

St Michael's Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	109228
Local Authority	South Gloucestershire
Inspection number	324926
Inspection dates	2–3 December 2008
Reporting inspector	Bill James

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Community
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	551
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Mrs Cath Johansen
Headteacher	Mr Mark Freeman
Date of previous school inspection	13 October 2005
School address	Ratcliffe Way Stoke Gifford BS34 8SG
Telephone number	01454 866783
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

St Michael's Church of England Primary School is the largest school in the unitary authority of South Gloucestershire. Pupils are drawn from the immediate neighbourhood and most of them have attended pre-school or nursery groups prior to starting Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) in the school. Most pupils are of White British heritage, although there is an increasing number of pupils from other ethnic backgrounds. A relatively small number of pupils speak English as an additional language and the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, mainly speech and language difficulties, is lower than the national average. The school has a number of awards including: Investor in People, Healthy Schools and Eco-Schools. The school runs a well-attended breakfast club and on-site childcare is run by an external provider. After school childcare for the school, is provided in adjacent premises run by an external provider.

Key for inspection grades

Grade 1	Outstanding
Grade 2	Good
Grade 3	Satisfactory
Grade 4	Inadequate

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 2

St Michael's Church of England Primary School is a good school that offers a good standard of education for its pupils that is recognised and appreciated by parents. The school provides an outstanding level of care, guidance and support for its pupils. Pupils trust the adults that look after them and this allows them to learn in a safe environment. Pupils enjoy coming to school, they are well behaved, enjoy their learning and achieve well as a result. This is reflected in their good personal development, as relationships throughout the school are strong. However, while pupils are well managed they do not have sufficient opportunities to develop the skills of independent learning.

Children's level of attainment when they start school is broadly as expected for their age. They make good progress in the Reception classes and this progress is maintained throughout the school. Current standards being achieved by the pupils are above average and their achievement is good. This includes those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities who achieve equally well. Mathematics has been a focus in the school and it is in this area that pupils achieve best. The school recognises the need to improve the achievement of pupils in writing in order to raise standards.

Good teaching that builds on pupils' knowledge is leading to good learning. Teachers use targets effectively to help pupils' understand what they need to do to make their work better. Teachers then follow this up by checking pupils' progress against these targets. If pupils do fall behind in their work they can be identified quickly and given the extra help they need. Senior leaders monitor teaching and provide effective feedback that helps teachers to improve. Marking is good and focuses on how pupils can improve their work.

The curriculum is good and provides good opportunities for enrichment and enhancement. However, recent changes in the curriculum are not closely monitored to make sure that pupils get the full range of opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge. There is a very good range of clubs, visits and enrichment activities that help to develop and support learning.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides good leadership and is supported by an effective leadership team. They have been effective in addressing the issues from the previous inspection and have made the necessary improvements. The impact of these measures illustrate that the school has a good capacity for further improvement. The governing body is well informed; it offers good support and appropriate challenge with regards to school development.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 2

The EYFS is recognised by parents as a strength of the school. Children settle in very quickly as a result of the outstanding care that enables them to make good progress from the outset. EYFS teachers know the pupils well. Good questioning, together with a good range of activities, ensure that children have good opportunities to learn. The good curriculum provides a range of learning opportunities that are very effective in nurturing children's independence, with a

good balance of activities initiated by adults and by the children themselves. However, there are times when children are not purposefully engaged in some activities and they require more direction. The provision benefits from strong leadership that has a commitment to involving parents in their children's learning.

What the school should do to improve further

- Improve writing across the school by carefully monitoring the opportunities pupils have to write and by ensuring these are used to best effect to improve standards.
- Monitor the curriculum to ensure that all the planned activities enable pupils to develop their skills and knowledge.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 2

Children enter the EYFS with skills which are similar to those expected for their age. As a result of good provision their achievement is good and this provides children with a good start before they enter Year 1. Standards by the end of Year 2 in the last year were lower than normal but current standards are now above average. Pupils' achievement in mathematics and reading is better than that in writing.

Standards at the end of Year 6 are above average, with mathematics being a particular strength. Standards achieved in writing are lower, with boys doing less well than girls. The school recognises the need to improve this area of its work. There are no other significant variations in the progress made by different groups of pupils in the school. Detailed tracking of pupils' achievement is having a very positive effect, with targeted help to assist pupils who are falling behind being an important area that the school has developed. As a result, those pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities achieve equally well.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils enjoy coming to school and attendance is above average. Relationships are good and pupils work and play together well. This reflects the importance the school places on developing relationships in a welcoming environment. The contribution that the pupils make to the community both in and out of school is good. The school council provides pupils with an effective voice. Pupils enjoy their responsibilities as they have a clear understanding of how they can make their school better. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good in all respects, with adult members of the school community providing good role models to reinforce this. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is good and pupils say that they are helped to resolve disagreements. The development of the skills pupils will need in later life is good; however, opportunities for pupils to develop independence are currently limited.

