

St Michael's CofE Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	102140
Local Authority	Haringey
Inspection number	335845
Inspection dates	22–23 September 2009
Reporting inspector	Mr John Earish

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	168
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Father Colin Coppen
Headteacher	Mrs Linda Sarr (Interim)
Date of previous school inspection	13 December 2006
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by three additional inspectors. The inspectors visited 14 lessons as well as parts of lessons, and held meetings with governors, staff and groups of pupils, and spoke with parents. They observed the school's work, and looked at a range of documentation including school policies, children's work and teachers' lesson plans. In addition, the inspectors looked at 87 parental questionnaires.

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

- the achievement of significant groups of pupils – special educational needs and/or disabilities, English as an additional language and higher-attaining pupils – to determine whether teaching is sufficiently challenging and the effectiveness of the support and guidance provided
- the effectiveness of tracking/monitoring systems in informing managers about the impact of provision, particularly in relation to the three significant groups of pupils and the resulting impact of managers at all levels on the quality of teaching and learning
- the effectiveness of governance at holding the school to account for its performance.

Information about the school

This small primary school serves a culturally diverse area of Wood Green. Almost all of the pupils are from minority ethnic groups and a number are at the very earliest stages of learning English. The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is above that found nationally. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is well above average. The headteacher has been in post for just over a year. Following a 12-month partnership, the Governing Body has agreed to pursue the establishment of a more formal and long-term arrangement through a 'soft federation' with a local school. The Headteacher will be responsible for both schools.

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

2

Main findings

St Michael's is a satisfactory school. It is rapidly improving and this is reflected in the many positive views expressed by both pupils and parents. One parent commented, 'I feel the school has improved so much in the last year. We are better informed about everything and my children are so happy here and as importantly they are learning'.

Under the effective leadership of the new headteacher, an enthusiastic senior management team support and drive improvements. They work together as a committed and cohesive team to ensure consistency of practice in most areas of the school's work. Self-evaluation involves staff at all levels and provides an accurate diagnosis of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Monitoring and analysis of pupil achievement and the teaching and learning are rigorous and incisive. Standards are rising rapidly, though attainment is low. Pupils who have difficulty reading and writing and those speaking English as an additional language are now making better progress than before in lessons because teachers are planning tasks that are well matched to their needs.

Actions taken to improve the quality of teaching and learning have resulted in rapid improvements. However, good practice is not yet consistent in all classes. Pupils learn best when teachers have high expectations of what they can achieve, and when work is well matched to their individual needs. There are still some lessons, however, where teachers do not always pitch work at suitably challenging levels or spend too much time explaining tasks. Consequently, pupils, especially the higher attainers, do not always have sufficient opportunities to work independently or use their initiative and sustain rapid progress.

Good relationships are evident across the school and pupils particularly enjoy learning when involved in practical activities. The satisfactory curriculum provides well for pupils' personal, social and health education and makes a positive contribution to their good personal development. Planning in English, mathematics and science has been adapted to meet the needs within each class of those pupils who have difficulty reading and writing and those speaking English as an additional language. This is a significant improvement and underpins much of the school's recent success. A good start has been made to provide more challenging, relevant and exciting learning activities and by making thematic links between the different areas of learning. However, more remains to be done.

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In this welcoming, caring environment, pupils are happy, safe and make satisfactory progress in their learning. They have a well-developed sense of what it means to live a healthy lifestyle. This was demonstrated, for example, in the discussion with some Year 5 pupils who were challenged to select the components for a healthy meal using an 'online' restaurant menu for under £10. They spoke with maturity and certainty about the various dangers to health, such as eating too much fat and sugar and taking too little exercise. Good pastoral support and guidance, especially for the pupils and their families who are experiencing difficulties, make a strong contribution to the school's good relationships with parents.

