

# Gillingham St Michael's Church of England Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	121140
<b>Local Authority</b>	Norfolk
<b>Inspection number</b>	358939
<b>Inspection dates</b>	22–23 September 2010
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Cheryl Thompson

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>	5–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	32
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Barbara Kaul
<b>Headteacher</b>	Heather Brand (Acting headteacher)
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 December 2007
<b>School address</b>	The Boundaries Geldeston Road Gillingham, Beccles
<b>Telephone number</b>	01502 713425
<b>Fax number</b>	01502 713425
<b>Email address</b>	office@st-michaelsfirst.norfolk.sch.uk

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## **Introduction**

This inspection was carried out by one additional inspector. Six lessons were observed involving three teachers and two teaching assistants. Meetings were held with groups of pupils, staff and governors. The inspector evaluated the school's work and looked at the system used for tracking pupils' progress, self-evaluation documents, external monitoring reports and development plans. Responses from 19 questionnaires from parents and carers were analysed as well as those from staff and older pupils.

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

- Whether the school's targets for pupils' attainment and progress are sufficiently challenging given their starting points.
- How efficiently pupils needing extra help are identified and provided for in class.
- How well the new acting headteacher and governors are identifying what needs to be done to improve the school further.

## **Information about the school**

St Michael's is a much smaller than average primary school which serves the local village and beyond.

There is a lower than average proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is also well below average. All pupils are of White British heritage. The Early Years Foundation Stage children are taught in the mixed Reception/Key Stage 1 class.

In September 2010, two weeks before the inspection, there have been significant changes in the school's provision: it has changed its status from first to primary school; and the acting headteacher and two new teachers started at the school.

The school has attained Healthy Schools status and the Royal Horticultural Level 3 Benchmark award.

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

## Inspection judgements

**Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?**

**3**

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

**3**

## Main findings

St Michael's provides a satisfactory education for its pupils. It has considerable strengths in its provision for pupils' personal development, being as one parent noted, 'a very friendly, warm school.'

Children enjoy a sound start to their education in Reception, where strong links with pre-school provision ensure a happy and confident start to the Early Years Foundation Stage. Attainment is currently above average in all year groups. The school's progress tracking system and pupils' current work indicate that they make satisfactory progress in their learning as they move through the school. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and those who are gifted or talented also make satisfactory progress. Currently, systems for identifying these pupils and putting an appropriate curriculum in place for them take far too long and are under review.

A significant strength in the school's provision is the way it helps pupils to become thoughtful and responsible young people. Their social skills are well-developed. Consequently, they play and work well together so that, together with their good basic literacy and numeracy skills, they are satisfactorily prepared for the next stage of their education and later life. The curriculum is satisfactory. However, the current narrow approach to individual National Curriculum subjects means that pupils have few opportunities to apply their well-developed basic skills and sound information and communication technology (ICT) skills to research and to write about challenging topics that interest them. Attendance is above average. Behaviour is good. Pupils enjoy taking on responsibilities such as being a play leader or competition organiser. They have a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe and do much to keep themselves fit through the strong links with the sports partnership. For its size, the school achieves outstanding success in sporting activities at local level.

Teaching is satisfactory. In a very short time, teachers have made a good start on getting to know their classes and planning for the three year groups in each class. Relationships are excellent in all classes, a strong feature of the teaching. However, at the moment not all lessons or activities planned for Reception children are ensuring good progress, often because of insufficient challenge, particularly for more-able pupils. The use of precise assessment within the school is developing, but it is not yet routinely used to ensure that work is well matched for pupils of all abilities.

Well-established teaching, clerical and mid-day assistants play an important role in the good pastoral care the school provides. Currently, guidance and support for all pupils are satisfactory. Links with parents are good and they have many good things to say about the school.

In that short time that the acting headteacher has been in post, she has developed a clear picture of the school's considerable strengths and prioritised areas for improvement, the majority of which were also identified by the inspection. As yet, there has been insufficient time for the impact of new ideas to be evident. The school has a satisfactory capacity for sustained improvement. The governing body, working with the previous headteacher, helped to ensure a smooth and successful change in headteacher, teaching team and primary school status. Parents appreciated being kept informed of changes.

