

# St Michael's CofE Primary School

Inspection report - amended

---

|                                |                    |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Unique Reference Number</b> | 116866             |
| <b>Local Authority</b>         | Herefordshire      |
| <b>Inspection number</b>       | 326469             |
| <b>Inspection date</b>         | 22 January 2009    |
| <b>Reporting inspector</b>     | Rodney Braithwaite |

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.

---

|  |                                 |
|--|---------------------------------|
| <b>Type of school</b>  | Primary                         |
| <b>School category</b>   | Voluntary aided                 |
| <b>Age range of pupils</b>   | 4–11                            |
| <b>Gender of pupils</b>  | Mixed                           |
| <b>Number on roll</b>  |                                 |
| School (total)   | 94                              |
| Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS | 18                              |
| Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years                                     | 0                               |
| <b>Appropriate authority</b>   | The governing body              |
| <b>Chair</b>   | Jane Jones                      |
| <b>Headteacher</b>   | Christine Potts                 |
| <b>Date of previous school inspection</b>  | 14 March 2006                   |
| <b>Date of previous funded early education inspection</b>                              | Not previously inspected        |
| <b>Date of previous childcare inspection</b>   | Not previously inspected        |
| <b>School address</b>  | Bodenham<br>Hereford<br>HR1 3JU |
| <b>Telephone number</b>  | 01568 797241                    |
| <b>Fax number</b>  | 01568 797752                    |

---

|                          |                 |
|--------------------------|-----------------|
| <b>Age group</b>         | 4–11            |
| <b>Inspection date</b>   | 22 January 2009 |
| <b>Inspection number</b> | 326469          |

## **Amended Report Addendum**

Report updated to resolve formatting inconsistency

---

© Crown copyright 2009

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

- the attainment on entry and overall standards in the school, especially in mathematics, and how these reflect the achievement of pupils
- the quality of teaching and learning, and how effective this is in enabling all pupils to achieve well, especially boys
- the effectiveness of school leadership and management in managing significant changes in staffing, and in the profile of pupils entering the school.

Evidence was gathered from: national published assessment data and the school's own records; scrutiny of pupils' work, a range of school documentation and parents' questionnaires; observations of the school at work; and discussions with staff, pupils and members of the governing body. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but evidence relating to them was gathered which is referred to where appropriate in the report.

## Description of the school

St Michael's is a small primary school serving a rural area. Almost all the pupils in the school are White British, including a small number of children from the travelling community. There is an Early Years Foundation Class (EYFS), and three more classes, all with mixed-age year groups, in the main school. The number of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities varies from average to above average. This is because of an increasing number of pupils who join and leave the school at various stages during the year. This results in significant differences in the size of each year group. When pupils enter the school their attainment varies widely from year to year between above and below average. Since the last inspection, new teachers have replaced half of the previous staff.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 2

St Michael's is a good school in which pupils build outstanding personal and social skills and achieve well because of the good provision made for them. The school also provides an outstanding level of pastoral care and welfare for all pupils, and children in EYFS. This is reflected in the overwhelmingly positive comments of parents, such as, 'The school has done so much for my children, morally, spiritually and emotionally.' The pupils show very positive attitudes to learning, behave sensibly and are kind and considerate to each other. Very importantly, they show great trust in the school, saying, 'Teachers are always there for us, they are our friends.' This helps them to develop considerable self-confidence and self-esteem, even for the shyest. Their self-belief is evident when Year 6 pupils identify their future careers as 'a palaeontologist', and 'either a teacher or a hairdresser'. Pupils' good attendance confirms great enjoyment of their work in school, both through interesting lessons in a broad and stimulating curriculum, and through the many enrichment activities and clubs provided, such as the mathematics workshops for more able pupils in the local cluster of schools. Provision for music and sport is especially extensive. The school also has an excellent commitment to community cohesion. In addition to the many responsibilities pupils take on in the school, especially through the thriving school council, they are also involved in a multitude of activities in the local community. These include assisting with toy collections, hand-bell playing at a local residential home, and participation annually in the Hereford Festival. The school is also an award-winning European Initiative school, and has created links with three European schools, as well as having planned links further afield in Australia.

Children make a good start to school in the EYFS. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 continue to achieve well and in most years reach standards that are above average by the end of Year 6. In 2008, there was a slight dip in standards, which were broadly average. However, school data clearly indicate that pupils had made good progress from their starting points, and all were meeting or exceeding challenging targets. Standards seen during the inspection were above average in reading, writing, mathematics and science in the majority of year groups. The small numbers in most cohorts cause the occasional 'skewing' of standards overall in each year. Additionally, an increasing number of pupils enter or leave the school in years other than the EYFS. The number of pupils with limited previous learning experiences has also increased. The progress of boys has been a concern for the school, but the introduction of new practical strategies to encourage their learning is helping a substantial majority to make good progress. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, pupils from the travelling community and the more able make similarly good progress.

