

# St Michael's Church of England Aided Primary School

Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	103418
<b>Local Authority</b>	Birmingham
<b>Inspection number</b>	286653
<b>Inspection dates</b>	19–20 June 2007
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Alison Cartlidge

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>	3–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	368
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Peter Bowden
<b>Headteacher</b>	Patricia Bowden
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 June 2002
<b>School address</b>	Nantmel Grove Bartley Green Birmingham B32 3JS
<b>Telephone number</b>	0121 4644345
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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by three Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

Attainment on entry to the school is below average and most pupils are of White British heritage. The proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is nearly twice the national average. There is a wide range of abilities in each class and boys consistently outnumber girls on the school roll. The proportion of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is broadly average.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 4

In accordance with section 13 (3) of the Education Act 2005, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector is of the opinion that this school requires significant improvement, because it is performing significantly less well than in all the circumstances it could reasonably be expected to perform. The school is therefore given a Notice to Improve. Significant improvement is required in relation to the pupils' progress and achievement because these are inadequate.

Members of staff and governors are fully aware that standards have slipped since the last inspection and have put into place systems to reverse this downward trend. Recent initiatives are beginning to have a positive effect on the progress of most pupils but have not fully overcome previous underachievement. Consequently, standards are still too low although there have been some improvements in the current year. Throughout the school, teaching and learning are now satisfactory, although more able pupils are not consistently challenged enough and as a result, their progress is inconsistent.

Children make a sound start to their education in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception Year) and make satisfactory progress. Standards are below average overall by the end of Year 6 and are well below average in writing. Pupils' rate of progress is inadequate from Year 1 to Year 6. Pupils, particularly the more able, do least well in writing, because they are not always expected to do their best work. Care, support and guidance are satisfactory. Teachers' marking has been developed well but systems for monitoring pupils' progress, whilst satisfactory, are not yet fully used to ensure all pupils make enough progress.

Provision for pupils' pastoral care is a strong feature of the school's work. Friendly members of staff manage pupils' behaviour well and support their good personal development and well-being successfully. Pupils behave well and respond positively to the good responsibilities they are given.

Leadership and management are satisfactory. Members of staff and governors are committed to raising standards and understand the next steps needed to improve the school. They have satisfactorily demonstrated that they can secure the necessary improvement. Well-focused monitoring, for example, has improved teaching and learning, which are now satisfactory. Information on pupils' performance in tests is collected together and is beginning to be used satisfactorily to identify and support those who have made insufficient progress. This information is not yet in a format that can be used easily by all members of staff and governors to check that all pupils are doing well enough. This makes it difficult to respond to dips in progress for specific groups of pupils as soon as they arise. The satisfactory curriculum is supported effectively by a wide range of additional learning activities; these contribute well to the pupils' obvious enjoyment of school. Most parents are pleased with the work of the school. One parent spoke for many by saying, 'My son is very happy at St. Michael's. It's a very happy school'.

### What the school should do to improve further

- Improve standards and progress, especially in writing, by ensuring that pupils are consistently expected to produce good work.
- Increase the challenge in lessons, so that all pupils, particularly the more able, reach their potential.
- Ensure that information collected on how well the pupils are doing is used to tackle underachievement quickly.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 4**

Pupils' achievement is inadequate because the school has only recently started to monitor pupils' progress satisfactorily. This has resulted in some pupils, particularly the more able, not doing as well as they should.

Children make satisfactory progress in the Foundation Stage. They make good progress in personal, social and emotional development because these skills are supported well by all members of staff. Standards by the time children start in Year 1 are below the nationally expected levels.

Standards by the end of Year 2 have been declining and were exceptionally low in 2006. In Years 1 to 6, recent improvements in the way pupils are assessed have enabled the school to identify those who have made inadequate progress. This has helped pupils to do better in the current year, although standards in Year 6 remain below average in mathematics and science and well below average in English. Pupils' writing is a particular weakness.

Some recent strategies are starting to have an impact on driving up standards and most pupils, including those with learning difficulties or disabilities, are now making satisfactory progress in lessons. Progress in reading in Year 3 has been improving well with support from a specific reading programme. However, the school is aware that more able pupils make inadequate progress and this continues to make standards lower than they should be.

## **Personal development and well-being**

### **Grade: 2**

Children in the Foundation Stage make good progress in developing personal skills. Throughout the school, most pupils behave well and show their respect for others. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. They understand global issues and show a good understanding of other faiths. Most work and play co-operatively and know how to stay safe and secure in school. The few instances of bullying are mostly dealt with to the pupils' satisfaction and they know where to turn for help when needed. Nearly all pupils say that they enjoy school but some feel that the writing they are expected to do is sometimes too easy.

Attendance remains below average but has improved slightly during the last year. This is due to the irregular attendance of a small number of families. The school is working well with outside agencies to improve the attendance of these children.

Pupils have learnt what it means to live a healthy life and they participate well in the extensive range of sporting activities. They know which foods are healthy but do not always choose these at lunchtime. Pupils make good contributions to the school and wider community through the school council and by acting as peer mentors. Whilst pupils reach below average standards in literacy and numeracy, the progress of most pupils is now improving. They develop good self-confidence, listen carefully and work well in teams. These factors taken together prepare them satisfactorily for the next stage of their education and later life.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Satisfactory teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage enables children to make a sound start to their education. Members of staff are particularly successful in developing the children's personal skills. Across the school, teachers provide stimulating and interesting activities that engage pupils well and add to their enjoyment. For example, interactive whiteboards are used well to explain to pupils what they are going to learn. Teaching assistants give good support to small groups of pupils, particularly those who have learning difficulties. Consistently high expectations for good behaviour ensure that lessons run smoothly, pupils listen carefully and respond confidently.

