

# Michaelchurch Escley Primary School

Michaelchurch Escley, Hereford, HR2 0PT

**Inspection dates** 4–5 June 2014

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

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because

- Pupils should be making better progress in mathematics in Key Stage 2. This is because learning is not made relevant enough to pupils' interests and experiences.
- Teachers do not always ensure that what pupils are expected to learn in lessons is made clear to them. Sometimes teachers try to fit too many learning points into lessons. Both of these features of teaching inhibit pupils' progress.
- Teachers' marking in Key Stage 2 does not consistently show pupils how they can improve their work.
- Pupils of all ages have insufficient opportunities to develop skills and understanding in computing and related skills.
- Opportunities for teachers' professional development are not linked closely enough to the school's requirements and staff needs.

### The school has the following strengths

- Senior leaders and the governing body know the strengths and weaknesses of teaching and assessment and are taking steps to improve it.
- Parents are highly supportive of the school.
- Behaviour is good and pupils are unfailingly courteous and respectful of adults and each other. Pupils say they feel safe in school.
- Over time, children make good progress in the Early Years Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed three teachers in five lessons, including two jointly observed with the headteacher. A whole-school assembly was also seen.
- Meetings were held with pupils, staff, governors, and a representative of the local authority.
- The school's work was observed and the inspector looked at a range of documents including assessments of pupils' progress, documents related to safeguarding, records of attendance, and the school's own assessments of the quality of teaching. The four responses to staff questionnaires were analysed.
- The inspector took account of the 22 responses to Parent View (the online questionnaire) and spoke informally to parents bringing their child to school and on the telephone.

## Inspection team

Michael Farrell, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- This is a much smaller school than most schools nationally. Since the previous inspection, numbers on roll have fallen from 46 to 24 but numbers are beginning to increase.
- All the pupils are White British.
- The proportion of pupils who are supported at school action is very small and below average.
- No pupils are supported at school action plus or have a statement of special educational needs.
- No pupils are known to be eligible for free school meals and none are eligible for support through the pupil premium.
- Pupils are taught in two mixed-age classes: Reception and Key Stage 1; and Key Stage 2.
- The school had recently started 'flexi-school' arrangements for younger pupils, in part to help their transition into school. This presently involves a very small number of pupils being taught at home for one or two days per week. For the remainder of the week, the pupils are taught in school.
- There have been significant changes since the previous full inspection in September 2012 and the subsequent monitoring visit. In 2012, a federation had been formed with nearby Longtown Community Primary School. In October 2013, two full-time teachers left Michaelchurch Escley Primary School for posts elsewhere. From February 2014, the previous headteacher became ill and the assistant headteacher became acting headteacher. The federation with Longtown Community Primary School was ended in April 2014 and Michaelchurch Escley Primary School now has its own governing body.
- At the time of the inspection, one of the two full-time teachers had been in post for only three days. The new headteacher had been in post for just over four weeks. The headteacher currently works two days a week and the assistant headteacher is acting headteacher when the headteacher is not in school.
- The number of pupils in Year 6 last year was too small for the government's floor standards to be applicable.

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

- Improve achievement and teaching in Key Stage 2 mathematics by ensuring that longer term plans for activities and the way the activities are presented are more relevant to pupils' needs, experiences and interests, and enhance pupils' understanding.
- Ensure that, in all lessons, pupils know what they are expected to learn, and that the teacher does not try to fit too much into a lesson.
- Make sure that teachers' marking of work shows pupils clearly how they can improve.
- Expand the provision for computing so that pupils have more opportunities to develop and practise skills and understanding in information and communication technology.
- Enhance opportunities for the professional development of staff in order to accelerate improvements in teaching.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils

### requires improvement

- Children start at the school with attainments at different levels which vary with each individual. The small numbers in each year group make it difficult to generalise about attainment. Consequently, progress and achievement is judged from children's different individual starting points.
- Last year, progress in English and mathematics was good in all key stages, as indicated by national data and the school's own assessments. From September 2013 to the time of the inspection, pupils are making good progress and achieving well in Reception and Key Stage 1, but, in Key Stage 2, they make only adequate progress overall and their achievement requires improvement.
- In Key Stage 2, pupils achieve well in reading, and progress in writing is good in most years of this key stage. Progress in mathematics is not strong enough. This is indicated by the school's assessment information, pupils' work, and discussions with pupils. Pupils cannot always explain how they are solving problems or tackling their mathematics work, and some express views suggesting limited confidence in the subject.
- Pupils read a wide range of material, which they enjoy, and they often read for pleasure. They readily talk about books they like. Reading records are up to date and help pupils to see the progress they have made.
- Because phonics (letters and the sounds they make) is taught effectively and systematically, beginning readers tackle reading with growing confidence. They demonstrate a wide range of strategies, including studying the pictures in a book, breaking down sounds, and thinking about what has gone before. When pupils come to a hard part in their reading, they are very persistent in working out what the text says.
- Evidence of pupils' progress in computing is limited and they do not have enough opportunities to practise and develop skills and knowledge in this area, limiting their progress.
- In other subjects, pupils often do well and they say that they enjoy their topic work.
- No pupils receive support through pupil premium.
- A very small proportion of pupils with special educational needs receive support at school action. They achieve well because, over time, individual support has been provided and their progress is monitored to ensure it is accelerated.
- Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their learning with regard to English but only adequately prepared in mathematics where pupils have the potential to achieve better.

### The quality of teaching

### requires improvement

- Teachers do not always make it clear enough to pupils what they are expected to learn, and sometimes they try to fit too many learning points into a single lesson. This slows progress because pupils do not have a sharp enough focus for their learning.
- In Key Stage 2 mathematics, the activities are not always sufficiently relevant to pupils' learning

needs, experiences and interests. The lack of practical examples means that pupils are not shown the relevance of the mathematical skills they are taught. This slows progress in mathematics because, although pupils try their best, the teaching does not sufficiently enable them to build on what they already know.