Pupils have a very good understanding of how to stay safe and feel that they can turn to adults if they have concerns. They understand well the importance of a good diet as part of a healthy lifestyle, and this is supported by the food provided in

school. Pupils value their learning and understand the importance of doing well for the next steps in their education. They feel a part of the community, both in school and in the wider world, and this is reinforced by visits and visitors.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 2

The standard of teaching in the school is good. The majority of lessons are delivered with good pace, reflecting high expectations and an emphasis on challenging pupils at a range of levels. Teachers and support staff build on pupils' knowledge and understanding, and develop their learning as a result. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and pupils benefit from the good relationships that exist with their teachers and support staff. This is complemented by good, useful and informative marking that relates to the targets that pupils are using to try and improve their work.

The effective use of individual pupils' targets as a way of improving the learning of pupils is now well developed. There are good opportunities for assessment to see how well pupils are doing and a good range of support for those pupils who need extra help. The quality of teachers' planning is variable, particularly in topic areas identified in the new curriculum.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The school provides a good curriculum that is reflected in the above average standards that pupils attain. The school has recently adopted a new curriculum providing topics that incorporate several subjects. While this approach is in its infancy, there is evidence of inconsistency both in style and content. Monitoring of the curriculum does not ensure that all activities are effective in developing pupils' skills and knowledge. The curriculum is enriched by a variety of appropriate visitors and events such as the very popular environment week. The very good variety of after-school clubs supports pupils' learning across the curriculum and enhances their personal development. French is taught in Years 3 to 6, adding further opportunities for pupils to develop their skills. There is good use of educational visits, particularly the residential trip for Years 5 and 6.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 1

From the EYFS onwards the care, guidance and support offered to pupils are outstanding. The school has good procedures, at many different levels, to ensure that pupil care is a top priority for the school. There is rigorous high quality monitoring and recording of any incidents or risks to pupils' safety and all legal requirements are met. As a result, pupils say that they feel safe. They are surrounded by staff with a high level of commitment whom they trust. The school works well with a variety of agencies and parents to support pupils, and this is something that parents especially value. Pupils' personal and academic progress is

carefully tracked and monitored and appropriate targets are set to help them improve. Pupils know and value these targets, and understand how they are helping to improve their work especially in mathematics and English. Support for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is good because any underachievement is quickly identified. The school has a number of different programmes that support pupils in their learning, focusing not only on academic help but also on meeting their social and emotional needs.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher is a good leader. His clear focus on whole-school development and improvement in achievement is underpinned by the high standard of care provided for the pupils. The senior leaders have had a direct impact on school effectiveness. The tracking of pupils' progress, the analysis of data and the monitoring of its effectiveness are leading to better achievement and more consistent standards. From their observations, the literacy and numeracy leaders have a clear picture of standards across the school. Good quality feedback is used to inform both planning and teaching. This focuses on learning, so that pupils of all abilities can make good progress. The school's evaluation is good and the use of challenging targets to improve pupils' progress across the school is working well. The governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and the areas which have to be improved. They take an active part in the effective deployment and use of resources. They are supportive and have a strong commitment to the Christian ethos of the school. Their ability to effectively challenge the school is improving as the quality of information they receive gets better. They, together with the leadership of the school, effectively advance community cohesion by promoting the school as the centre of the community, and their success in this area is widely recognised by parents.

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Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate.	School Overall
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Overall effectiveness

How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?	2
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of boarding provision	
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	1
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	2
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	1
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	2

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	2
The standards ¹ reached by learners	2
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	2
How well learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities make progress	2

¹ Grade 1 - Exceptionally and consistently high; Grade 2 - Generally above average with none significantly below average; Grade 3 - Broadly average to below average; Grade 4 - Exceptionally low.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of learners' needs?	2
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	2
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	1

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
Do procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements?	Yes
Does this school require special measures?	No
Does this school require a notice to improve?	No

Annex B



5 December 2008

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St Michael's Church of England Primary School, Stoke Gifford
BS34 8SG**

Thank you for making us welcome in your school and for talking with us so openly. We really enjoyed joining you in lessons and seeing your work. We think your school gives you a good education. Here are some of the reasons why:

- Children in Reception make a good start to their education.
- Nearly all of you are making good progress because you work hard.
- Your behaviour is good and you told us how much you like coming to school.
- You have a good understanding of the importance of healthy eating and exercise in order to stay healthy
- Teaching is good. Your teachers help you to learn and keep a check on your progress.
- The targets you are given are working really well and they are helping you to do even better.
- You have a good headteacher, and all the adults, including the governors, are working hard to improve your school.

We have two recommendations to help your school to get even better:

- To really concentrate on teaching you to write as well as you can.
- To keep a close check on the new topics you are doing to make sure they help your work to get even better.

We hope that you will continue to work hard and enjoy your time at school. You can help the school to improve by politely telling an adult if you think something could be better.

Yours sincerely

Bill James

Lead inspector