

St Michael's C of E Aided Primary

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	126392
Local Authority	Wiltshire
Inspection number	331192
Inspection dates	24–25 February 2009
Reporting inspector	Robert Pyner HMI

This inspection was carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005; it was also deemed a section 5 inspection under the same Act.

The registered childcare, managed by the governing body, was inspected under section 49 of the Childcare Act 2006.

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	118
Government funded early education provision for children aged 3 to the end of the EYFS	0
Childcare provision for children aged 0 to 3 years	0
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Marianne Adey
Headteacher	Susan Smith
Date of previous school inspection	10 July 2007
Date of previous funded early education inspection	Not previously inspected
Date of previous childcare inspection	Not previously inspected
School address	Back Lane Aldbourn Marlborough SN8 2BP
Telephone number	01672 540434
Fax number	01672 541536

Age group	4–11
Inspection dates	24–25 February 2009
Inspection number	331192

© Crown copyright 2009

Website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

This document may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that the information quoted is reproduced without adaptation and the source and date of publication are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the Education Act 2005, the school must provide a copy of this report free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

Introduction

The inspection was carried out by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors and an Additional Inspector. When St Michael's was inspected in July 2007, it was judged to require special measures.

Description of the school

St Michael's CE Aided Primary School is smaller than average and serves the village of Aldbourne in Wiltshire. The school shares a site with a privately managed pre-school with which it has close links. Pupils come from a range of backgrounds and attainment on entry to the school varies with different year groups but is broadly in line with that expected. Most pupils are of White British heritage and very few do not speak English as their first language. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is below the national average, as is the proportion with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. The school has gained the Investor in People, Basic Skills, Healthy School and Activemark awards.

Key for inspection grades

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

Overall effectiveness of the school

Grade: 3

In accordance with section 13 (4) of the Education Act 2005, HMCI is of the opinion that the school no longer requires special measures. It has improved well since the last inspection and is now a satisfactory school with good features.

Pupils thoroughly enjoy their work in school, are busy and active in lessons, and keen to learn. Their behaviour is excellent, they readily accept guidance and work very well together and with adults. Their personal development and well-being are good with positive contributions to the school and wider community, particularly the local church. The curriculum is good and has been successfully adapted to reflect a focus on the skills pupils are to learn and to develop cross curricular links. The result of this is that there are now more stimulating and active lessons which keep pupils focused on their learning. Pupils and staff are justifiably proud of their colourful classrooms and interactive displays that highlight work.

Provision for the Early Years Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall, although the outdoor environment is underdeveloped. This means that children cannot fully experience all areas of learning and make appropriate choices in their learning. The pupils' rate of progress has improved because the school has developed the use of assessment data much more effectively to monitor progress and identify those who need support. Individual targets help pupils to understand what they are working to achieve. This is supported by effective marking by most teachers which outlines clearly and positively what pupils need to do in order improve their work. The standards achieved by pupils in Years 2 and 6 are in line or above national averages at the expected levels and this represents a significant improvement since the last inspection. However, this improvement is less marked in writing across the school. Overall, given their starting points when they start school, pupils make satisfactory progress.

Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Close monitoring of lessons by senior staff has raised expectations, and effective use of assessment has led to appropriate intervention where underachievement is identified. Lessons generally take account of the range of abilities in each class, although sometimes this is not applied consistently for all groups of learners. Pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are supported well and make similar progress to their peers.

Care, guidance and support are good. Pupils feel safe and well cared for and they are aware of what they need to do to develop healthy lifestyles. All staff at the school know the pupils and their families very well and the level of pastoral care is good.

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher has shown resilience and determination to drive through the improvements necessary and this has resulted in a clear impact on achievement. She has created a strong leadership team that shares her commitment to improvement. The school's self-evaluation is realistic, accurate and used effectively to ensure the momentum of improvement continues. Governance is good and provides effective support and challenge. There is now reduced external support as the school is able to work independently. Given the strength of the leadership of the school, St Michael's has a good capacity to improve and raise achievement further.

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

Grade: 3

Provision and achievement of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are satisfactory. Most children start in the Reception class with average skills and by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage many achieve skills expected for their age. The teacher has effectively created an attractive indoor learning environment. Children are appropriately developing their communication and literacy skills through a comprehensive 'letters and sounds' programme and are beginning to use these in their writing. They are developing their independent skills appropriately and understand the rules in the classroom. For example, they know only a certain number of children can be at each activity. Behaviour is good and children share equipment and relate well to each other. Children have some opportunities to choose their own activities, but the outdoor area is underdeveloped and not used effectively for children to make choices about whether to learn inside or outside. Children are well cared for and all welfare requirements are in place. The 'Learning Journey Diaries' provide good evidence of children's progress and parents are able to celebrate achievements at home by adding a 'wow' sticker to the diaries. The teacher is well supported by an experienced teaching assistant. The management of the Early Years Foundation Stage is developing satisfactorily and the teacher is benefiting from external support.

