

# St Michael's CofE (A) First School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique Reference Number</b>	124343
<b>Local Authority</b>	Staffordshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	314895
<b>Inspection date</b>	7 May 2008
<b>Reporting inspector</b>	Brian Holmes

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>	First
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–9
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number on roll</b>	
School	109
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Esther Burd
<b>Headteacher</b>	Jayne Grundy
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	10 May 2004
<b>School address</b>	Market Place Penkridge Stafford ST19 5DJ
<b>Telephone number</b>	01785 712344
<b>Fax number</b>	01785 712344

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## Introduction

The inspection was carried out by two Additional Inspectors.

## Description of the school

St Michael's is a smaller than average school at the centre of a village community. It has close links with the local church and some pupils travel long distances to the school because of its distinctive ethos. The vast majority of pupils are from White British backgrounds and the proportion of pupils with learning difficulties is lower than average.

The school has achieved the Artsmark, the Activemark and Eco school status.

## Key for inspection grades

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

## Overall effectiveness of the school

### Grade: 3

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education. Satisfactory leadership and management, with good leadership from the headteacher after a period of instability and significant staff change, are enabling all pupils to achieve and progress at a satisfactory rate. The capacity for further improvement is satisfactory because the headteacher has developed a clear direction for the school, in partnership with the assistant headteacher and governing body, with a team of staff who share her vision. The hard work of the staff in making the vision work is beginning to have a positive effect on pupils' achievement and standards.

Children enter the school with attainment that is typical for their age. In the pre-Reception and Reception classes they make satisfactory progress in most areas of learning and good progress in their personal, social and emotional development and in speaking and listening. In Years 1 to 4 satisfactory progress continues, so by the end of Years 2 and 4, pupils in those classes are on course to attain average standards in reading, writing and mathematics. The school checks and tracks pupils' performance satisfactorily to identify where pupils are underachieving and this strategy is beginning to have a positive effect on the achievement of all pupils in reading, writing and mathematics.

The systems the school has put in place to track and check pupils' progress are used satisfactorily by teachers to plan their work for all pupils and meet their needs appropriately, including those who are more able. Teachers enjoy good relationships with pupils and manage them well. The curriculum meets the needs of all pupils and is enriched well through a good range of extra activities and clubs. However, pupils are not provided with enough opportunities to apply their basic skills in other subjects in order to raise their achievement. Subject leaders have begun work on improving standards but not all of them are involved enough in checking pupils' standards in their subject areas in order to raise achievement.

The school provides pupils with good care and support, which parents see as a strength of the school. As one parent commented, 'The school is a warm, welcoming and friendly place.' The academic guidance pupils receive is satisfactory. However, not all pupils are aware of their personal targets or how to achieve them. Provision for their care, support and guidance results in pupils reaching satisfactory standards in their personal development and well-being. Their contribution to the school is satisfactory. The school council is newly formed but pupils' involvement in expressing their views and making decisions about the life of the school is underdeveloped. Attendance is good, and the vast majority of pupils behave well and show positive attitudes to their learning. They have a good awareness of how to stay safe and an appropriate understanding of how to live healthily. Their satisfactory achievement and positive attitudes to learning mean that they are appropriately prepared for the next stage of their education.

## Effectiveness of the Foundation Stage

### Grade: 3

From their average starting point on entry to the school, most children make satisfactory progress. As a result, they are on track to achieve the goals expected at the end of the Reception Year and exceed them in their personal, social and emotional development and in speaking and listening. Children make good progress when they undertake 'free choice', child-initiated activities. When teaching is adult-directed children have less opportunity to explore and learn

for themselves and the pace of their learning slows. Good relationships between adults and children give children confidence in their personal development, and the phonics programme aids their progress in speaking and listening. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are satisfactory and improving through support from the headteacher and the local authority. The school does not make enough regular use of the outdoor learning environment in the Foundation Stage curriculum, partly because of the constraints on an old building and has plans in place to improve this aspect of its provision.

### **What the school should do to improve further**

- Improve the role of subject leaders in raising standards of achievement in their areas of responsibility.
- Improve opportunities for pupils to use their literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills in other subjects.
- Ensure that all pupils know their targets and understand what they need to do to achieve them.
- Improve pupils' contribution to the life of the school by involving them more in making decisions.

A small proportion of schools whose overall effectiveness is judged satisfactory but which have areas of underperformance will receive a monitoring visit by an Ofsted inspector before the next section 5 inspection.

## **Achievement and standards**

### **Grade: 3**

Across the school pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Standards of attainment at the end of Year 2 and the end of Year 4 are broadly average. Pupils' progress in all classes is improving because recent initiatives to raise their achievement, for example, in shared reading and guided writing, are beginning to have a positive effect. More consistent approaches to assessing pupils' progress and tracking their performance help the school to target individuals and groups of pupils in improving their progress in writing and mathematics. Pupils with learning difficulties make satisfactory progress because of the support they receive from the adults working with them.

