

# St Michael's Church of England Primary School, Sandhurst

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	109973
<b>Local Authority</b>	Bracknell Forest
<b>Inspection number</b>	337413
<b>Inspection dates</b>	27–28 April 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Rob Crompton

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

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<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 of pupils on the school roll</b>	211
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Christopher Harris
<b>Headteacher</b>	Antoinette Butler-Willis
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	6 June 2007
<b>School address</b>	Lower Church Road Sandhurst GU47 8HN
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. Fourteen lessons taken by eight teachers were observed. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, staff and governors. Inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at teachers' planning, pupils' work and assessment records. Eighty-seven parental questionnaires were received and inspectors had informal discussions with parents.

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

- the dip in attainment at Key Stage 1, and the extent to which pupils, especially boys and more-able pupils, are building well on their prior attainment
- the extent to which the school's judgement that children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are making outstanding progress is evident in the quality of their learning and pace of development
- the school's capacity for sustaining improvement, particularly in driving up levels of attainment at Key Stage 1.

## Information about the school

The school is average in size. Most pupils have a White British heritage with a few from minority ethnic groups. English is the home language of almost all pupils. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average. Most of these pupils find learning difficult and a few have speech, language and communication difficulties. The school has received the Activemark and the Healthy School Award.

**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?**

**1**

**The school's capacity for sustained improvement**

**1**

## Main findings

This is an outstanding school where pupils enjoy learning, behave extremely well and reach high standards. The supportive and purposeful atmosphere, underpinned by the school's Christian values, is seen at every turn. Relationships between adults and pupils are excellent and founded on an ethos of mutual respect. The school is held in high regard by parents.

Excellent provision in Reception means children get off to a flying start. They achieve extremely well through the school and levels of attainment by pupils in Year 6 are consistently well above average. Almost all pupils reach the expected standards, with the proportion reaching the higher levels about twice the national average in English, mathematics and science. A dip in the attainment of pupils at Key Stage 1 has been successfully addressed. In the past, girls tended to outperform boys and more-able pupils were not fulfilling their potential. The gender gap is no longer evident and levels of attainment in Year 2, including those of more-able pupils, have risen considerably. That said, the level of challenge offered in Key Stage 1 does not always take into account fully children's very secure social, language and numeracy skills gained in Reception.

Pupils' academic progress and personal development move on apace due to an outstanding, innovative curriculum that thoroughly engages and excites them, good teaching which motivates them, and first-class care and support that ensures all groups flourish in a warm, safe and nurturing environment. Pupils develop a high degree of independence in their learning. They choose sensibly which particular aspects of a topic they wish to pursue and work maturely with their classmates. They take a pride in presenting their work in imaginative ways, often using their considerable computer skills to publish summary leaflets and multimedia presentations. Pupils frequently evaluate their own work. During lessons, they are often asked to signal their level of confidence using 'thumbs up' or 'traffic lights', but opportunities are sometimes missed to modify lessons as they proceed to take account of this information.

The headteacher plays a key role in inspiring colleagues and pupils. Rigorous self-evaluation by senior staff and the highly effective governing body results in sharply focused development planning. An excellent track record of ironing out inconsistencies in teaching and raising standards illustrates an outstanding capacity to sustain improvement.

## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure that pupils build well on their highly positive attitudes and very secure basic

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skills acquired in Reception after they move into Key Stage 1.

- Help teachers to respond immediately to pupils' evaluation of their own work during lessons to refine the level of challenge offered to different groups.

**Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils****1**

The high quality of current work in Year 6 is consistent with the well above-average performance of pupils in national tests over recent years. Pupils demonstrate their very good skills and particular flair in much of their written work. When creating a newspaper article, for example, one showed a secure grasp of the genre, writing, 'Little Red Riding Hood, 11 years old, was at home yesterday recovering from a terrifying ordeal after a big black wolf pretended to be her grandmother and then attacked her.' Pupils gain increasing confidence in using their well-established numeracy skills to solve problems. This was evident when Year 5 pupils tackled challenging work involving calculating the total weight of objects where the values included decimal points. Pupils' progress and attainment in science has improved significantly, with pupils gaining insights and skills through a wide range of practical investigative work. The school's success in raising standards at Key Stage 1 and narrowing the gap between the progress and attainment of boys and girls was evident in the confident responses of boys during lessons and in the quality and range of work in pupils' books. Year 2 pupils showed good skills in using different methods to add and subtract, the more-able pupils using numbers up to 1,000. Across the school pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make good progress, mostly through working alongside their classmates with additional support. Personal development is a real strength and is the foundation upon which the school builds success. Pupils talk knowledgeably about how to keep their minds and bodies healthy. They appreciate the need to eat sensibly and to take regular exercise and know how to deal with situations which concern them. This has been reflected in the school gaining national awards in these areas. Pupils are proud of their contribution to the school through their wide range of roles, such as buddies and school councillors. Pupils understand the Christian principles which underpin their respect and consideration for others. They have a strongly identified mission to support those less fortunate than themselves. Such moral values are reinforced effectively through the school's 'rights and responsibilities' programme.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

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

**How effective is the provision?**

A consistent determination to engage and inspire pupils is evident in the outstanding curriculum. The wide variety of enrichment activities on offer, including after-school clubs, themed weeks, visits and visitors, provides first-class support for pupils' academic and personal development. Teachers plan appealing topics, such as 'Lights, Camera, Action!' which include creative activities, such as making television commercials, writing for different purposes and the use of computers for research and presentation. Teachers generally adopt a brisk pace within lessons, devise interesting tasks and successfully enthuse pupils to work hard. Because pupils have a say in what they study, they are well motivated and increasingly self-reflective. Encouraging pupils to research independently often results in a surprising depth of knowledge. Following practical work making shadow puppets, one wrote, 'Shadow shows, known as Wayang Purwa, were originally used to teach the Hindu religion and have much in common with Indian shadow shows.' Pupils' high level of competence in using computers greatly enhances their learning. For example, in presenting their thoughts on 'What my community means to me' Year 6 pupils used satellite images from the internet and their own digital photographs to reinforce their views.

Practical work, first-hand experiences and the use of modern technology particularly benefit those pupils who generally lack confidence in learning or expressing themselves. They often discover something at which they are equally as good as their classmates, which raises self-esteem and inspires further effort. This is evident in the high-quality artwork, including paintings, clay masks and digital images, produced by pupils with varying skills in other areas.

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Teachers use assessment information well to devise challenging tasks which build on prior learning and to set individual targets, although the information gained from pupils' self-review is not always acted upon immediately during lessons and somewhat defeats the object of asking them in the first place. A particular strength of the school is the quality of support for individual pupils. This helps those with particular gifts and talents, and those who find it difficult to benefit from what is on offer, enabling both groups to make good progress. Sensitive support is provided for pupils whose circumstances, such as family bereavement, make them vulnerable.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

<b>The quality of teaching</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
<b>The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

**How effective are leadership and management?**

The school management team demonstrates a high degree of drive and ambition to sustain high standards. Senior staff set out high expectations for teaching and learning, and do not shirk difficult decisions. Any weaknesses are addressed rigorously. The school is at the forefront of a number of initiatives. Staff lead training for other schools in curriculum innovation and are actively engaged promoting strategies to improve writing across the local authority and beyond. Governors make an exceptional contribution to the work and direction of the school. They have high levels of insight and are extremely well organised and thorough in their approach. Safeguarding and procedures for child protection are rigorous in ensuring that all pupils and staff are safe. The school has very positive relationships with parents. Staff make themselves available daily for informal contact and all parents attend consultation meetings. The school website is constantly updated and includes a wealth of useful information, including links to the local authority's e-learning website and to sources of advice and support for families. A family support advisor provides tailored advice and support to vulnerable families. Extended services are provided in partnership with local schools. The school's core Christian values are the driving force in its commitment to equal opportunities. The school ensures that every pupil has an equal chance to learn. They rigorously tackle any discrimination. Senior and middle leaders guide staff so that equality of opportunity and inclusion are excellent. The school promotes community cohesion well through its links with the parish and active involvement in extending local services. Pupils' views are represented in local planning meetings. Through curriculum topics, including local studies and places further afield, together with support for a school in Kenya, pupils gain insights into other communities. In order to promote community cohesion further, plans

