



Creech St Michael Church of England Primary School

Inspection Report

Unique Reference Number 123793
LEA Somerset
Inspection number 281562
Inspection dates 22 May 2006 to 23 May 2006
Reporting inspector Patricia Potheary AI

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

Type of school	Primary	School address	Hyde Lane
School category	Voluntary controlled		Creech St Michael
Age range of pupils	4 to 11		Taunton, Somerset TA3 5QQ
Gender of pupils	Mixed	Telephone number	01823 442898
Number on roll	219	Fax number	01823 444002
Appropriate authority	The governing body	Chair of governors	
Date of previous inspection	10 January 2000	Headteacher	Mr Edward Gregory

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Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

Description of the school

Creech St Michael is an average-sized school for junior, infant and reception aged pupils. A below-average proportion of pupils have learning difficulties, mainly specific learning difficulties. Almost all pupils are of White British origin.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

Creech St Michael provides a sound quality of education and satisfactory value for money. This view matches that of the school's leadership. Pupils' progress and achievement are satisfactory overall in all age groups, including the Foundation Stage. Several groups of pupils are now making good progress but, although improved significantly, there is still some underachievement, especially in written work and for pupils with higher ability, in all age groups. The quality of teaching is satisfactory, but an increasing number of lessons are good. Inconsistencies in teachers' use of assessment and in planning for pupils' different needs are the main reasons progress is slow for some. Pupils are well cared for and develop good personal skills; they evidently enjoy school. There is a wide range of interesting activities to enrich pupils' growing understanding, and outstanding provision to help them keep healthy. Provision in the Foundation Stage is equally satisfactory. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Improvement since the last inspection has been steady. Senior leaders have accurately identified and acted upon what needs to be done to raise standards and this is beginning to have an impact. They have overcome significant barriers to improvement in recent years and kept the school moving steadily forward. Managers do not, however, monitor the work of teachers sufficiently rigorously or involve enough staff in the process to increase the pace of change.

What the school should do to improve further

- Raise achievement for all pupils by improving the quality and consistency of teaching, assessment and planning for learning.
- Improve the way leadership drives school improvement by monitoring the work of teachers more rigorously and by involving more managers in the process.

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards in all subjects are broadly average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6 and pupils make steady progress from average attainment on entry. Achievement is satisfactory overall in all age groups and most pupils meet appropriate targets. Pupils in Reception meet expected levels in their early learning goals. Pupils with learning difficulties make steady progress overall, and good progress in reading. In some lessons the most and least able pupils do not progress as well as expected, because work is not matched well enough to their needs. However, this year, there has been a significant improvement in the number of higher-ability pupils aged 7 and 11 reaching National Curriculum levels above what is normally expected. The mixed Year 2 and 3 groups are working well and pupils of all abilities are making at least satisfactory and sometimes good progress in these classes. The majority of pupils in Year 5 make significantly good progress. The underachievement in writing is still evident, but there is noticeable improvement since last year.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

The good personal development and wellbeing of pupils is clearly evident in their enjoyment of school and above-average attendance. The great majority of parents are pleased with the way their children enjoy school and grow in confidence. Pupils' good behaviour is responsible and considerate; they conduct themselves well in and out of lessons and look after each other. Behaviour has improved greatly this year, with little bullying and no exclusions. Pupils say that they feel 'very safe' and they know who to turn to if they need help. Pupils show an exceptional understanding of how to keep healthy; they take part in plenty of sport, choose healthy lunches and always seem to be eating fruit or drinking water. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils understand and respect how others live, worship and celebrate and took part with great enthusiasm in all the exciting activities about South America during the inspection. Pupils contribute well to the school and wider community, entertaining local residents, helping to plan the environmental area or leading fitness sessions, for example. Pupils develop good personal and life skills and satisfactory basic skills in preparation for the next stage of their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Satisfactory teaching is leading to satisfactory learning in most classes. Teaching is improving; there is a core of good teaching and most teachers teach well some of the time. In good lessons the work is planned well so that pupils of all abilities reach challenging targets and make good progress. In all lessons relationships with pupils are good and pupils generally behave well and work hard. Pupils are often helped to work independently and collaborate with others effectively. Teaching assistants contribute well to the work of lowerability pupils, especially those with learning difficulties. The use of assessment to plan what each child should learn next is improving but this is inconsistent, which is why, in some lessons, pupils do not learn enough, especially those of higher and lower abilities. In the mixed-age classes, careful assessment is used to match work closely to each pupil's needs, which is why pupils of all abilities do well in these classes. There is good use of homework, but not all books are marked regularly, which means that some pupils do not know how well they have done, and a few lose motivation.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 3

