

# St Michael's Church of England Aided Primary School

Lower Street, Tettenhall, Wolverhampton, WV6 9AF

## Inspection dates

12–13 December 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Teaching is nearly always good. Teachers work diligently, using good subject knowledge to make lessons stimulating.
- Most pupils make good progress, particularly in reading and writing, so their attainment is rising consistently.
- Good levels of support to disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs ensure that they make good progress.
- Pupils' behaviour is good and sometimes outstanding.
- The quality of support to pupils new to the school is effective, especially in reading and writing. Consequently, gaps in their learning are closing swiftly so that they play a full part in school life.
- The governing body and senior leaders have worked closely together to ensure that inadequate teaching has been eradicated and that training for teachers has a significant impact on pupils' learning.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- There is not enough outstanding teaching to speed up pupils' progress further.
- Though improving, levels of progress in mathematics lag behind those seen in reading and writing.
- Pupils do not check the accuracy of their answers in mathematics with sufficient precision.
- Teachers' marking is positive and accurate but their guidance on how pupils can improve is inconsistent.
- Pupils are not given enough opportunities to use their initiative or to develop independent learning skills.

## Information about this inspection

- Eighteen lessons or parts of lessons were observed. All classroom teachers present during the inspection were observed teaching and almost all were observed at least twice. Inspectors undertook three joint lesson observations with the headteacher.
- Discussions were held with senior leaders, staff, members of the governing body and different groups of pupils.
- An inspector heard individual pupils read and discussed with them their reading preferences and individual reading record.
- Inspectors sampled pupils' work, scrutinised the school's tracking records of pupils' progress and took account of the school's self-evaluation and improvement plans.
- The lead inspector held a discussion with a member of the local authority's advisory staff.
- The views of parents and carers were sought during the two days and 24 responses to Parent View were examined. Inspectors took account of the school's own survey of the views of 37 parents and carers undertaken in December 2011.
- The views of staff were sought through a questionnaire. In total, 18 questionnaires were scrutinised.

## Inspection team

Gordon Ewing, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Jennifer Cutler

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a smaller than average-sized primary school.
- Pupils come from a wide range of different heritage groups. The largest group (28%) is of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils whose first language is not English is well above average.
- An above average proportion of pupils is eligible for the pupil premium, which provides additional funding for children in local authority care and pupils known to be eligible for free school meals.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is below average. The proportion of pupils supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average.
- The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school, other than at expected times, is high. A number of these pupils have complex learning needs and speak little or no English.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school receives children from up to 20 different Nursery settings and some children have not received any early years education prior to their induction into the Reception class.
- The school runs a daily pre-school group called 'The Toast and Study Club' which hosts up to 20 pupils. This provision is managed by the governing body.
- The school uses part-time local authority alternative provision to support pupils who have complex needs.
- An Ofsted subject inspection in December 2011 judged pupils' achievement, the quality of teaching and subject leadership of geography as good.

