

St Michael's Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	113788
Local Authority	Bournemouth
Inspection number	357422
Inspection dates	22–23 September 2010
Reporting inspector	Grahame Sherfield

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	412
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	MR G Exon
Headteacher	Robert Kennedy
Date of previous school inspection	23 September 2010
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two of Her Majesty's Inspectors and two additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 27 lessons and observed 15 teachers. They held meetings with members of the governing body, staff and pupils and informal discussions with parents and carers. Inspectors looked at key documents, such as the school's improvement plan and the minutes of meetings of the governing body, as well as 121 questionnaires returned by parents and carers.

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

- The progress being made by pupils who join the school at times other than in Reception and by those who speak English as an additional language.
- The impact of the school's actions to improve attendance.
- How well pupils understand the next steps they need to take in their learning.
- The impact of changes in the curriculum on the development of pupils' basic skills and on improving challenge for the more able.
- How far leaders at all levels contribute to the school's improvement.

Information about the school

St Michael's is a larger than average sized school serving a diverse community in the centre of this seaside town. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is well above average. A well above average percentage speak English as an additional language and about a third of these pupils are at an early stage of learning the language. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is broadly average and the percentage known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. An above average proportion of pupils join the school at times other than the start of Reception or leave before the end of Year 6.

Before- and after-school provision is managed by the governing body.

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?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

St Michael's is a good school where pupils enjoy their learning and flourish within the exceptionally caring environment created by the headteacher and his staff. Pupils from varied backgrounds get on well together and feel very safe. Arrangements for safeguarding are outstanding. Behaviour is good and parents and carers are strongly supportive of the school. One described it as 'a very happy and nurturing place' while another noted that St Michael's was 'a very caring school'. Inspection evidence supports these views which are representative of the very large majority of parents and carers who returned the questionnaire.

Children get off to a good start in the Early Years Foundation Stage and make good progress. Progress is accelerating in Years 1 and 2 as a result of effective teaching and there is a clear trend of improving attainment in recent years. Attainment is also rising by the end of Year 6, although remains broadly average. The school has successfully raised the attainment of girls in mathematics through sharply focused teaching to address weaknesses in understanding, and the whole-school focus on writing has been successful in raising attainment by the end of Year 6. Unvalidated data for 2010 show a significant increase in the proportion of pupils achieving the higher level (Level 5) in English. The progress pupils make by the end of Year 6 is good and improving.

The rising attainment and improving progress are the result of rigorous monitoring and analysis of pupils' progress and the good teaching, although there is some inconsistency in providing appropriate challenge for more able pupils. Teachers mark work well and pupils understand and value the targets for improvement they are set. On occasion, some pupils have opportunities to assess their own work and identify for themselves ways in which they might improve it but this is not a consistent feature of the teaching. Pupils enjoy the cross-curricular topics involving exciting initial activities to engage their interest and these meet their needs well. While there are some opportunities to extend higher attaining pupils, for example in sport and music, this is an underdeveloped aspect of the curriculum.

The good leadership of the headteacher and his senior team has established high staff morale and a widely shared commitment to continuous improvement. Self-evaluation is accurate, resulting in clear and appropriate priorities for action. There have been improvements in the care, guidance and support provided and in the curriculum. Pupils' attainment is rising steadily, the progress they make is improving and challenging targets have been set for the end of Year 6 in the summer of 2011. Consequently, the capacity to improve further is good.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the provision for more able pupils by:
 - ensuring an appropriate level of challenge is provided for them in all lessons
 - planning and providing more opportunities in the curriculum to extend their academic progress and personal development.
- Involve pupils more frequently and consistently in opportunities to evaluate their own work and identify for themselves the best ways to improve it.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Pupils get on very well with the staff and sustain their concentration effectively. They respond well when given the opportunity to share and develop their ideas with a 'work buddy'. Pupils are engaged well by the interesting challenges teachers frequently provide. For example, in a Year 5 class, pupils particularly enjoyed their work in exploring the feelings of a character in a story set in Victorian times, culminating in a 'conscience alley', where pupils argued for and against the character escaping from the workhouse. In a Year 6 class, pupils responded very well to the word association activity about the 'Portuguese man of war'.