The newly constituted governing body has a good knowledge and understanding of the issues facing the school. Governors are fully involved in the school's work but they are at the early stages of devising new ways of holding the school to account for its performance. Given the school's good procedures for safeguarding, its success at promoting equal opportunity and tackling discrimination, and the rapid and continuing improvement in pupils' attainment, achievement and enjoyment, it has a good capacity for sustained improvement.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase the proportion of good or better teaching to accelerate pupils' progress and further raise standards by:
 - increasing the opportunities during lessons for pupils, especially higher attainers, to work independently and use their initiative
 - strengthening the links between subjects to make the learning interesting, relevant and challenging.
- Ensure that governors are fully involved in holding the school to account for its performance.

About 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**3**

The vast majority of pupils now make the expected progress or better in all classes and are meeting their challenging targets. Previous test results show that standards are significantly lower than average in mathematics and science and below average in English. However, detailed and accurate performance data supplied by the school indicate that pupils are now well on the way to attain standards that are broadly in line with national averages in all three subjects by the age of 11 years. This is due to the rigorous tracking of pupils' progress, and the work of the subject leaders in monitoring and supporting learning. Children in the Early Years Foundation Stage

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make at least satisfactory progress from their well below average starting points in the Reception Year, and pupils in Year 1 are building well on this secure start to their education. Those pupils who speak English as an additional language achieve as well as their classmates during lessons. The good support for pupils who have difficulty with reading and writing means they are making good progress and achieving well. Though pupils' attainment is low, their learning and progress are improving securely and quickly due to the many recent rapid improvements in teaching, learning and the curriculum. Pupils confirm this and say that learning is now much more enjoyable and rewarding. Some older pupils added that 'we now have many more opportunities to think for ourselves and to work independently'.

Pupils are polite and courteous. They behave well and enjoy taking responsibility as peer mediators and school councillors for duties that support the smooth running of the school. In the wider community, they work hard to raise money for charitable causes. Through special topics and events they show a good awareness of other cultures and customs, and this contributes well towards their growing understanding of what it means to be British in an increasingly diverse society. While basic skills are low, pupils work together cooperatively and leave the school as confident well-rounded individuals. The rate of attendance is satisfactory. The school is strenuous in its efforts to ensure this is maintained and improved further.

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	4
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	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
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	3
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

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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How effective is the provision?

Pupils understand what they must do and achieve by the end of each lesson because objectives and targets are shared with them. In addition, teachers' regular checks of pupils' understanding of previous learning provides good opportunities to clarify, consolidate and review new work. Another important feature is the active participation of pupils in the learning, rather than listening for lengthy periods to the teacher. Learning is most effective when work is well matched to the needs of the different groups within each class. However, these good features are not consistent in all lessons.

Developing literacy and numeracy skills is a curriculum priority. A good start has been made to make it more challenging, relevant and exciting through thematic links between the different areas of learning. For example, Year 5 pupils were finding out about healthy diets and the importance of fresh fruit and vegetables by studying life aboard ship in the time of Captain Cook. Pupils say they find this 'a very effective way of learning' because it 'captures their imagination and curiosity'. Links with other schools, different specialists and expert teachers are making a useful contribution to all aspects of pupils' learning. Although provision for science meets requirements, it is not yet sufficiently developed to ensure scientific enquiry skills are taught systematically.

Positive relationships, coupled with the high priority placed on treating each child as an individual, are indicative of the good care, guidance and support. As a result, pupils play a full and active part in school life. Staff are clear about pupils' health, safety and welfare, and policies and procedures are carefully implemented. The much improved methods and information for keeping track of pupils' progress are used well to set challenging targets for improvement. Target setting is developing well to guide pupils' academic development, although there is scope to help pupils have an even clearer understanding of what they must do to improve. The school works well with parents, volunteers and a variety of external agencies to support all children, including those most at risk.

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?