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are well in hand to develop links with a school in a contrasting area.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

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

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall, children enter the Reception will skills and understanding a little above those typical of the age group. They make excellent progress during the year so their attainment in all areas of learning is consistently very high. Children are very imaginative, eager to explore the world around them and have a thirst for learning. They form friendships easily and work and play together harmoniously. Snatches of conversations overheard illustrate children's mature social development and language skills: 'Shall I sharpen your pencil?'; 'How do you spell your name?'; 'Put two waters in and it might go faster'. The teaching is consistently stimulating but does not restrict children's independence. Staff provoke ideas which the children latch on to and take forward in their own way. Staff make exceptionally effective use of the adjacent nature reserve for introducing children to a magical world of fantasy learning and first-hand experiences. Children develop a great interest in and respect for the natural environment.

Staff have a very thorough knowledge of each child through well-developed assessment strategies. This means they can target interventions to support each individual child. Children's welfare is given the highest priority and children themselves are involved in an exemplary way in making their own risk assessments. For example, they made sensible suggestions about negotiating an adult-sized stile and how they might react if a stray dog appeared during their work in the woods.



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The Early Years Foundation Stage manager provides visionary leadership for Reception staff. She has the overwhelming support of parents, over 20 of whom see at first hand the quality of the provision during their regular visits to provide voluntary support. Staff go the extra mile in creating a professionally published record of each child's development through the Reception Year. One parent wrote, 'The booklet is a beautiful memory for us to treasure.' Another commented, 'I have tears in my eyes whilst trying to write this. Such a lovely report of her first year in school. So much detail has gone into the book, it was a joy to read.'

*These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage*

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>1</b>
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	1
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	1

**Views of parents and carers**

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers are extremely positive about the school. Within these positive views, a small minority raised individual concerns, all of which were relatively minor and not borne out by the inspection.

### Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Michael's CE 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 87 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 208 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	52	60	33	38	1	1	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	50	58	36	41	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	34	39	53	61	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	35	41	47	54	4	5	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	34	40	49	58	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	32	37	49	57	5	6	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	38	43	47	54	2	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)	29	37	43	55	6	8	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	30	35	50	59	5	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	21	25	54	64	8	9	2	2
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	27	29	56	67	1	1	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	29	34	51	59	6	7	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	36	41	51	59	0	0	0	0

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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	51	45	0	4
Primary schools	6	41	42	10
Secondary schools	8	34	44	14
Sixth forms	10	37	50	3
Special schools	32	38	25	5
Pupil referral units	12	43	31	14
All schools	9	40	40	10

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 is for the period 1 September to 31 December 2009 and is the most recently published data available (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn term 2009 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

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"> <li>■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.</li> <li>■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.</li> <li>■ The quality of teaching.</li> <li>■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupil's needs, including where relevant, through partnerships.</li> <li>■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.</li> </ul>
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.**



29 April 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Michael's CE Primary School, Sandhurst GU47 8HN

Thank you for making my colleagues and me welcome when we visited your school. We agree with you that it is an outstanding school and saw for ourselves how much you enjoy life at St Michael's. You are all making good progress because your teachers are really good at finding exciting ways for you to learn. It was fascinating to see how you choose which aspects of each topic to explore and we enjoyed reading your lively and well-written accounts of what you had found out. We were particularly impressed by the flying start made by children in the Reception class. It was good to hear how older children pulled up with each newcomer to help them settle down and make friends. We have suggested that, because they are so well grounded in basic skills as they start Year 1, children could be given more challenging work sooner to ensure they build on this really good foundation.

We were really pleased to see how well you behave and how everyone gets on happily together. It was good to see how you comment sensibly on how difficult or easy you find the work, using 'thumbs up' or 'traffic lights'. We think teachers could use this valuable feedback to better effect as lessons proceed, to provide support for those children who need it and set more demanding work for those more confident.

You are really well looked after by all the adults. Not only that, but you take good care of one another too. We know the adults appreciate the many other ways that children help the school to run smoothly.

We are sure you will keep enjoying school and trying hard. We wish you all the best for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Rob Crompton

Lead inspector

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