The satisfactory curriculum helps pupils, including those in reception, to build systematically on what they have learned before. It generally meets pupils' different needs, especially in the mixed Year 2/3 classes where a revised curriculum is being trialled. In other classes the content does not always capture the different interests

of pupils, which the school is seeking to address. The opportunities for pupils to develop literacy and numeracy skills in all subjects are too few to help pupils make faster progress in these key skills. The curriculum is strongly enriched with a breakfast club, after-school activities, plenty of sport and an emphasis on the performing arts and music. The current South American theme, with visitors from Guatemala and Mexico and activities such as cooking 'fajitas' and the Rio carnival dancing, demonstrates how well curriculum enrichment is used to bring subjects alive. The school provides an excellent range of opportunities for teaching pupils how to be healthy.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils are well cared for, guided and supported and their good personal development is central to work of the school. Systems to ensure pupils' safety, including child protection procedures, are secure and robust. Care and guidance for pupils with learning difficulties is well organised. The school has begun to develop a detailed system to track the progress of each pupil so that they can be helped to reach or exceed the expected levels for their age or ability. This already enables the school to target pupils who are falling behind and give them extra support. Although the use of this information is much improved recently, it is recognised that intervention is still not frequent enough in several classes to raise standards more quickly, particularly for the most able pupils. Pupils know what their targets are and are clear about what they need to do to improve, and parents are involved well in the process.

Leadership and management

Grade: 3

The satisfactory quality of leadership and management is leading to continuous and gradual improvement. Senior staff have a very accurate understanding of what needs to be done and have successfully begun improving key areas, such as the progress of girls with high ability. The governors and headteacher have been required to spend significant amounts of time in recent years dealing with issues not directly connected with the day-to-day running of the school. This has slowed the pace at which actions to improve pupils' learning have taken place. These issues are now largely resolved and the school does have the capacity to continue improving. The procedures for self-evaluation are greatly improved since the last inspection and the views of parents, pupils and the local authority are acted upon effectively. School leaders do a very good job of monitoring and evaluating the bigger picture. They do not, however, monitor the work of all teachers closely enough to ensure a consistently high quality of teaching, curriculum and pupil progress. Not enough managers are involved in this work as a team, to speed up the pace of change, an issue which the school plans to address. The school has good links with local schools, the local authority and educational groups and services to seek the best possible opportunities for pupils.

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Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	School Overall	16-19
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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?	3	NA
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2	NA
The quality and standards in foundation stage	NA	NA
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3	NA
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	Yes	NA
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes	NA

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3	NA
The standards ¹ reached by learners	3	NA
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	3	NA
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	3	NA

Personal development and well-being

How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2	NA
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2	NA
The behaviour of learners	2	NA
The attendance of learners	2	NA
How well learners enjoy their education	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2	NA
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	1	NA
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution to the community	2	NA
How well learners develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	3	NA

The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3	NA
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3	NA
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	2	NA

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	3	NA
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3	NA
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets, through quality assurance and self-review	3	NA
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3	NA
How effectively and efficiently resources are deployed to achieve value for money	3	NA
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3	NA
The adequacy and suitability of staff to ensure that learners are protected	Yes	NA

The extent to which schools enable learners to be healthy	
Learners are encouraged and enabled to eat and drink healthily	Yes
Learners are encouraged and enabled to take regular exercise	Yes
Learners are discouraged from smoking and substance abuse	Yes
Learners are educated about sexual health	Yes
The extent to which providers ensure that learners stay safe	
Procedures for safeguarding learners meet current government requirements	Yes
Risk assessment procedures and related staff training are in place	Yes
Action is taken to reduce anti-social behaviour, such as bullying and racism	Yes
Learners are taught about key risks and how to deal with them	Yes
The extent to which learners make a positive contribution	
Learners are helped to develop stable, positive relationships	Yes
Learners, individually and collectively, participate in making decisions that affect them	Yes
Learners are encouraged to initiate, participate in and manage activities in school and the wider community	Yes
The extent to which schools enable learners to achieve economic well-being	
There is provision to promote learners' basic skills	Yes
Learners have opportunities to develop enterprise skills and work in teams	Yes
Careers education and guidance is provided to all learners in key stage 3 and 4 and the sixth form	NA
Education for all learners aged 14–19 provides an understanding of employment and the economy	NA

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

Dear Pupils, Thank you for being so helpful and welcoming to us when we visited Creech St Michael; we enjoyed the time we spent with you very much. We can see why you find the school such a good place to learn. We also enjoyed meeting the staff and joining you for lunch and some of your lessons. Here are some of your school's highlights:

- The mature way you behave, help others and work so hard in lessons.
- How well you understand how to keep yourselves healthy.
- The large number of interesting activities on offer for you.
- The way the staff really care for you and keep you safe.

What we have asked the school to improve further:

- Help you to learn even more by making more of your lessons as good as the best.
- Ask all managers to check more often on how well the work you are given to do is helping you to learn. This is to help senior staff improve things more quickly.

We wish you all the very best in the future. Yours sincerely, Lead Inspector