A key strength of the school is the termly tracking of the progress pupils make. This process is rigorous and involves careful consideration of each individual pupil. In addition, there is a thorough and wide-ranging annual review of the all assessment data relating to different pupil groups in the school to confirm areas of strength and aspects in need of improvement. As a result of this approach and the focused teaching that follows, pupils' achievement is good. When children join Reception, their skills are below expected levels. Although attainment by the end of Year 2 was below average in 2009, more recent data show an improving trend. Unvalidated national test results and inspection evidence suggest the school's data are correct in showing improved attainment by the end of Year 6 in 2010. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities, those who speak English as an additional language and those who join St Michael's at times other than in Reception make similar progress to their peers. This is a result of the careful analysis of their progress and the resulting well-planned teaching and additional support they receive.

Pupils report they feel very safe in school and are confident that if any problems arose, they would be swiftly and effectively tackled. They have a good understanding of the importance of a healthy diet and of plenty of exercise. Pupils take pride in their school community. The school has worked successfully to improve attendance and this is now broadly average. With their average attainment in literacy and numeracy, they are equipped soundly for their future economic well-being.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

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

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Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment ¹	3
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
The extent to which pupils feel safe	1
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
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	2
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

How effective is the provision?

Teachers have established a very positive atmosphere in the classrooms and teaching assistants make a good contribution in supporting pupils' learning. Teachers' marking provides a clear indication of how well pupils have addressed the objectives underpinning their work and how work might be improved. Teachers then make clear when pupils have made the desired improvement and pupils enjoy recording this on the 'stepping stones' in the classrooms.

The best teaching observed during the inspection was characterised by well-planned sessions, designed to fit within a sequence to develop pupils' skills and understanding systematically and progressively. There was often an engaging focus that really sparked pupils' interest and enthusiasm, resulting in a brisk pace in learning. Teachers' enthusiasm and commitment to their pupils' learning were clear and pupils were often required to think carefully before contributing to class discussion. Where teaching was less strong, the pace of learning slowed when pupils were working in groups and teachers relied too much on more able pupils responding at a higher level to the same task as other pupils.

There is good provision for developing pupils' skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology, and the curriculum has been particularly successful in providing pupils with opportunities to improve their skills in writing. There is a strong commitment to offering pupils memorable experiences, for example the Year 6

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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residential visit, and 'home learning' projects make a positive contribution to their progress. There is very good range of extra-curricular activities and these are well attended.

The school is exceptionally inclusive and welcoming. All pupils in need of extra support and attention are very well cared for in the friendly atmosphere. The school works successfully to help those parents and carers whose circumstances may cause them some difficulty in supporting their children's learning fully. Before- and after-school provision makes a good contribution to pupils' personal and academic development.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
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?

Senior leaders have effective systems for monitoring and evaluating the school's work and staff share the ambition for the continuing improvement of the school. Staff teams have recently been established to provide collaborative leadership for the subjects of the curriculum and for wider aspects, such as assessment and inclusion. Although this is at an early stage, staff are committed to this new way of working and are confident that it will bring significant advantages in sharing key activities, for example planning and monitoring. The governing body is kept well informed about the work of the school by the headteacher, other staff and the pupil associate governors. It checks progress with the improvement plan well and members of the governing body ask good questions to make sure that leaders are doing what is needed. Visits by representatives of the governing body to gain first-hand knowledge vary in their frequency, although these are beginning to be more systematically linked to the new staff teams.

The school works effectively to ensure that groups of pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who speak English as an additional language, make similar progress to others, and it has successfully improved the attainment of girls in mathematics. This shows it is effective in promoting equal opportunities for all pupils to achieve as well as they can. The school also ensures that discrimination against any group is avoided at all times.

