

# St Michael's Church of England Aided Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	126392
<b>Local Authority</b>	Wiltshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	360071
<b>Inspection dates</b>	22–23 March 2011
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Christine Huard

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>	135
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Marianne Banning Adey
<b>Headteacher</b>	Susan Smith
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	24 February 2009
<b>School address</b>	Back Lane Marlborough Wiltshire SN8 2BP
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## Introduction

This inspection was carried out by two additional inspectors. They visited 11 lessons and observed six teachers. There were meetings with governors, staff and some pupils from Years 4, 5 and 6. The inspectors observed the school's work, and looked at samples of pupils' work in literacy and mathematics as well as curricular planning, assessment and tracking information for each year group, minutes of governors' meetings and the school's procedures for ensuring pupils' safety. The inspectors also considered 62 questionnaires that were received from parents and carers as well as those returned by staff and pupils.

The inspectors reviewed many aspects of the school's work, looking in detail at a number of key areas.

- Investigating and evaluating what the school is doing to improve attainment in mathematics across the school.
- The quality and success of actions to improve writing.
- What the school is doing to raise the standard of teaching to ensure it is consistently good.
- The quality of outdoor provision for pupils in the Reception class, particularly in enabling them to develop independence and make choices.

## Information about the school

St Michael's Church of England School is small when compared to other primary schools. The very large majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities is below average and these relate mainly to moderate learning, autism or emotional and behavioural difficulties. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is also below average. No pupils are at an early stage of learning English. The school has achieved a number of nationally recognised awards, including Healthy Schools status. The children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are accommodated in the Reception class. There is a pre-school, and breakfast and after-school clubs on site but these are run independently and were therefore not part of this inspection.

**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. It has some outstanding features, particularly in the high quality of care it affords its pupils and in several aspects of their personal development. The education it provides fully reflects the school's recently revised vision statement. The parents and carers are overwhelmingly supportive of the school. As one wrote, 'The new vision and values statement encapsulates perfectly the ambition and application shown by the pupils, staff and parents throughout the school.'

The pupils really enjoy school and their learning. One parent or carer commented, 'The children really look forward to school and miss it in the holidays enough said!' The curriculum is interesting and stimulating. It inspires the pupils and enables them to achieve well. The headteacher works enthusiastically with her senior leadership team to successfully drive the school forward. Teamwork and a total unity of purpose are the main reasons for the school's success. There is a determination and commitment to provide the best possible education for every pupil. The staff are enthusiastic, well motivated and work very well together. They know the children. There is a staunch team spirit and a feeling of whole-school ownership of decisions made. Everyone is striving to further improve what is already a good school.

Staff and governors know how well the school is doing. The school has set challenging targets for future development but they are achievable. Self-evaluation is very accurate and senior leaders and governors are always looking for ways to improve. There is a good capacity for further improvement, as illustrated by the significant improvements made in mathematics and writing, leading to above average standards at the end of Year 6 and the good progress of pupils across the school.

Children in the Reception class get a good start to their education. The exciting range of activities provided in the stimulating environment mean that they learn effectively and make good progress. Attainment at the end of Year 6 over time is average. It varies from year to year, which is to be expected with relatively small groups of children. The attainment of the current Year 6 is above average, representing good progress from their starting points. This good progress is reflected throughout the school as a result of a determined effort to improve the quality of teaching and learning. This has been achieved well and teaching and learning are good overall. This has had a positive impact on the good progress made by pupils in mathematics and writing. The strategies adopted to secure improvement in these areas have been highly successful. The school, however, has not yet identified all the opportunities for pupils to explore mathematics in the various topic themes they pursue, which means they miss chances to practise and apply their basic skills through problem solving and investigation.

The progress of pupils is monitored rigorously and this tracking means that any pupils having difficulties or performing particularly well are swiftly identified and a programme

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put in place to ensure the right level of support or challenge is offered. The system has ensured that pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities also make good progress. On a day-to-day basis, teachers mark pupils' work diligently. However, the quality of marking is inconsistent. Many constructive comments are made but teachers do not always tell pupils precisely how they can improve their work.

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

- Improve pupils' achievements in mathematics by identifying opportunities for practising basic skills, problem solving and investigation within the topics pursued.
- Improve the quality of marking to ensure all pupils know exactly what they need to do to improve their work.

