive about the school. There were a significant number of complimentary comments about the inclusion and support provided for pupils with additional learning needs and/or disabilities. Other positive comments included the recognition of the high levels of care shown by staff to pupils transferring to the school and the way in which the school sought to develop the confidence of children. In essence, the findings of inspection reflected the views of parents. A small minority of parents had concerns and constructive suggestions to make. Issues raised included the school's processes and procedures for dealing with unacceptable behaviour and safeguarding arrangements.

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Michael's Church of England Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school. If a parent has more than one child at the school, we asked them to record an answer against all the questions, for each of their children.

The inspection team received 155 completed questionnaires. In total, there are 635 parents and carers registered at the school.

	Always	Most of the time	Occasionally	Never
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	131	23	1	0

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. In 2007/8, 15% of schools were judged to be outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2007/8, 49% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils. In 2007/8, 32% of schools were judged satisfactory.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. In 2007/8, 5% of schools were judged inadequate.

Common terminology used by inspectors

- Attainment:** the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
- Progress:** the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
- Achievement:** the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, training or development. This may refer to the acquisition of skills, knowledge, understanding or desired attributes. Attributes include qualities or personal competencies which are important to the development of the pupil; for example personal, social, cultural, emotional or health.
- Capacity to improve:** the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
- Leadership and management:** the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.



14 May 2009

Dear Children

Inspection of St Michael's Church of England Primary School,
Kingsteington, Devon, TQ12 3BQ

Thank you for your warm welcome and the cheerful and friendly way you greeted us throughout the inspection. You clearly enjoy coming to school and make the most of your time, taking part and enjoying a wide range of clubs and games. We were very impressed by the way all staff take very good care of you and make sure that you are doing your best at all times. Your parents are given plenty of information about how you are doing and they are encouraged to become really involved in what you are doing and in the life of the school.

Teachers make lessons enjoyable and interesting and you showed how well you could concentrate and how keen you were to work hard. We noticed that you are often given different tasks to do in lessons but we have asked teachers to explain clearly to you exactly what you are to learn during each lesson. This will help you to know what you are learning and we would like you to be able to explain to others how you think you have got on.

Your headteacher, governors and staff know how you are getting on and keep a careful eye on the progress you are making. They have been responsible for making the school an enjoyable and friendly place to work and play. They have several plans to improve the school even more, although we asked that they make sure that their plans explain clearly the difference they will make to you and your work. We saw how you now behave well at all times and come to school regularly. Your exam results in mathematics and science are getting better and we noticed how the writing in your books had improved.

You look after each other well in and around the school and have close links with the local village and churches. We saw how you are starting to make links with countries around the world and asked that you also make contact with people from other cultures and religions within the United Kingdom.

Thank you very much and good luck.

Mark Lindfield
Her Majesty's Inspector

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