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

- Improve pupils' progress to a consistently good level by:
  - making more precise use of assessment to plan lessons which build on what pupils already know
  - making more effective use of ICT
  - making sure that pupils who need extra help or are gifted or talented are identified quickly and appropriate work and opportunities provided
  - regular and rigorous monitoring by the headteacher.
- Develop the curriculum to ensure greater challenge especially for more able pupils by:
  - revising the school's yearly curriculum plans to include more topic themed work that makes relevant connections between subjects
  - making curricular links with nearby schools to help teachers build their subject leadership roles, to share resources, and for wider enrichment activities such as pupils' residential visits and provision for gifted and talented pupils.
- Ensure planning and teaching for children in Reception provides greater challenge, especially for the more able children by:
  - rigorous assessment of what it is children already know and understand when they start in Reception
  - precise planning to build on this knowledge to ensure maximum progress.
- Up to 40% of the schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory may receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before their next section 5 inspection.

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

<b>3</b>
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Current attainment in Year 2 and Year 5 is above average. The school's progress tracking information indicates that, over time, attainment on entry is usually above average and that there is no difference in the attainment or progress of boys and girls. In lessons seen, the large majority of pupils made at least satisfactory progress. In a mathematics lesson for Years 3, 4 and 5, pupils of all abilities made good progress because the work set for them was carefully tailored to their individual needs and

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

challenged pupils of all abilities. In other lessons, there was insufficient challenge. Consequently, pupils consolidated rather than extended their learning. However, in discussion with teachers after lessons, it is clear at this very early stage of the school year that they can evaluate their pupils' level of learning and identify how they can improve their future lessons.

Pupils say they enjoy coming to school, like their new teachers and like being with their friends. They say they feel very safe and are very confident that if they have any concerns, any member of staff will help them. Pupils contribute significantly to the caring ethos of the school and those elected enjoy the responsibility of being members of the newly formed school council. They enjoy physical activities immensely. Most belong to a school sports club and can talk at length about what constitutes a healthy diet.

*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	2
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
<b>The extent to which pupils feel safe</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Pupils' behaviour</b>	<b>2</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>2</b>
<b>The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: Pupils' attendance <sup>1</sup>	2
<b>The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development</b>	<b>2</b>

## How effective is the provision?

In a framework of excellent relationships, teachers manage their classes well so that pupils are keen to work hard. Teachers make good use of interactive whiteboards to

<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.

reinforce learning. In the good lessons observed in both classes, there is a high level of challenge and a productive balance between teachers talking and pupils being given time to work. More typically, however, in lessons observed, the work planned does not ensure pupils make optimum progress. Pupils' work is always marked but there is inconsistency in the usefulness of this in helping pupils understand what they have to do to improve.

The satisfactory curriculum provides a reasonable balance of relevant and interesting lessons which are further enriched by a good range of visits such as those to Norwich Castle, which contribute well to pupils' enjoyment of learning. Opportunities for pupils to use and develop their ICT skills are currently limited and little use is made of ICT programs to support pupils needing extra help or challenge. The acting headteacher has already identified that more must be done to provide greater relevance and challenge within the curriculum especially for the older year groups. Sports partnerships have a significant impact on pupils' high levels of sporting skills and their willing participation and success in a range of competitive sports. Currently, partnerships with other schools are at an early stage of development.

Pupils are known well. Any unhappiness is quickly noted and appropriate strategies put in place. Overall, support for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is satisfactory. The acting headteacher is revising the school's pupil progress tracking system so that it is more precise and can be used more effectively to set challenging targets for individuals.

*These are the grades for the quality of provision*

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

## How effective are leadership and management?

The acting headteacher and governors are keen to promote a welcoming and inclusive school where pupils develop as responsible young people and feel safe. In these respects the school is very successful. The school's good links with parents and carers are productive, especially in supporting reading at home.