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers know their pupils well and help them to develop good basic skills. Relationships between teachers and pupils are especially good. A particular strength in teaching is the good teamwork between teachers and teaching assistants. Teaching assistants are well trained, enthusiastic and confident in their very good contributions to the learning of the most vulnerable and less able pupils. They accept high levels of responsibility with much eagerness. This enables teachers to deal well with the problems posed by having mixed-year classes. Teachers give good academic guidance to their pupils, although there is variation in how this is done. Some of the best marking is diagnostic and enables pupils to understand how they can improve. This is not consistent across all classes, for instance, in advising pupils on the overall presentation of their work. Target setting for pupils has been in

place for some time, but the school is in the process of changing this to a more sophisticated and specific programme for improvement. It is too early to judge the full impact of this.

Pastoral care and provision for pupils' welfare is outstanding. All current safeguarding requirements are met. Staff have excellent knowledge of all pupils and are very responsive to their needs. Their example enables pupils to develop considerable empathy for others. This leads to parents being keen to say how proud they are of the school; 'It is an extended family', and 'My child has high levels of motivation and pride in attainment' are comments that reflect the typical view. Pupils say that staff listen to them, they are very safe, all treated equally, whatever their background, and that bullying is not a problem. Pupils who have previously been disaffected by their schooling speak very highly of their treatment and welcome by all in the school.

The school is well led and managed by decisive and sensitive leaders who have a high level of commitment to those the headteacher calls her 'little people'. The headteacher and deputy headteacher are both very practically involved and carry significant loads of responsibility, especially with their extensive teaching commitments. They have also had to deal with considerable changes in the school during the last three years. These changes have been effectively implemented and the school has successfully maintained its high reputation in the local community. The school shows it has a good capacity to continue to improve and deal with future challenges. Resources, including the staff, are deployed effectively, enabling the school to give good value for money. However, the links between school priorities and its self-evaluation are inconsistent. Although satisfactory, the school's evaluation of what it does, how well it is doing, and where it wants to go, is not sufficiently rigorous enough and tends to be retrospective. The governing body is well guided by an experienced and dedicated chair, who is building a new team after several changes of governors. The new body has made a promising start.

## **Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage**

### **Grade: 2**

Most children start in EYFS with skills and abilities which are similar to others of their age. In recent years there have been considerable variations between year groups, and the school has a broad range of abilities in every cohort on entry. The school has good links to a number of agencies to respond effectively to the needs of children, especially those that the school identifies quickly as having learning difficulties. The achievement of almost all children is good and they enter Year 1 with confidence, developing independence, and ready to start work on the National Curriculum. They do best in their physical development, and personal and social development. They make slightly less progress in aspects of mathematical development such as shape, space and measure and in writing. Welfare and care are promoted well, and the school is meeting the new requirements for Early Years effectively. Adults, led well by the headteacher, support learning well in a pleasant, stimulating and colourful environment with good resources. Teaching is good, relationships very good, and there are strong and effective links with parents. Children show consideration and care for each other, such as when they are using the wheeled toys and when enjoying working on gymnastic equipment in the hall. They show lively inquisitiveness, for example, when learning to investigate farm animals by using computers. Although staff know the children well, they have insufficient assessment data in order to follow the progress made by children. The available limited information is not used sufficiently well in order to plan the children's next steps in learning.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve the collection and use of assessment data in the EYFS so that children's progress and steps for improvement are clearly understood.
- Ensure that the school's self-evaluation and development priorities are more closely linked, and are monitored rigorously and frequently.

**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? | 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?   | 1   |
| 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? | 1 |
| How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?                     | 2 |
| 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 <sup>1</sup> 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 |

<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.



## Personal development and well-being

|   |   |
|---|---|
| <b>How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>                          | 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 |
| The extent to which learners enjoy their education  | 1 |
| The attendance of learners  | 2 |
| 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 | 2 |

## The quality of provision

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?</b>       | 2 |
| How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners? | 2 |
| How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?   | 1 |

## Leadership and management

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| <b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>                                       | 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  | 3   |
| How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated   | 2   |
| How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?   | 1   |
| 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  | 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  |

**Annex B****Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection**

23 January 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Michael's C of E Primary School, Bodenham, HR1 3JU

Thank you for your friendly and lively welcome, when we visited your school. We enjoyed talking to you, and were very pleased that you are so proud of your school and enjoy your learning so much. It was good to hear that you think your teachers know you well, and that you have lots of ideas for what you want to do in the future. You told us that you go to a good school, and we agree with you. This is what we found out about your school.

- You reach good standards by the time you leave school, and make good progress in your learning right through the school.
- Your personal development and knowledge of healthy lives, keeping safe and looking after each other are outstanding.
- All of the adults look after you exceptionally well, and help you to become confident and independent young people.
- Your involvement in the running of your school and in the local community, together with your links with schools in other countries, is much more than we see in most schools.
- You have good teachers, who are helped very well by the teaching assistants you like so much.
- Your school has good leaders who work tremendously hard, both teaching you and managing the school.

We have asked them to do a couple of things to help you. First, to make sure that they have and use information about the youngest children, so that they know for certain how well they are doing. Second, we have asked them to look closely and often at how they think the school is doing, so that they can plan even better for improving the school. You are doing well now, and we are sure that you will do even better in the future.

Good luck in whatever you do and wherever you go.

Yours faithfully

Rodney Braithwaite

Lead inspector