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

**2**

Pupils learn effectively because tasks are well matched to their individual needs. Strategies to raise attainment have proved to be very effective. Guided mathematics sessions have been introduced and these enable pupils to practise their basic skills in an entertaining way. Those needing more specific help with a particular aspect benefit from focus groups. In a Year 2 session, pupils were engaged in a variety of mathematics games involving calculation while a group worked with the teacher to solve problems involving multiplication and division. The tasks were all set at different levels to ensure that all were appropriately challenged and consequently they made good progress and achieved well. Older pupils, in Years 3 to 5, developed their persuasive writing skills well. They learned the importance of using imperative verbs, or 'bossy' verbs as they were termed for the younger pupils, and the necessity of using appropriate adjectives and adverbs in order to sustain the attention of the reader. Pupils achieve well because they receive the support or challenge that they need. There is no difference in the performance of different groups of pupils. Those with special educational needs and/or disabilities receive good support. More-able pupils are challenged appropriately and those pupils with particular talents receive many opportunities to extend and develop these both in and out of school.

Pupils thrive in the nurturing atmosphere of the school. They are well motivated and keen to succeed. They have an excellent knowledge of what living a healthy lifestyle entails, fully justifying the school's Healthy Schools status. They make an outstanding contribution to the day-to-day running of the school. They have an excellent understanding of their wider global responsibilities and have developed a range of ideas to make the school 'greener'. They are thoughtful and reflective, assertive and confident. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is outstanding. They have an excellent awareness of the cultural diversity in the United Kingdom today and show considerable talents in music and the arts. Behaviour in and around the school is good and the play spaces are happy and harmonious places. Their excellent punctuality and attendance, as well as good literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology skills ensure pupils are getting a good grounding for the future.

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*These are the grades for pupils' outcomes*

<b>Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment <sup>1</sup>	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
<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>1</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>2</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>

<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

## How effective is the provision?

Teachers work very hard to enthuse and inspire their pupils through the good curriculum the school provides. Topics, such as those on Africa, pirates, and recycling, excite and motivate them. Teachers make excellent links across a range of subjects and this makes pupils' learning more relevant and meaningful to them. Pupils have ample opportunities to develop and extend their writing skills in these topics, from describing the various pirates' punishments to vilifying the evils of apartheid, which have a positive impact on their progress. However, topics do not provide the same opportunities to develop and practise their mathematics skills as these have not been identified within the planning.

'Our teachers do all they can to make learning fun,' explained one pupil. Relationships between adults and pupils are excellent. Teachers listen to their pupils and take their interests and needs into account when planning. They ensure that pupils know what they are going to learn and use resources, such as interactive whiteboards, skilfully. Tasks are carefully devised to meet the learning needs of all pupils so that all are appropriately challenged or supported. Pupils have lots of opportunities to discuss and compare their thinking and ideas with partners, but this strategy is occasionally overused, which slows the pace of learning. Marking is good in the majority of classes and target setting strategies are consistent across the school. However, not all marking tells pupils what they have to do in order to improve their work.

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It is firmly bound up in the ethos and culture of the school that every child's needs are individually known and catered for. As a result, all pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities, make good progress. The school works closely with parents, carers and a wide range of outside agencies to enable them to make the best possible provision. Transition arrangements into and out of the school are effective. Pupils receive excellent support for their personal development and are very well cared for.

*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>2</b>
<b>The effectiveness of care, guidance and support</b>	<b>1</b>

## How effective are leadership and management?

The headteacher is highly skilled, fully committed, and drives forward the ambitious programme outlined in the school development plan. Leadership roles are devolved effectively. There is a robust monitoring programme to ensure that the drive towards higher standards, in both personal and academic attainment, is sustained. The school improvement plan is good, and a vital constituent in the concerted efforts to drive this school forward. The monitoring and tracking of pupils' progress are rigorous, with swift actions taken to remedy any perceived weakness. Equality of opportunity for pupils is promoted effectively. All teachers are held to account through pupil progress meetings where the school's accurate tracking system highlights any possible underperformance and swift action is taken to address this. Regular newsletters and workshops provide parents and carers with excellent information and they appreciate the accessibility of the headteacher and staff. The school has established outstanding links with a wide variety of outside agencies and local primary and secondary schools in order to further promote pupils' well-being and learning. Governors and senior leaders promote good levels of community cohesion through links with a school in India whose headteacher is shortly to visit them. Pupils' knowledge of the differing cultures represented in the United Kingdom is outstanding because they have a strong link with a school in a contrasting area as well as investigating a range of other cultures and beliefs as part of their curriculum. Governors have a good overview of the school's performance. Regular visits, reports and meetings with staff mean they are able to be constructive and challenging. The governing body ensures that the pupils are kept safe. Parents and carers are confident that this is effective. There are very careful checks on all adults who work in the school and health and safety checks as well as risk assessments are carried out rigorously.