The school makes a good contribution to community cohesion. It is a cohesive, multi-cultural community with good links with the local area. The school has established a link with a village school in Britain and an orphanage in Romania, and is at an early stage in building a connection with a school in South Africa.

The school has good partnerships with a range of external organisations to extend the

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opportunities for pupils, both academically and in their personal development. Procedures for safeguarding are outstanding as all necessary policies are used very well.

These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
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	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	1
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress in their learning and, in 2009/10; attainment was in line with levels expected by the end of the Reception Year. The children currently in the Reception classes are settling in well and are keen to learn. They benefit from the good teaching, which ensures a good range of adult-led and child-selected activities.

There are very good relationships between the children and the staff, even at this early stage in the school year, and all welfare requirements are met. Children are well behaved, happy and well cared for in the warm and supportive atmosphere. The needs of all children, including the high proportion who speak English as an additional language, are met well by the dedicated and effective team of teachers and teaching assistants. Children's good progress is supported by good planning and comprehensive procedures for observation and assessment which staff use well to devise activities that meet the children's needs. Children respond well to the stimulating classrooms and the recently created additional play space, and particularly enjoy access to the outdoor area.

As the leader of Reception and Years 1 and 2 is new in post, the development of the Early Years Foundation Stage is currently a shared endeavour. There is a good understanding of the strengths of the provision and of priorities for development, although these are not yet set out in an action plan. The partnership with parents and carers is developing well and there are good links with the main pre-school providers.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
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 of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

The very large majority of parents and carers who responded have positive views on all aspects featuring in the Ofsted questionnaire. Respondents were particularly pleased with children's enjoyment of school, how the school keeps them safe, the quality of the teaching and the leadership and management. Inspection evidence endorses these positive views.

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 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 121 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 412 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	85	70	36	30	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	74	61	46	38	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	51	42	59	49	4	3	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	45	37	62	51	8	7	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	62	51	52	43	1	1	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	50	41	62	51	6	5	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	61	50	51	42	6	5	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)	51	42	56	46	3	2	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	55	45	48	40	7	6	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	51	42	51	42	8	7	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	52	46	54	45	5	4	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	68	56	46	38	1	1	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	72	60	46	38	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	58	36	4	2
Primary schools	8	43	40	9
Secondary schools	10	35	42	13
Sixth forms	13	39	45	3
Special schools	33	42	20	4
Pupil referral units	18	40	29	12
All schools	11	42	38	9

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 are for the period 1 September 2009 to 31 March 2010 and are the most recently published data available (see www.ofsted.gov.uk). Please note that the sample of schools inspected during the autumn and spring terms 2009/10 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">■ 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.



24 September 2010

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Michael's CE Primary School, Bournemouth BH2 5LH

Thank you for your involvement in the recent inspection, particularly for the friendly and open way in which you talked to us. We enjoyed visiting your school very much.

You go to a good school and we think you are right to be proud of it. Here are the main things we found out.

- You make good progress in your work and you enjoy the good curriculum.
- You behave well and benefit from good teaching.
- The children in Reception get off to a good start.
- The school cares for you exceptionally well and you feel very safe.
- The governing body, the headteacher and the other staff have been successful in improving the school and are determined to make it even better.

There are two things we have asked the school to do to keep improving

- There are times when the work given to those of you who find learning easy is not difficult enough and we have asked the school to make sure that these pupils always have work with the right level of difficulty to make them think hard.
- Teachers' marking is good and helps you to do better. We have asked the school to help you to get even better at improving your work by giving you opportunities to assess your own work and come up with your own ideas on how to do better. You can help by thinking really carefully when this happens.

Thank you again for your involvement in the inspection and we wish you every success for the future.

Yours sincerely

Grahame Sherfield

Her Majesty's Inspector

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