

St Michael's C of E Aided Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	104384
Local Authority	Wolverhampton
Inspection number	336297
Inspection dates	7–8 October 2009
Reporting inspector	Alwyne Jolly

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	188
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mark Brennand
Headteacher	Mrs K Jackson
Date of previous school inspection	2 May 2007
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 11 lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils. They observed the school's work, and looked at documentation relating to planning, monitoring, safeguarding, communications with parents, records of governor meetings and 52 questionnaires.

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

- the achievement of pupils, particularly those who have English as an additional language
- the extent teaching is enabling all groups of pupils to achieve well
- how effectively the school meets the needs of all pupils, particularly those who are vulnerable
- the extent to which the school is able to analyse all the information about its effectiveness and arrive at a clear view of its strengths and weaknesses.

Information about the school

St Michael's Church of England Aided Primary School is smaller than most primary schools. Three out of ten pupils are eligible to receive free school meals, which is well above average. The percentage of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups and for whom English is a second language are both well above average. The school holds a number of national awards including Activemark, Healthy School Award and the Foundation level of the International School Award. Both the headteacher and deputy headteacher took up their posts in the previous academic year. The headteacher was absent during the inspection.

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

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

3

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

3

Main findings

This is a caring school that provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. Pupils from many different ethnic backgrounds are integrated well into the happy atmosphere where all feel secure and valued. It is a school that cherishes its Christian foundation and promotes the spiritual development of its pupils particularly well. Parents appreciate the school's efforts on behalf of their children and pupils talk positively of how they enjoy school. The moral, social and cultural development of the pupils is also good.

Arrangements for the Early Years Foundation Stage are now settled so that pupils make satisfactory progress by Year 1. However, at times, activities in Reception are insufficiently challenging and assessment information is not always used to plan activities that meet the different needs of the children. Younger pupils attain less well in mathematics but are making improved progress in reading. Standards are average by the end of Year 6, reflecting that pupils of all abilities and all ethnic groups achieve satisfactorily. Standards in writing are lower than average throughout the school, especially for boys, and this key skill remains a priority for improvement.

The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Good relationships underpin most lessons and the content is invariably interesting and relevant. However, pupils are not always clear about what they have to achieve in lessons and sometimes they work too slowly when given individual tasks.

The new leadership has quickly gained the support of the school community and instilled a clear sense of purpose. They have a secure understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and have already implemented good systems for monitoring teaching and learning. There are satisfactory systems being developed to build up and collate assessment information. These in turn enable the school to set reasonably challenging targets for its pupils. These encouraging signs indicate that the school has a satisfactory capacity to make further improvement.

About 40% of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a visit by an Ofsted Inspector before the next Section 5 inspection.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching so that it is of consistently good quality by ensuring:
 - pupils are always clear about what they need to do in lessons to achieve their very best
 - younger pupils are given more regular opportunities to use and apply their mathematical skills in practical situations

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- pupils are expected to work quicker when given individual and group tasks.
- Improve provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage by:
 - ensuring all children receive activities which are sufficiently challenging
 - using assessment information effectively to develop children's learning
 - developing the outdoor play area so that it can be used as an effective learning environment.
- To improve standards of writing the school should ensure:
 - there are regular tasks set to meet the specific interests of boys
 - there are regular opportunities for older pupils to write at length on subjects across the curriculum
 - older pupils are encouraged to use more ambitious vocabulary and more complex sentences in their writing.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils**3**

Although pupils make satisfactory progress overall to reach average standards by Year 6, some pupils could achieve more. This is because at times, tasks set are insufficiently challenging and pupils are too slow completing individual and group activities. This in turn impacts on the quality and quantity of the work they produce. Pupils for whom English is an additional language generally make increasingly good progress as they become more confident in their ability. Published assessment information for 2008 led inspectors to investigate the progress made by pupils from a Black Caribbean background, particularly in Years 1 and 2. Inspectors found, however, that these pupils progress as well as others because of the effective additional support they receive and the efficient way their needs are identified and then targeted. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities are supported well and most make satisfactory or good progress.

The school has adopted a commercial scheme to develop pupils' writing, which is having some impact. Nevertheless, standards remain lower than average, particularly for boys, which is reflected in the pupils' work and the most recent national test results. The school's initiative to develop pupils reading further has borne more fruit and there are clear signs of improvement for all ages. The introduction of a new approach to calculation and effective clear-sighted leadership has led to an improvement in mathematical attainment in Years 3 to 6. However, attainment is still below average in mathematics by Year 2 and pupils' ability to use and apply mathematical skills in practical situations remains a weakness.