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*These are the grades for leadership and management*

<b>The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement</b>	<b>2</b>
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
<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>2</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>2</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>2</b>

## **Early Years Foundation Stage**

Children are eager to learn and make good progress because teaching is confident and lively. There is a good balance between those activities led by the teacher and those that children choose for themselves. Their curriculum is well planned and good use is made of the outside areas. There are many opportunities for children to pursue their early literacy and numeracy skills. They learn to share and take turns and develop independence and the ability to make choices. The current theme, revolving around 'Where the Wild Things Are', provides many learning opportunities for children. They role play in the 'Wild Things Cafe', solving problems involving money and making menus. One group was packing cases for Max's journey and they included things like binoculars and compasses, 'so that he knows where he is going,' explained one child. Some children were making boats for Max to go on his travels, letting their imaginations run free and describing what he might see. Questioning skills of all staff are good and these encourage children to explain their thinking and reasoning so that they fully understand their learning. The care and attention given to children's welfare are excellent. Children's individual needs are known and acted upon and children feel very safe and secure. Induction processes are very secure and there are very good relationships with the pre-school on site and with the other settings from which children attend. Leadership and management are good. Children's progress is monitored carefully and extra support or challenge put in place where needed. The observations made in children's 'Learning Journeys' record children's progress effectively and parents and carers make useful contributions to these. However, the staff do not always identify the next steps in children's learning.

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

<b>Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage</b>	<b>2</b>
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

About half the parents responded to the questionnaires which were sent out, which is a high response when compared to responses nationally. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who responded are happy with the experiences their children have at St Michael's and all agree that the school keeps their children safe. Parents and carers made many positive comments about the school and the general consensus is summed up by one who said: 'A fantastic village school, giving the children a secure and confident start to their learning journey.'

## 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 62 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 135 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	46	74	14	23	2	3	0	0
The school keeps my child safe	46	74	16	26	0	0	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	35	56	24	39	1	2	0	0
My child is making enough progress at this school	37	60	22	35	1	2	0	0
The teaching is good at this school	48	77	13	21	0	0	0	0
The school helps me to support my child's learning	39	63	21	34	2	3	0	0
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	45	73	15	24	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)	37	60	21	34	0	0	0	0
The school meets my child's particular needs	44	71	15	24	2	3	0	0
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	30	48	26	42	4	6	0	0
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	33	53	25	40	1	2	0	0
The school is led and managed effectively	46	74	16	26	0	0	0	0
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	49	79	12	19	1	2	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 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

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	59	35	3	3
Primary schools	9	44	39	7
Secondary schools	13	36	41	11
Sixth forms	15	39	43	3
Special schools	35	43	17	5
Pupil referral units	21	42	29	9
All schools	13	43	37	8

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 August 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

The sample of schools inspected during 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.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

## 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 pupils' 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 March 2011

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St Michael's Church of England Primary School, Aldbourne SN8 2BP**

Thank you for making us so welcome when we visited your school. We really enjoyed seeing you work so hard in lessons and play so happily outside. You showed us how much you enjoy your school and are proud of how well you are doing. You are right to be pleased, because it is a good school!

What we found out about your school:

- You really enjoy school and make good progress in English and mathematics.
- You behave well, both in class and out in the playground.
- You get on well with the other pupils and look after each other.
- The headteacher and governors are good at running the school and understand well how they could make it even better.
- You have an excellent understanding of how to live healthy lives and really work hard to make a positive contribution in school; we think your efforts to make the school a greener place are excellent.
- Your teachers work hard to plan interesting lessons.
- Your curriculum is exciting and innovative.
- All staff take excellent care of you and keep you safe.
- Children in Reception get a good start to their school life.

What we would like the school to do now:

- Provide more opportunities for you to use your numeracy skills in the topics you pursue.
- Ensure that teachers tell you what you can do to improve when they mark your work.

Best wishes for the future. You can all help the school improve further by continuing to work as hard as you do now.

Yours sincerely

Christine Huard

Lead Inspector

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