Teachers often plan work for groups of differing ability, enabling pupils of all levels of attainment to make satisfactory progress most of the time. Occasionally information on how well pupils are doing is not used fully. This mostly affects more able pupils who are not given enough challenge in some lessons. Consequently, they do not all reach the standards of which they are capable. The marking of work is improving, giving praise to pupils when work is well done and letting them know how they can improve. The presentation of pupils' work is variable and avoidable errors sometimes go unchecked.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

There is a sound curriculum for the Foundation Stage. Members of staff provide a wide range of interesting activities, although planning does not always show clearly what children are expected to learn. There is a satisfactory basic curriculum in Years 1 to 6 and links between different subjects, including the use of literacy, are being developed appropriately. The curriculum is not consistently and sufficiently well adapted to ensure adequate challenge for more able pupils to enable them to learn as well as they should.

The curriculum makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development through the use of 'circle time' and other specific activities. There is an impressive range of visits to places of interest, special visitors to the school and clubs. The provision of three residential visits is a particular strength of the school, developing pupil independence successfully. Pupils enjoy these opportunities to learn through first hand experiences. Pupils say that school visits 'are fun' and 'teach us new things'.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 3

The pastoral care of pupils is good as a result of positive relationships within the school. Children in the Foundation Stage are made to feel welcome and settle into routines quickly. There are effective procedures to safeguard the pupils, including any who are vulnerable, and there are checks on the suitability of all staff. These actions ensure the safety of pupils both in school and when out on school visits.

The academic guidance for pupils is satisfactory. New assessment arrangements are enabling members of staff to monitor pupils' progress more closely and these are beginning to be used to set more challenging targets for individuals to achieve. Pupils with learning difficulties are

given beneficial additional support for literacy, although there is less done to help those who have difficulties with numeracy.

## **Leadership and management**

### **Grade: 3**

Improvement since the last inspection is inadequate as standards have not improved sufficiently. The headteacher and senior managers have received training which has helped to improve their effectiveness. They have developed sound procedures for school self-evaluation so that they can identify weaknesses more quickly than in the past. Sharper monitoring of teaching and learning carried out mainly by the headteacher is identifying the right areas for development. Relevant training is provided and is having a positive impact on improving the quality of teaching.

A new system for tracking pupils' progress is beginning to be used satisfactorily to identify groups of pupils who have fallen behind in their learning. For example, the school now has a greater awareness that more able pupils are not making as much progress as other pupils. Members of staff know that this system is not kept in a format that enables information to be used fully. Whilst some strategies to improve the rate of pupils' progress have not been in place long enough to have had a significant impact on standards, others such as the successful intensive reading programme show the school's sound capacity to improve further.

All members of staff are good role models for the pupils' behaviour and work together well to provide strong leadership for personal development. New subject leaders are enthusiastic about developing their roles in monitoring provision and standards.

Governance is satisfactory. Governors have a realistic understanding of where the school is now and are keen to develop their roles further in holding the school to account. Resources have not been used well enough over the last few years to ensure that all pupils made enough progress and this means that the school does not provide satisfactory value for money.

**Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'Complaints about school inspection', which is available from Ofsted's website: [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk).**

## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

<i>Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate</i>	<b>School Overall</b>
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### Overall effectiveness

<b>How effective, efficient and inclusive is the provision of education, integrated care and any extended services in meeting the needs of learners?</b>	4
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	3
The quality and standards in the Foundation Stage	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	No

### Achievement and standards

<b>How well do learners achieve?</b>	4
The standards <sup>1</sup> reached by learners	3
How well learners make progress, taking account of any significant variations between groups of learners	4
How well learners with learning difficulties and disabilities make progress	4

### Personal development and well-being

<b>How good is the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?</b>	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The behaviour of learners	2
The attendance of learners	3
How well learners enjoy their education	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	3
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	3

### The quality of provision

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

<sup>1</sup> 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.

## Annex A

**Leadership and management**

<b>How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?</b>	3
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	3
How effectively performance is monitored, evaluated and improved to meet challenging targets	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	4
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	4
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	3
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?	Yes

## Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

21 June 2007

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St. Michael's CE Aided Primary School, Birmingham, B32 3JS.

Thank you for welcoming us to your school and for sharing your work with us. We found some good things in your school, but we have asked that your school should be placed in a special category so that it gets extra help. This is because some of you are not doing as well as you should.

Here are some other things about you and your school:

- most of you are now making satisfactory progress in most subjects but those of you who are quick at learning do not all do well enough
- you are polite and friendly and take responsibility well; your school council helps teachers know what you would like to improve
- you are taught soundly and your teachers help you to behave sensibly
- you study all the right subjects in lessons
- we were especially impressed with all your residential visits - they sound great fun!
- all adults in school are kind and caring and look after you suitably
- your headteacher, other teachers and governors are working hard to make your school better
- your parents and carers are pleased that you enjoy coming to this school.

What we have asked your school to do now:

- help your writing to improve
- make lessons hard enough, especially for those of you who learn quickly
- ensure that the leaders of your school use the information about how well you are doing to check that you are all learning well enough.

What we would like you to do:

- always do your best when writing.

We thoroughly enjoyed talking with you about your work and watching you learn, and wish you well for the future.

Yours sincerely,

Alison Cartlidge Lead inspector