The pupils from many different social and ethnic backgrounds all enjoy coming to a school they feel safe in and in which they flourish and grow. They get on well together and rare instances of bullying are quickly dealt with. Behaviour is satisfactory overall. Pupils often show a responsible attitude and are typically well behaved around the school though on occasion, some pupils distract others, which slows learning in a few lessons. The strong and inclusive ethos of the school helps pupils develop well in terms

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of their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. They also have a good commitment to a healthy lifestyle helped by the school's provision for physical education, sports and other activities, as well as the support through the school council for healthy eating. Pupils make a satisfactory contribution to the school and the wider community, particularly through strong links with the church. Attendance has steadily improved to reach the school target and now matches similar schools. Furthermore, pupils are demonstrating secure literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills that are important for their future economic well being.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	3
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	3
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	3
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	3
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	3
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

The school has had a large turnover of staff recently which has made it difficult to sustain a consistently high quality of teaching. Nevertheless, teaching is satisfactory overall and there are some good features throughout the school. Positive, caring relationships characterise all teaching. Lessons are generally interesting and teachers make effective use of the projectors linked to interactive whiteboards. For example, in an effective literacy lesson in Year 3, the pupils gasped at a striking picture of a unicorn.

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

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New pupils to the school have their needs particularly well addressed both through initial withdrawal for those who do not understand basic English sufficiently and later through targeted support in lessons.

Learning objectives are not always clearly stated to pupils so that they know how to improve their skills and understanding. On these occasions teachers list activities rather than what the pupils are expected to learn. Occasionally, teaching lacks challenge and this is evident by the lack of urgency shown when pupils attempt their tasks. On these occasions, the pace of learning drops and pupils make less progress. At times teachers talk for too long, leading to a few pupils losing concentration and distracting others.

Pupils' work is invariably well marked and constructive comments are given to help them improve. They understand the targets they are given which are also communicated to their parents. Assessment arrangements are satisfactory and improving so teachers are beginning to get more information and analysis to help them plan work to meet the pupils' needs.

The curriculum is satisfactory with an effective emphasis on encouraging creativity and responsiveness in younger pupils. French, for example, is already taught to pupils throughout the school. The school has made progress in promoting literacy and numeracy across the curriculum although it recognizes that resulting schemes of work and lesson planning lack the necessary focus and challenge to ensure pupils always make the best progress. The curriculum is further enhanced by regular visits and a satisfactory range of extra-curricular activities.

Pupils, who are widely different in terms of their ethnic and social backgrounds and stages of language acquisition, come into a socially cohesive and supportive environment. Support for pupils at an early stage of English language acquisition is particularly good reflecting the often good progress they make in their studies and integration into the school community. Vulnerable children develop confidence through the structured support and all pupils feel safe.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

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

How effective are leadership and management?

Staff, pupils and parents speak positively about the vision and drive of the recently established senior leadership team. Their impact can already be seen in improvements to the fabric of the building and a well planned programme for monitoring teaching.

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It is too early to see the impact of the leadership on the drive to improve standards. Self-evaluation processes are currently predominantly limited to this senior leadership team. In response to criticisms in the last inspection report, the school improvement plan is now an effective document which lists a few correctly identified priorities and has sharper and more measurable success criteria. Again in response to the last inspection report, the school now focuses lesson observations more rigorously on how pupils learn and make progress. The way work is matched to pupils' abilities has improved but, as with the management of data, this has not yet had an impact on pupils' attainment.

There is an effective approach to promoting equal opportunities and tackling discrimination because the school takes the actions needed to ensure different groups all achieve appropriately. The school's positive ethos contributes well to community cohesion locally. There has been a particularly strong focus on Jamaica and the Caribbean, reflecting the ethnic background of a significant section of the pupils. However, the school recognises it needs to increase pupil awareness of life in other parts of Britain.

The governors are well organised with a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. They have been aware and responsive to how they can support the new senior management team. They are not yet fully involved in evaluating some important aspects of the school such as the progress of different groups and safeguarding. The school's vetting arrangements currently meet government requirements and the school adopts satisfactory practice across all areas of its safeguarding work. The school's good links with other key agencies are used well to reduce the risk of harm to pupils.