- Among strengths of teaching are high expectations of pupils' work and effort, and skilled questioning that is pitched accurately at pupils' different levels of understanding. In many areas, teachers have strong subject knowledge. This enables them to convey their enthusiasm and encourage an enjoyment of learning. Suitable homework is set across the school.
- Teachers and teaching assistant work closely together and this partnership makes a valuable contribution to maintaining pupils' good behaviour.
- Pupils are encouraged to think for themselves and to share ideas by discussing them in pairs with their 'talking partners'.
- Teachers create a positive climate for learning, which is nurtured because relationships are warm and trusting. The school and individual classrooms are neat and tidy and enhanced by attractive displays that are relevant to learning.
- Pupils' behaviour is very well managed through calm guidance and high expectations of conduct. Consequently, pupils respond very positively to deserved encouragement and praise.
- The quality of teaching in Reception and Key Stage 1 is good, leading to good progress. This is indicated, for example, by the observations of the quality of teaching that has been made by the school and by others, and by pupils' work. Teachers ensure that individuals and small groups of pupils are challenged well, teachers and teaching assistant work closely together, and activities are chosen that capture pupils' interests.
- Assessments are generally accurate but the quality of marking of pupils' work varies. Inconsistencies are more evident in Key Stage 2 where teachers' marking, although offering pupils encouragement, does not always convey to pupils what they should do to improve.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. Pupils take pride in the school and in their work. They behave with courtesy and respect to adults and to each other at all times. This was evident as pupils arrived at school, during break times, at lunch, around the school and in lessons.
- Very typical were two incidents of good attitudes and courteous behaviour. In a French lesson, for example, small sweets were awarded as prizes for good responses and a boy who won one and later another immediately said that he would like it to go to another pupil. During break time, one of the youngest and smallest children put all her effort into opening a door for the inspector to pass through.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning are very positive across all key stages, with different staff, and in different subjects. They arrive at lessons on time and are eager to learn.
- There is no litter and the premises are treated with care and respect.
- Pupils attend regularly and are always punctual to lessons.

- Pupils respond well to guidance from staff. Pupils say confidently that behaviour is good. No disruption of any kind was seen during the inspection. Quite the contrary, pupils were eager to work and tried their best.
- Parents, pupils and staff express positive views about behaviour and safety.
- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Arrangements for pupils' safeguarding meet current government requirements.
- Pupils say that they feel safe in school. They state that there are no places in school when they do not feel safe or any times when they feel unsafe.
- Pupils state that there is no bullying. There is no name-calling, they say, only sometimes friendly nicknames which pupils like. Pupils know they can see a member of staff if they have any concerns.
- Pupils recognise places and activities which may not always be safe and can give suitable examples, relative to their age, of how to keep safe near water or roads, and when using the internet.

### **The leadership and management** requires improvement

- The school's self-evaluation is accurate for behaviour and safety and for the quality of teaching but is inaccurate and overgenerous for pupils' achievement and for leadership and management.
- Professional development opportunities and training for staff – for example, relating to improving teaching and achievement in mathematics – have not been offered as often as all staff would like.
- The curriculum does not sufficiently promote computing or progress in Key Stage 2 mathematics. Not enough equipment is made available, and not enough time is allocated on the timetable.
- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effectively promoted through visits and visitors, learning French, and regular whole-school assemblies that promote values. Partnerships with nearby schools enhance provision. For example, Michaelchurch Escley works closely with another local school to check the accuracy of teachers' assessments of pupils' work, and to share ideas for longer term planning of activities.
- The new headteacher is quickly gaining the trust of parents, staff and governors, and the new Key Stage 1 teacher is settling in quickly. The school has ensured that Reception children make good progress and are well cared for. Since the previous full inspection, behaviour related to learning has improved because the school prioritised and closely monitored it.
- Parents value the school highly. One parent stated that their child was, 'making good progress in reading' and 'loves phonics'. Regular newsletters help to ensure that parents are kept up to date with developments. Parents help to run the popular after-school clubs.
- The local authority provides effective support and challenge; for example, through commissioning and paying for school improvement visits.

- The school and parents have signed 'flexi-school' agreements and the school has plans to monitor the progress of these pupils and to make home visits.

■ **The governance of the school:**

- Governors in the newly constituted governing body have dealt with considerable changes, especially over the previous six months. They represent a wide range of skills and life experience. Through visiting the school and discussions with staff and pupils, governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the quality of teaching and assessment and they understand where pupils' achievement needs to be improved. Governors effectively oversee arrangements for safeguarding to ensure pupils are safe. Agreed systems for managing the performance of staff are properly followed and the governing body ensures that teachers' pay rises are tied to the progress of their pupils. Oversight of professional development has not ensured that this relates closely to the school's or individual staff needs. Governors are aware of their responsibilities should the school have any pupils receiving support through pupil premium. Finances are currently secure. Part of the sports funding has been effectively deployed for dance teaching and the formal monitoring of its impact is planned. Plans are in place to spend the remainder on a range of suitable activities. Governors keep their training up to date and are constructively self-critical but have not yet formally evaluated their effectiveness.

## 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>	116714
<b>Local authority</b>	Herefordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	442594

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>	Community
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	24
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Benna Waites
<b>Headteacher</b>	Louise Crocker
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	27 September 2012
<b>Telephone number</b>	01981 510208
<b>Fax number</b>	01981 510208
<b>Email address</b>	admin@michaelchurch-escley.hereford.sch.uk

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