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

- Raise attainment and further improve rates of progress, especially in mathematics, through making teaching consistently good by ensuring that:
  - all teachers understand and apply the key components of outstanding teaching
  - the mathematical skills and abilities of new pupils are promptly checked and support provided to close any gaps in their learning
  - the number and calculations policy is applied thoroughly across the school
  - pupils confidently check the accuracy of their calculations using alternative methods
  - pupils have a wide range of opportunities to apply their calculation skills in different ways across subjects, such as science, and through open-ended investigations.
- Increase pupils' abilities to work on their own as learners and thus improve their capacity to be less reliant on adults, by:
  - providing more learning activities and challenging investigations that make pupils think across the curriculum
  - improving their ability to carefully review their own work and set themselves new targets
  - increase opportunities to judge the quality of their own work and that of their peers
  - developing pupils' skills in the use of dictionaries, thesaurus and encyclopaedia.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Children make a good start in Reception from low starting points. This is because adults provide a well-balanced and stimulating range of activities that is built around accurate assessments of their progress and interests. When they start in Year 1, pupils' attainment in personal, social and emotional development and in communication, language and literacy is broadly in line with those expected for their age.
- Pupils' attainment and progress have improved steadily over the last three years. Across the school, particularly in reading and writing, progress is accelerating because teachers are more astute in tracking pupils' learning and adapting lessons more accurately to their needs. As a result, over time most pupils reach the levels expected for their age in Year 6.
- Rates of progress in mathematics, though rising steadily, are not at the levels seen in reading and writing. Leaders have taken clear action to turn around the legacy of underachievement in mathematics, for example by recently introducing a number and calculations policy. This is not consistently applied across the school, however.
- The teaching of phonics (linking letters and sounds) is good across the school and, by the end of Year 2, pupils read fluently. They continue to make good progress in their reading so that those Year 6 pupils who have been at the school since Year 2 are reading at above average levels.
- The learning and progress of pupils supported by additional funding, disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs or complex needs, are good and sometimes outstanding. The use of small teaching groups ensures that most pupils who find learning tricky at times receive support that is just right for their needs. This boosts their confidence, self-esteem and basic skills.
- Additional funding for pupils (the pupil premium) is used very well to support a broad range of activities. These include one-to-one tuition in mathematics, writing and reading; group tuition in music; and participation in after-school clubs. As a result of the good teaching, alongside these additional activities, the learning gap for these pupils is closing convincingly.
- The school has well-tuned procedures for checking the skills of newly arrived pupils and those with limited knowledge of English in reading and writing. As a result, teaching ensures that these pupils develop the key language skills to make the most of school life. This is not yet the case in mathematics, however. Procedures to assess the mathematical skill-levels of newcomers are not yet fully established and, consequently, their progress in mathematics, though improving, is not as strong.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teachers use their good subject knowledge and skilful questioning to ensure that pupils are engaged and that work is demanding. Teachers expect pupils to work hard and manage their behaviour well. Consequently, lessons are characterized by good relationships where pupils cooperate and collaborate well, and their learning is improved through paired discussions and activities. The very large majority of parents and carers rightly judge that their children are taught well.
- Most lessons start with teachers discussing with pupils what they are going to learn and the

steps they will need to take to do this. Teachers work conscientiously in adapting tasks to the broad range of abilities so that most learning is well paced and at the right level. For example, in an outstanding phonics lesson in Reception, the teacher ably linked sounds to story telling so that learning was meaningful and enjoyable. The activities ensured that linking letters and sounds went hand-in-hand with writing. As a result, children swiftly formed letters accurately and with confidence. Their enthusiasm was infectious. The teacher skilfully used every opportunity to focus on learning and reinforce key skills.

- Teachers regularly check how well pupils are learning in lessons to adapt activities so that any misunderstandings are overcome and progress is continuous.
- Newcomers and those at an early stage of learning English are well supported individually and in small groups in developing their speaking and listening, reading and writing skills. As a result, they establish good attitudes to learning and rapidly develop the key skills necessary to communicate effectively. In a good group session seen, pupils were learning how to subtract two digit numbers using different methods. The teacher ably reinforced the use of vocabulary at every step so that pupils' mathematical vocabulary was growing in range and depth. This good practice in mathematics is not common, however, for all new pupils to the school.
- Scrutiny of pupils' work in their books confirms that teaching has improved over time. Teachers are diligent in their marking and written feedback. However, not all pupils are given time to respond to their teachers' comments and opportunities are missed to help them become more independent.
- Pupils know at which levels they are working but they are less confident in knowing what to do to speed up their learning. This is because, at times, they are too reliant on adults to take the next step. There are too few opportunities provided in lessons for pupils to use their initiative and access learning resources such as dictionaries, thesaurus or encyclopaedia on their own.
- Pupils' calculation skills are improving steadily and, at times, they demonstrate good levels of mental agility in solving number problems. However, many do not use other methods of calculation to check the accuracy of answers. Furthermore, opportunities to acquire and apply mathematical skills and knowledge to solve open-ended problems are under-developed. The lack of these skills acts as a brake on progress.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Behaviour in lessons and around school is good and sometimes outstanding. Pupils enjoy school. One pupil commented, 'I can't wait to get to school every morning.' They are polite, courteous and well-mannered. Strong relationships across the school ensure that pupils are part of a cohesive and harmonious community.
- Pupils know how to keep themselves safe at school and beyond. They have good levels of awareness of different types of bullying and the dangers presented to them in life, such as drug taking and smoking, and they know who to turn to for help. They report that racism, bullying and homophobia are rare. On the very few occasions that incidents occur, pupils reported that adults respond swiftly and effectively.
- Pupils are willing learners. Their positive attitudes and enthusiasm help to make a learning environment that is safe, rich and vibrant. Those attending the 'Toast and Study Club' enjoy a stimulating range of activities that encourage good relationships, boost their confidence and support them with homework.