School development planning is comprehensive but is close to the end of the planning cycle. Consequently, the acting headteacher has a 'blank canvas' for identifying and prioritising improvements. Within two weeks she has made a very good start on doing so, demonstrating high aspirations for pupils' progress. New staff are keen to take on responsibilities and to develop their roles.

Currently, there are satisfactory opportunities for all pupils, regardless of ability, gender

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or age to do well. The school promotes community cohesion within its own and local community successfully. In the recent past there have been good links with schools in the United Kingdom and Africa but these are not currently being pursued as staff involved have left the school. The effectiveness of the governing body is satisfactory. Governors are very supportive of the school but not always sufficiently rigorous in checking to make sure policies are followed and that pupils are making good progress. Safeguarding procedures are satisfactory. Site security and safety have high priority.

*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>3</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	3
<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>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money</b>	<b>3</b>

## Early Years Foundation Stage

Children enjoy coming to school, settle well and have very positive and mature attitudes to activities they undertake. Their levels of knowledge, skills and understanding are above those typical for their age. They talk at length about what they are doing and each has a well-developed vocabulary. Almost all know some letter sounds and can use them to sound out words. They take turns happily and are pleased to help one another, for example in building activities or when playing a board game. In a good ICT session for the oldest children, they used the laptop computers very sensibly and made good progress in developing their skills in using a 'paint' program. In other sessions seen, teaching was satisfactory and progress was adequate rather than good because the planned activities were insufficiently challenging to extend the learning of these able children. However, steps are being taken to assess children's stages of knowledge and understanding to provide a firmer basis for planning.

The teacher leading the Early Years Foundation Stage is newly in post. However, it is already acknowledged that assessment must be more rigorous to ensure optimum



progress; and that the class teacher should devote a higher proportion of her time to the Reception children, currently taught for the great majority of the time by the teaching assistant.

Parents are welcomed warmly into school. They are helped and encouraged to contribute to their children's learning. Links with pre-schools are good in ensuring a smooth start to school.

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

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>3</b>
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

The response from parents and carers to the questionnaire was highly positive. The return rate of questionnaires was much high than that usually found. From the questionnaires and discussions with parents it was clear that they are very happy with all the school provides and know that their children are well cared for and safe. They value the 'family atmosphere' and the strong links with the pre-school.

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

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at Gillingham 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 inspector received 19 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 32 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	14	74	5	26	0	0	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	12	63	7	37	0	0	0	0
The school informs me about my child's progress	11	58	8	42	0	0	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	12	63	7	37	0	0	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	13	68	6	32	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	14	74	5	26	0	0	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	16	84	3	16	0	0	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)	10	53	9	47	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	10	53	9	47	0	0	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	10	53	8	42	0	0	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	10	53	7	37	0	0	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	11	58	8	42	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	13	68	6	32	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

	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
Type of school	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](http://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"><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.**



24 September 2010

Dear Children

Inspection of Gillingham St Michael's Church of England Primary School, Gillingham, Beccles, NR34 0HT

Thank you so much for welcoming me to your school. Like you, I think it is a very friendly place to be and you get on very well together. My particular thanks to those of you who sat and talked to me at lunchtimes. I found what you had to say very helpful. In return, I now want to share with you my findings.

This is a satisfactory school. There have been many big changes for you all but, importantly, you continue to enjoy school. You told me the teachers are nice and everyone is friendly. I agree that teaching is satisfactory and sometimes good and all the adults care about you a great deal and work hard on your behalf. I noted that standards are usually above average and the older children in Year 5 are making sound progress.

Your new acting headteacher has many exciting ideas for making your school even better. I have asked your headteacher and school governors to do three things to get improvements off to a good start.

Ensure that the work teachers ask you to do makes you think hard and involves, when possible, good use of ICT.

Make sure that children who need a little extra help with learning or are talented in some way are quickly noted and have help to do even better.

Improve the curriculum so that there are good links between subjects such as English, history and ICT.

Your school is successful, not only because of what the adults bring to it, but also because of your contributions. You are very positive about learning and I was very impressed with how fit you all are, your good manners and how welcoming you are to visitors.

Thank you again for your help and all good wishes for your continued success.

Yours sincerely

Cheryl Thompson

Lead inspector

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