What the school should do to improve further

- Provide more opportunities for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage to experience all areas of learning in the outside environment and to be able to make their own choices about indoor and outdoor learning.
- Raise standards in writing across the school.
- Ensure teaching consistently matches the needs of all groups of pupils.

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

Achievement and standards

Grade: 3

Standards are broadly average and improving. Pupils make satisfactory progress in relation to their starting points and this includes pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. In science, progress across the school is very good. Expectations of pupils' attainment and rates of progress have been increased in the period since the last inspection and the targets to be achieved have become more effective in promoting improvement. In addition, effective monitoring of pupil progress has reduced underachievement. The impact of this can be seen in the improvement in basic skills, particularly in reading, mathematics and science. National assessment results in 2008 show that pupils in Year 2 reach broadly average results at the expected levels in reading, writing and mathematics. There has been an impressive improvement in the performance at the higher levels in reading and mathematics with the school achieving results above national averages for these subjects. The unvalidated Key Stage 2 results for 2008 show that, by the end of Year 6, pupils reach standards which are above average in English, mathematics and science. However, pupils attain significantly higher standards for reading than for writing. Attainment at the higher level is well above average in science but below in English and mathematics. The school's tracking data indicate that the school is well on course to improve

on this in 2009. Taking the results as a whole, they show a significant improvement on the outcomes in 2007 when standards in English and mathematics had suffered a sharp decline. The improvement in the results for mathematics and science is marked and reflects the drive to raise achievement in these subjects since the last inspection.

Personal development and well-being

Grade: 2

Pupils have outstanding attitudes to learning and their behaviour is exemplary. They are polite, articulate and thoroughly enjoy their time at school. As one pupil said, 'I like school because teachers make lessons fun.' As a result, pupils' attendance is above average. Pupils respond well to the reward systems in place and enjoy having their particular achievements recorded on the 'Honeycomb Board'. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, with particular strengths in work on other cultures. For example, a visitor recently talked to pupils about her Hindu faith and pupils have links with a school in a nearby larger town and with a school in Zimbabwe. Pupils feel safe in school and have a good understanding of healthy lifestyles. They have the opportunity to have fruit at break time and they collect the waste for compost. Older pupils support the younger ones in the playground.

The school council takes an active part in the running of the school. The members are currently working on a project to improve the outdoor environment. Other pupils enjoy taking responsibilities, such as gate monitors and play leaders. These responsibilities support pupils' personal development well. The school regularly participates in church and village activities. Pupils enjoy organising fundraising events for local and national charities and are involved in fundraising to support the linked school in Zimbabwe. Pupils are satisfactorily developing workplace and other skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT) and are appropriately prepared for the next stage in their education.

Quality of provision

Teaching and learning

Grade: 3

Rigorous monitoring and support for teaching have brought about significant improvements. For example, lessons have clearer objectives and work to meet pupils' individual needs is targeted more effectively, although some work is still required to ensure that teaching is consistently appropriate for all groups of learners. Activities are now more closely matched to teaching and teachers model strategies more effectively. Sharing of objectives with the pupils has improved their understanding of the learning in lessons. Work on teachers' use of assessment information to guide planning and set targets for pupils has had a clear impact on achievement. There is now more effective intervention by teachers to improve progress for individuals and groups. Teachers use interactive whiteboards and ICT well and there are good examples of the effective use of subject knowledge to extend pupils' enjoyment and learning across the curriculum. Teaching assistants support pupils well, especially those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, so that they make satisfactory progress and teachers ensure that the contribution to lessons of this group of learners is shared and celebrated.

Curriculum and other activities

Grade: 2

The curriculum is good and encourages pupils' personal development well. Curriculum provision was reviewed over the last year with an emphasis on developing skills for learning which has led to stronger links between subjects. Overall, the curriculum is broad and balanced and enriched by a good range of visits and visitors to the school. For example, pupils in Years 4, 5 and 6 are taught French by a specialist teacher each week through a scheme involving the local secondary school. Pupils greatly enjoy and benefit from this specialist teaching. Learning is enhanced through the colourful and thought-provoking displays all around the school. There is a good range of enrichment activities through clubs, some led by specialists for sport and music, and pupils have the use of an after school facility. Parents have been involved in a family learning programme promoting the understanding of mathematics which has supported pupils in their learning. Links with the local church are strong and are an important part of its work.

