

# St Michael's CofE Aided First School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	125170
<b>Local Authority</b>	Surrey
<b>Inspection number</b>	328306
<b>Inspection date</b>	13 May 2009
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Peter Thrussell

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.

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<b>Type of school</b>	First
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–8
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School (total)	65
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
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Cllr Ben Tatham
<b>Headteacher</b>	Mrs Anne Hossack
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	14 June 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>	School Lane Mickleham Dorking RH5 6EW

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<b>Age group</b>	4–8
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## 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 impact of leadership and management on further raising achievement and standards and maintaining a high quality of teaching and learning
- the use of assessment to plan lessons for all abilities and to keep pupils informed of how well they are doing
- the quality and standards in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

Evidence was gathered from lesson observations, the scrutiny of pupils' work and the school's documents. Parents' questionnaires and discussions with children, governors, other leaders and staff also contributed to the judgements. Other aspects of the school's work were not investigated in detail, but the inspector 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 where appropriate in this report.

## Description of the school

St Michael's is a popular, small village school. Almost all of the pupils are of White British heritage. Very few pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals. The proportion of pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities is just below average. These pupils have a number of needs including speech, language and communication difficulties. The school has gained the Activemark and Eco Schools Silver awards.

## 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. Good leadership and management, with committed staff and governors, ensure that pupils make good progress in both their personal and academic development. Close links with outside agencies and parents contribute to the excellent level of care and support provided for pupils. One parent rightly comments that, 'The nurturing and pastoral care is fantastic'.

Pupils greatly enjoy school, reflected in their excellent attendance. They enjoy their lessons, particularly mathematics, which they see, as one put it as, 'a kind of brain teaser'. They benefit from good opportunities for sport and other opportunities for physical activity, such as 'Huff and Puff' at play times, which is recognised in a national award. This, along with an excellent understanding of what constitutes a healthy diet, shows that pupils are very keen to adopt healthy lifestyles. Pupils take their responsibilities seriously, with all of Year 3 having monitorial duties, such as serving lunches to younger pupils and helping to organise playground activities. They also form the eco committee, which looks to improve the school's use and recycling of resources and has also gained recognition for this work. The school council has an active role in suggesting and bringing about improvements, such as the decoration of the toilets. Pupils are also increasingly taking responsibility for their learning. They are set individual targets in English and mathematics, based on a careful assessment of their progress. They are keen to achieve these and are also encouraged to evaluate their work and consider how well they are doing. This, along with their exemplary behaviour and very positive attitudes to learning, contributes to their good achievement.

Pupils throughout the school make good progress. With small cohorts, standards fluctuate a little from year to year, but they are consistently above average overall, and this is reflected in the end of Year 2 assessments in reading, writing and mathematics. At the end of Year 3, when pupils leave the school, standards are above those expected at this age. Good support for pupils who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities enables them also to make good progress. Good tracking procedures help the school to identify pupils who are not making the expected progress towards the challenging end-of-year targets set for them, and to provide additional support. The school has taken effective action to address relative weaknesses in subjects. In mathematics, for example, a focus on mental reasoning and problem-solving has helped to raise standards further. A focus on writing in different subjects, as part of the school's curriculum development, has, as one teacher stated, 'added spark to pupils' writing', encouraged boys, and helped to raise standards, especially of the more able pupils.

The school has reviewed its curriculum and has made links between different subjects, combining them into interesting and relevant topics such as 'How does your garden grow?' and 'Machines and inventions'. Pupils thoroughly enjoy these, especially the opportunity to work independently at a range of activities within lessons, drawing on their different skills, such as writing, geography and information and communication technology. However, the school recognises that there is scope to improve the way the staff monitor these activities by checking more closely to ensure that the subject skills being taught and developed reflect pupils' different abilities and offer a high level of challenge to all. Nevertheless, teachers manage this approach to learning well. Lessons are well prepared and introduced so that pupils know what is expected of them. Teaching assistants work well with teachers, providing effective support for the groups assigned to them. Teachers are flexible in their approach, making effective use of opportunities as they arise, for example when the chicks started to hatch.

The school is accurate in its self-evaluation, identifying appropriate areas for development. This has brought about further improvements to achievement and standards in mathematics and writing. In response to parent questionnaires, more opportunities are being provided to encourage parents to play a fuller part in their children's learning. Mathematics and reading workshops have been much appreciated by parents. The monitoring of teaching and learning accurately identifies strengths and areas of development, and is helping to maintain a good standard overall. Governors are well aware of how the school is performing and are planning a more systematic and focused approach to their monitoring visits. The school works well to promote pupils' understanding and respect of communities both locally and internationally, and has evaluated the impact of this provision on community cohesion. Given the positive impact of its recent actions, the school has a good capacity for further improvement.

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

### **Grade: 2**

Visits by children and parents before starting school establish good links and ensure that children quickly settle into their surroundings. Children usually enter Reception at just above the expected level of skills and knowledge for their age. They make good progress. When they enter Year 1, the great majority are working securely within the learning goals expected at this age, with a high proportion fully meeting or exceeding them. In the current year, although making good progress, more children than usual started below the expected levels. A number of them are socially immature and benefit from speech and language therapy, an area that has been a focus in teachers' planning. Staff make learning exciting, providing good opportunities for children to explore and choose what they want to do for themselves. They were exhilarated to be asked to make healthy sandwiches and new spectacles for a 'giant' who had written a letter to them. Children have many opportunities and strong encouragement to develop good social and communication skills through role play activities. They work and play well together and become very confident learners. They are creative in their thinking, inspired by a good range of equipment. Children who were playing at camping acted out making a fire, cooking and fishing, and made good use of the outside covered area. The manager provides good leadership. She plans the curriculum well to ensure children have good opportunities for choice and independence, but also ensuring that children participate fully in the different areas of learning. The staff work very well as a team, ensuring that good relationships are quickly built up between adults and children, and that very high levels of care and welfare are maintained. Cross-curricular links are well planned and the teachers' evaluations of lessons identify what individual children have done and their levels of performance. However, this information is not fully used to organise the planning for different levels of group work in the direct teaching of mathematical, reading and writing skills.

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

- Ensure that curriculum planning takes full account of the development of skills in each subject and that it provides the right level of challenge for all pupils.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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### 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?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
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	1
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	1

## 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	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**

26 May 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Michael's CofE Aided First School, Dorking, RH5 6EW

On behalf of the inspectors, I am writing to let you know what we found when we visited your school. Thank you for taking part in the inspection. We spoke with some of you during our visit and you were interesting to talk to, extremely polite and helpful. You spoke enthusiastically about enjoying school and all of the things in which you take part. St Michael's is a good school. It has some excellent features.

We liked these things the most.

- Children get a good start to school in Reception.
- You work hard in your lessons and your behaviour is excellent.
- The school makes sure that you are safe and extremely well looked after.
- Those of you who find learning difficult are given good quality help.
- You thoroughly enjoy school and are all keen to keep fit and eat the right things.
- You are very keen to take on responsibilities and want to make the school even better.
- Your headteacher, staff and governors are doing a good job.

We have asked the school to improve in one area of its work.

- The school has organised your learning into different topics, which help to make your learning more interesting and enjoyable. It was good to see you working independently on your writing, geography, art, and mathematics, moving from one activity to another and getting on so well together. The school now needs to check that all of these varied activities within lessons help you to develop your skills in different subjects as fully as possible. Whatever the subject you are working on, you must all be challenged to do your very best.

We did enjoy visiting your school and watching you learn.

Yours faithfully

Peter Thrussell

Lead Inspector