- Pupils show sensitivity to the needs of others within and beyond the locality. They often, without prompting from adults, raise funds for a range of charities, locally and globally.
- Pupils of different ages help and support each other in the playground. Enthusiastic and sympathetic buddies are on hand to support and guide those who are feeling out of sorts. Pupils are keen to take on responsibilities such as a school councillor or as a digital leader, the duties of which they undertake with enthusiasm and diligence.
- A key strength is the way newcomers are supported by adults and pupils. Consequently, they settle in quickly and learn the well-established routines in the classroom and around the school. This gives them the confidence to come to school, to learn and to develop into good citizens.
- Pupils' attendance is broadly average and improving. The school works tirelessly to encourage good attendance and is robust in holding parents and carers to account for any unnecessary absence. The persistent absence of a very few pupils is being addressed through close liaison with external agencies.

### **The leadership and management are good**

- Leaders and managers at all levels work well as a team and there is a clear sense of collective enterprise. They demonstrate high expectations and clear ambitions for the future. Their key focus on raising the achievement of pupils through sustained improvements in teaching is clearly paying dividends. Training is targeted and its impact is tracked closely to ensure that complacent and ineffective teaching no longer exists.
- Teachers' performance is managed effectively and systems to link the quality of teaching and pupils' progress to salary progression are outstanding. Improvements in teaching, their impact on learning and rising levels of attainment demonstrate that the school is well equipped to further improve.
- The school works very closely with a number of local schools, which enables teachers to observe and share good practice and improve provision. These informal partnerships have boosted the school's capacity to improve pupils' achievement in key areas, for example, in writing and in the use of information communication technology (ICT) to support learning.
- The views of staff, parents and carers show that they have real confidence in the school and morale is high. The headteacher's high profile presence and approachability ensures that any concerns are swiftly and effectively addressed. One parent commented, 'I love the small school, family atmosphere.' The local authority knows the school well, provides sound support and has an accurate view of its strengths and weaknesses.
- Regular and focused tracking of pupils' attainment and progress is becoming increasingly astute, although the checks made on the mathematical learning needs of newcomers is under-developed. That said, teachers are effective in identifying most pupils who are at risk of falling behind and are swift in deploying additional support so that they rapidly close the gap on their peers. These actions reflect the school's strong commitment to equal opportunities and in tackling any form of discrimination.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Through the subjects that they are taught, pupils demonstrate thoughtful reflection and mature consideration of others' beliefs and feelings. They have a clear sense of right and wrong as well as show courtesy towards each other and a keen willingness to listen.

- Leaders and managers, including the governing body, use the abundant information on pupils' attainment and progress to evaluate the work of the school, identify priorities and draw up effective improvement planning. They ensure that pupils' achievement is at the top of their agenda. That said, improvement planning and self-evaluation are not outstanding because, though the right priorities are identified, planned actions are not astute or incisive enough to target resources or actions so that they have maximum impact.
- The curriculum is vibrant and varied. It is effectively planned and taught with an appropriate focus on reading, writing and mathematics. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education within and beyond the school. Pupils are provided with a good range of extra-curricular activities that contribute positively to their academic and personal development. Key strengths include music, sport, ICT and geography. For example, in the Animation Club, Reception children worked closely with pupils in Year 1 and 2 to produce an excellent animation of the life cycle of a butterfly.
- Safeguarding and safer staff recruitment procedures are exemplary. Key policies, such as child protection, safeguarding and behaviour are closely dovetailed to ensure that all procedures and practices make sure pupils and staff are safe and well cared for.
- **The governance of the school is good:**
  - The governing body has a clear and accurate view of the school and what it needs to improve further. They study carefully data on pupils' progress and robustly hold the school leadership to account for any underperformance. Governors understand their responsibilities and play a key role in monitoring the work of teachers through the use of performance management, and ensure that salary progression is fair and effective. They attend training and keep up-to-date with good practice and legislation. The governing body has a good handle on the school budget and can account, with confidence, for how additional funding to support particular pupils is used and is having a clear impact on their academic and personal achievements.

## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	104384
<b>Local authority</b>	Wolverhampton
<b>Inspection number</b>	400711

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

<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>	190
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mark Brennand
<b>Headteacher</b>	Kathryn Jackson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	7 October 2009
<b>Telephone number</b>	01902 558845
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