The school's relationship with parents and carers supports its care and welfare provision well and parents commented positively on their relationship with the school. It works well with other schools and colleges to widen opportunities for pupils, particularly in the arts.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	3
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	3
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	3

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The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	3
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

Early Years Foundation Stage

Good relationships at all levels enable the children to behave well, feel safe and become secure learners. They work co-operatively and independently some of the time without close supervision so that they make satisfactory progress in all areas of learning. However, when resources are not being used effectively, they lack concentration and move too quickly between activities. They are generally enthusiastic but on occasions their enjoyment is restricted by over-repetitive activities.

The curriculum is well planned to cover all areas of learning with a satisfactory balance between adult-led and child-initiated activities. Particularly good, sensitive support is given to those for whom English is an additional language. The children's physical, social and emotional needs are cared for satisfactorily which leads to their good creative development.

Teaching is satisfactory. Adults model language well for the children to help the development of their early skills in literacy. At times, however, activities lack both clarity and sufficient challenge. Assessment also lacks rigour and is not used sufficiently to plan a progression in activities to meet the needs of all learners. Although there are plans to improve the outdoor area, it is not equipped currently to enable sufficient appropriate learning activities to take place.

The Early Years Foundation Stage has been through an unsettled period but it now has an established leader who is aware of the deficiencies. Improvements to the outdoor area and the need for further professional development have been correctly identified as priorities.

These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	3

Views of parents and carers

All parents think their children are safe, enjoy the school and are well prepared for the future. The vast majority of parents responded positively to all the questions in the Ofsted questionnaire. A very small minority of parents felt the school does not deal

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effectively with unacceptable behaviour. Inspectors investigated this, and concluded that, although in occasional lessons there is a minority that lacks concentration and is restless, the school has an effective range of strategies for dealing with behaviour. A very small minority of parents also felt the school did not take account of its suggestions and concerns but the inspectors found no evidence to substantiate this.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Michael's Church of England Aided Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school. The inspection team received 52 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 189 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	31	60	21	40	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	25	48	27	52	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	27	52	21	40	3	6	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	22	42	25	48	1	2	2	4
The teaching is good at this school	26	50	22	42	1	2	2	4
The school helps me to support my child's learning	25	48	22	42	2	4	2	4
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	28	54	22	42	1	2	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	21	40	25	48	0	0	1	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	24	46	22	42	2	4	1	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	14	27	28	54	3	6	3	6
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	17	33	27	52	2	4	4	8
The school is led and managed effectively	25	48	23	44	2	4	1	2
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	28	46	28	46	0	0	2	3

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
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.

Overall effectiveness of schools inspected between September 2007 and July 2008

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	39	58	3	0
Primary schools	13	50	33	4
Secondary schools	17	40	34	9
Sixth forms	18	43	37	2
Special schools	26	54	18	2
Pupil referral units	7	55	30	7
All schools	15	49	32	5

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above were reported in The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2007/08.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100. Secondary school figures include those that have sixth forms, and sixth form figures include only the data specifically for sixth form inspection judgements.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
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.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
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.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



10 October 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Michael's C of E Aided Primary School, Tettenhall, Wolverhampton, WV6 9AF

Thank you for making us so welcome when we came to visit your school recently. You told us that you feel safe and that people care for you. We agree and these are our main conclusions about your school.

Pupils from all backgrounds make satisfactory progress and are equally valued.

You receive a satisfactory education.

Your spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

You have a satisfactory curriculum and satisfactory teaching.

You know what to do to live healthily and most of you consistently make healthy choices.

You have committed teachers, caring adults and dedicated governors at your school and so we have asked them to make the quality of education even better by addressing three issues.

Improve what happens in Reception by ensuring activities are planned for all abilities and the outdoor area is developed.

Improve teaching by giving those of you in Years 1 and 2 more practical activities in mathematics and by ensuring you all understand how to produce their very best work and the need always to work as quickly as possible.

Improve the quality of your writing by matching tasks more often to the boys' interests, giving more opportunities to write at length and encouraging the older pupils among you to use more ambitious words and more complex sentences.

You can help by always concentrating and working as hard as you can.

I wish you all the best for the future.

Yours faithfully

Alwyne Jolly

Lead Inspector

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