Care, guidance and support

Grade: 2

Pupils are well cared for, feel safe, and say they know who to talk to if they have a problem. The school makes effective use of their comprehensive personal, social and health education programmes to ensure that pupils' pastoral care is good. The recently appointed play leaders and the 'Friendship Stop' in the playground offer pupils good support at playtimes. Midday supervisors have received good training to support their work at lunchtimes. The school has good links with outside agencies which effectively ensure that pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are provided with all the additional support to which they are entitled. All safeguarding procedures are fully in place and rigorously implemented.

The school has introduced rigorous systems for tracking pupils' progress and these are successfully embedded into practice. However, the full impact of these strategies on pupils' achievement has not been seen, particularly in writing. The headteacher holds regular meetings with staff to discuss pupils' progress and to identify any underachievement and those pupils who might need short term intervention programmes. All this information is used well to provide group and individual targets for pupils in English and mathematics. Older pupils say they know what National Curriculum level they are working at and what they need to do to reach the next level. Marking has improved and most pupils feel they know how to improve their work.

Leadership and management

Grade: 2

The headteacher has demonstrated a determined approach in leading the improvements required since the school became subject to special measures. She gives a good lead in developing the pupils' educational achievement and standards, together with promoting good pastoral care for all pupils. She has created an effective leadership team that shares her vision for improvement and appreciates that there is still work to do to build on the improved achievement and standards. Indeed, throughout the staff there is a good team ethos and determination to do the best for pupils. Self-evaluation is accurate and there is a good awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Subject leaders have improved their monitoring of teaching and learning and this has had a clear impact on results.

The school lies at the heart of the community enabling pupils to make positive contributions to their school and village life, for example in the parish 'Send a Cow' harvest project. This, together with the links with other schools in very different communities, ensures that the school makes a good contribution to community cohesion.

With the support of the local authority, the governing body has risen to the challenge of the school requiring special measures and has rigorous procedures for support and challenge which are now embedded in the work of the school.

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.

Annex A

Inspection judgements

Key to judgements: grade 1 is outstanding, grade 2 good, grade 3 satisfactory, and grade 4 inadequate	School Overall
---	----------------

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 capacity to make any necessary improvements	2

Effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?	3
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	3
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	3
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?	3
How effectively is the welfare of children in the EYFS promoted?	3
How effectively is provision in the EYFS led and managed?	3

Achievement and standards

How well do learners achieve?	3
The standards ¹ 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/or disabilities make progress	3

¹Grade 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.

Personal development and well-being

How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the learners?	2
The extent of learners' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The extent to which learners adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which learners adopt safe practices	2
The extent to which learners enjoy their education	1
The attendance of learners	2
The behaviour of learners	1
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

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

Leadership and management

How effective are leadership and management in raising achievement and supporting all learners?	2
How effectively leaders and managers at all levels set clear direction leading to improvement and promote high quality of care and education	2
How effectively leaders and managers use challenging targets to raise standards	2
The effectiveness of the school's self-evaluation	2
How well equality of opportunity is promoted and discrimination eliminated	2
How well does the school contribute to community cohesion?	2
How effectively and efficiently resources, including staff, are deployed to achieve value for money	2
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

Annex B

Text from letter to pupils explaining the findings of the inspection

26 February 2009

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Michael's CE Aided Primary School, Aldbourne SN8 2BP

Thank you so much for welcoming the inspection team into your school in February. We enjoyed our visit and I am writing to tell you what we found.

The adults in your school have worked hard to make improvements since the last inspection and this was clear to the inspectors. Your school is satisfactory overall and there are some aspects that are good. One of these is the good curriculum that provides you with lots of opportunities to learn. Another is the way you develop as sensible, thoughtful young people. We could see that you really enjoy your time at school and we found that your behaviour is excellent. We liked the friendly way you work together and how thoughtfully you talked to us about your life at school. You have an impressive knowledge about how to live healthy lifestyles. Another good aspect is the way the staff take good care of you, making you feel safe and secure. Lots of people talked to us about the things happening in the school to make it even better and we have seen how successful these have been.

Your headteacher and everyone at the school have worked hard to help you improve the standards that you achieve in your work and we could see this in your books and test results. This means that you are making better progress in your learning. There is still one area where you could make more progress and we have asked the school to help you to improve your attainment in writing. We have also asked your teachers to make sure that, in your lessons, activities are matched to your needs all the time. Finally, we have asked the school to improve the outdoor learning area for the youngest children.

You can play a very important part in helping to improve your school even more by continuing to work hard and help each other. I am sure that you will.

Best wishes

Yours faithfully

Robert Pyner

Her Majesty's Inspector