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The strong impact of leadership is seen in how effectively the headteacher and senior managers are embedding ambition and driving improvement. They have successfully rebuilt the confidence and self-esteem of pupils and adults and taken effective actions to reduce underachievement. As one member of staff wrote, 'From a long period of stagnation and insularity, the school has moved forward rapidly under the new leadership team'. This is a significant success and an excellent foundation for future learning and progress. The new headteacher and governing body quickly drew up an action plan to deal decisively with disaffection among parents and pupils, underachievement, poor behaviour and lack of morale. As a result, the school is building very successfully on the improved relationships with parents and carers. Leaders and governors take very seriously their responsibility to promote equal opportunities and tackle discrimination, and the success of this commitment is evident in the way barriers to learning have been effectively tackled. Consequently, standards are rising and achievement is improving rapidly and pupils are achieving more challenging targets. The school promotes community cohesion well; for example, it has a well-developed link with a school in the Caribbean and engages well with the wider community. Systems for safeguarding pupils and adults are rigorous and well understood.

Governors are supportive, are well informed and understand most of the school's strengths and areas needing further development. The challenge they provide has had an impact on some important areas, for example in developing relationships with parents and dealing with a deficient budget. However, they are at an early stage of devising robust new ways of holding the school to account for its performance.

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	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	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	3

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Early Years Foundation Stage

Children’s welfare needs are met effectively, which is why they settle quickly and make satisfactory progress in their learning. They start school with well below average skills, especially in communication, language, and literacy and number. They make satisfactory progress overall because learning is satisfactory. Most children are still working towards the expected levels for their age by the time they move into Year 1.

Children genuinely enjoy learning and discovering through play because adults encourage them to make their own independent choices. They behave well, play harmoniously together and are considerate of each other. The balance between activities chosen by the children and those planned for them by the teacher is good. The school is improving the provision for outdoor play to support the development of children’s coordination and physical development. Leadership and management are satisfactory. While staff accurately record children’s achievements and use these to plan the next steps in learning, the information is not used rigorously enough to clearly identify children’s starting points in all the areas of learning.

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

The large majority of parents are happy with their child’s experience of school. They say their children enjoy school and they value the support that they are given. A few felt that their views or concerns were not always listened to or that incidents of unacceptable behaviour were not always dealt with effectively. Some parents also wanted more help to support their children’s learning so they could make faster progress.

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 87 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 168 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	57	66	28	32	0	0	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	53	61	30	35	3	3	0	1
The school informs me about my child's progress	38	44	46	53	2	2	1	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	33	38	41	47	8	9	2	3
The teaching is good at this school	38	44	39	45	5	6	3	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	34	39	43	49	7	8	2	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	38	44	42	48	0	0	5	2
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)	25	29	45	52	4	5	12	1
The school meets my child's particular needs	28	32	49	56	4	5	4	2
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	31	36	45	52	7	8	3	1
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	32	37	45	52	6	7	2	2
The school is led and managed effectively	31	36	42	48	2	2	9	3
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	39	45	41	47	2	2	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 all 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

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>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 pupils' 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.



25 September 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Michael's CofE Primary School, Wood Green, N22 8HE

Thank you for being so welcoming and helpful when we visited your school recently. We enjoyed looking at your work, seeing you in lessons, watching the celebration assembly and talking to so many of you.

Your headteacher and teachers have made your school an attractive place to learn. You and your parents told us that you like school and that it is a welcoming, caring place where you feel safe. I was pleased to talk with a group of older pupils who took it upon themselves to explain how much your school has improved. They were very complimentary about the changes. You behave well, get on well with each other and help the school to run smoothly. Many of you said that you found the work of the playground mediators very helpful. Well done mediators!

You go to a satisfactory and improving school. This means that there are lots of things that it does well, but also there are some things that could be better. We have asked the staff to help you even more by making sure your lessons are all as good as the best, so that you can make even more progress. Also to give you even more opportunities to use your own initiative during lessons and to work independently. You told us that you find this a very effective and enjoyable way to learn. Teachers have made a good start at making links between subjects so that lessons are challenging and interesting. We have asked them to continue to plan their lessons this way. We would also like the governors to find out more about the different ways they could check how well you are doing. This will help them to make your school even better.

You can all help by continuing to work hard to meet the targets set for you.

We are sure that you are ready for these challenges!

Yours faithfully

John Earish
Lead inspector

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