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

### **Grade: 3**

Pupils enjoy coming to school, as seen in their good attendance, and have positive attitudes to their learning. The behaviour of the vast majority of pupils is good. A very small minority of pupils do not behave as well as the rest. Pupils enjoy good relationships with each other and the adults around them. The strong Christian ethos of the school enables the pupils to thrive, and they demonstrate good spiritual and moral development. Pupils' social development is satisfactory. They have some responsibilities, with older pupils working with younger children through the shared reading programme and they enjoy being involved in the Eco Committee. Their understanding of other cultures is satisfactory but not as strong as other aspects of their development. Pupils make a good contribution to the local community through singing in the local church and playing in the orchestra as well as raising money for charities in the local village and further afield.

## Quality of provision

### Teaching and learning

#### Grade: 3

Thorough planning, for example, in the mixed-age class in Years 2 and 3, and satisfactory use of assessment ensure that pupils of all abilities are sufficiently challenged in their work. Pupils show more enjoyment of learning when they are given opportunities to learn independently and in small groups. In some lessons, pupils are passive when the activities are teacher directed. Marking makes clear to pupils what they have done well, and the best marking makes clear to pupils what to do next to improve their work but this method is not used in all classes. Older pupils are beginning to assess their own work in some classes and this is beginning to help improve their achievement.

### Curriculum and other activities

#### Grade: 3

The curriculum is satisfactorily planned to meet the needs of all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and those who are more able. It is adapted satisfactorily to focus on aspects of learning that will help pupils to improve their achievement, for example, problem solving in mathematics. Pupils are not provided with sufficient planned opportunities to make use of their literacy, numeracy and ICT skills in other subjects. The programmes for personal, social and health education contribute well to the pupils' personal development. The curriculum is enriched well by a good range of visits and extra activities in sport and music, Pupils in Years 3 and 4 have the opportunity to learn French.

### Care, guidance and support

#### Grade: 3

Arrangements for safeguarding pupils meet all current requirements and are followed appropriately. The good quality of care and support is central to the ethos of the school and underpins the positive learning environment. This results in pupils developing their levels of confidence and self-esteem. They say that they feel safe and know that their teachers look after them. Good links with outside agencies ensure that the needs of all pupils, including learners with difficulties and the very small minority of pupils with behavioural difficulties, are supported. Systems are in place to guide and support pupils in their academic progress, but not all pupils have a clear understanding of what their personal targets are in English and mathematics, or what they need to do to achieve them.

## Leadership and management

#### Grade: 3

The headteacher has shown good leadership since she arrived after a period of instability in the leadership and management of the school and significant changes in staff. She has developed an effective leadership team in partnership with the assistant headteacher. Subject leader roles for all staff are just beginning. Not all subject leaders are checking pupils' standards thoroughly enough in order to improve their attainment and achievement. The school's self-evaluation processes are satisfactory. Systems for checking the quality of teaching and learning are satisfactory and are beginning to have a positive effect on standards of achievement. All pupils

are equally valued and have equal access to the opportunities that the school has to offer. The governing body shares the headteacher's vision and supports and challenges the school to good effect. They know the school's strengths and weaknesses and hold it to account effectively. The vast majority of parents express positive views about the school and have confidence in its work.

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## Annex A

## Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
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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
Effective steps have been taken to promote improvement since the last inspection	Yes
How well does the school work in partnership with others to promote learners' well-being?	2
The effectiveness of the Foundation Stage	3
The capacity to make any necessary improvements	3

### Achievement and standards

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

### Personal development and well-being

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

### The quality of provision

How effective are teaching and learning in meeting the full range of the learners' needs?	3
How well do the curriculum and other activities meet the range of needs and interests of learners?	3
How well are learners cared for, guided and supported?	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 leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	3
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	3
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination tackled so that all learners achieve as well as they can	3
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	3
The extent to which governors and other supervisory boards discharge their responsibilities	2
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?	No

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

8 May 2008

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Michael's CE First School, Penkridge, ST19 5DJ

Thank you for being so welcoming and helpful when we visited your school. We thought that you were polite and friendly. We enjoyed talking to you and listening to what you had to say. We know you like your school and enjoy going there. We think that St Michael's is a satisfactory school with some strengths. These are the main things we found out about your school.

- You make satisfactory progress in your work.
- You behave well and your attendance is good.
- You have a good understanding of how to stay safe.
- Your lessons are mostly satisfactory and some are good.
- You are provided with interesting clubs and activities.
- You are well looked after by all the adults in school.
- All the adults in school work hard to help you do your best.

In order to make the school better, we have asked the staff to:

- make sure that teachers, who are in charge of different subjects, check how good the teaching and learning in those subjects are, so they can help you to do better in your work
- give you more opportunities to practise your reading, writing, number and ICT skills in other subjects
- help you to understand what your targets are and what you need to do to achieve them
- give you more opportunities to make your views heard in school.

Best wishes

Brian Holmes Lead inspector

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Best wishes

Brian Holmes  
Lead inspector