

St Michael and All Angels Church of England (Aided) Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	120197
Local Authority	Leicestershire
Inspection number	327224
Inspection dates	11–12 November 2008
Reporting inspector	Ceri Morgan HMI

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number on roll	
School (total)	103
Appropriate authority	The local authority
Chair	Mrs Sue Norledge
Headteacher	Mrs Gail Forryan
Date of previous school inspection	6 December 2005
School address	Brookside Rearsby Leicestershire, LE7 4YB
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out over two days by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI) under the agreed pilot inspection arrangements. A second HMI visited the inspection on the first day and contributed to the evidence base. Each class was seen at least once and meetings were held with governors, staff and pupils. The inspectors observed the school's work and considered a full range of the school's documentation. This included reference to parental, pupil and staff questionnaires. All aspects of the school's work were considered but the inspection looked in particular at the pupils' progress and achievement, the work of more-able pupils, the curriculum and the quality of leadership.

Information about the school

St Michaels and All Angels Church of England School is a Church of England Aided School. This means it receives some additional funding from the diocese as well as the local authority and is required to promote Christian values. It serves a settled rural community. The number on roll has steadily increased over the last few years. The school has recently opened a new '4+' unit in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

Further information about the school

	School's figures	School's figures compared with other schools
School size	103	Below average
Free school meals	5.6%	Below average
Proportions of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities	11%	Below average
Proportion of pupils from ethnic minorities	6.5%	Below average
Proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language	1%	Below average
Proportion of pupils with a statement of special educational needs	0%	Below average

Inspection judgements

Grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Overall effectiveness

1

Capacity for sustained improvement

1

Main findings

This is an outstanding school that is a delight to visit. Particular strengths are the standards pupils reach by ages 7 and 11, the care and support offered by the staff to each child and the quality of leadership of the outgoing headteacher. However by far the best ingredient in this success is the pupils themselves. Their behaviour, responsiveness and readiness to engage in their lessons is exemplary. The school has an outstanding capacity for sustained improvement shown by its track record and the proven ability of the leadership and management to implement change effectively and quickly. The school is rightly considering making changes to the curriculum - partly to increase the level of challenge for high ability pupils and partly to ensure innovation and creativity are encouraged in a rigorous and systematic way. This work is not yet fully established and is a priority for the new leadership in school. At present, leadership is overly reliant on the headteacher and there is an opportunity for others, such as curriculum leaders and governors, to contribute in a more strategic way, for example in developing the school development plan.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Implement the school's plans to provide a more integrated curriculum offering even greater challenge for the more able.
- Ensure that the full leadership team in school is more involved in evaluating the school's progress.

How well does the school meet the needs of individuals and different groups of pupils?

1

Levels of attainment in school are high. In the national tests for 2008, every pupil managed to achieve the expected level by age 11 and almost every pupil also reached the higher Level 5 in English and science. Almost two thirds did so in mathematics. Similarly, for pupils aged 7, every child reached the expected level in reading, mathematics and science. This indicates outstanding progress and achievement throughout the school. There are no significant differences in the performance of girls and boys and for pupils with additional needs. Much of this success is due to the rigour with which staff monitor the pupils' progress and pay

careful attention to individual detail.

The school conducts a pupil survey which indicates that all pupils feel very safe and that the staff will look after them. They are increasingly aware of the importance of a healthy diet and good physical activity to ensure a healthy lifestyle. The school plans to introduce hot meals in the near future when the premises developments are completed. Some of the pupils wish to see even greater emphasis on sports and other physical activity such as dance.

Pupils' behaviour is exemplary, particularly in lessons. The politeness and respect shown to visitors and each other is impressive. The school council takes its growing responsibilities very seriously and its members report that there is no bullying or racism in school, or indeed very little falling out. As one pupil expressed it, 'The best feature of school is the way we all get on, and any minor falling out is only because we are children!' They care for each other and everyone feels included.

Pupils contribute well to their local community, particularly through a wide range of activities connected to the local church. They increasingly take decisions that influence their own environment, mainly through the school council. There is a very strong tradition of supporting charitable collections, for example by filling shoeboxes with Christmas presents for children overseas, and the pupils and families play a full part in a wide range of such activities. The school works hard to promote an understanding of a variety of cultures via visits and links but recognises there is scope for a greater engagement with some of the thorny aspects facing the wider global and UK community.

The high standards attained in mathematics and literacy, alongside some well planned activities and visits, help pupils prepare outstandingly well for opportunities in the future. The school hosts visits by the police and others who talk about their role, and a recent 'Fathers' Day' in which dads came into school to talk about their work was successful in giving pupils a wider experience of the range of vocations available.

The richness of the experiences provided and the high quality of relationships ensure that pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is strong. In particular, there is a tangible spirituality about the school that is evident in relationships. The pupils have a good understanding of the variety and differences between their own and other cultures. The school has appropriate plans to ensure the development of deeper understanding and respect for cultural diversity in the future.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

How well do pupils achieve and enjoy their learning?	1
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	1
The quality of learning for pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and their progress	1
Pupils' attainment ¹	1

¹ Grades for attainment are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; 4 is low

To what extent do pupils feel safe?	1
How well do pupils behave?	1
To what extent do pupils adopt healthy lifestyles?	2
To what extent do pupils contribute to the school and wider community?	2
How well do pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being?	1
Pupils' attendance and punctuality	1
What is the extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development?	1

The quality of the school's work

The quality of teaching and learning ranged from satisfactory to outstanding and overall was judged to be good. Key strengths were the high quality of relationships, effective use of assessment activities, brisk lesson timings and well planned and well resourced lessons. It is clear that teachers here enjoy their teaching and pupils respond exceptionally well to that, almost without exception. Where teaching was less than outstanding, it was usually due to over lengthy introductions, thus reducing the opportunities for extended research and learning. For some of the most able, this capped their learning, but for others it limited opportunities to speak at length and develop an already impressive vocabulary. However, a real strength of the teaching was a readiness by teachers to evaluate and adapt their practice continually to keep fresh the already high standards. Individual attention to pupils was a particular feature of all lessons. Assessment activities are undertaken regularly and pupils are encouraged to assess their own understanding of new learning in almost every lesson. A particular feature of the school is the high quality of additional support offered by a strong team of classroom support assistants.

The school offers an appropriate curriculum, which is further enriched by a series of well planned visits, clubs and visitors. It meets the needs of all pupils and there are some examples of innovative practice emerging such as recent provision for modern foreign languages and much improved use and application of information and communication technology (ICT). The school plans to refresh the curriculum in the coming months. Currently, there are too few regular opportunities for pupils, especially the more able, to undertake higher level thinking or longer term and more profound research. Similarly, although some links are made across subjects, there are examples of missed opportunities to develop, for example, literacy skills in other subjects.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

High quality teaching and purposeful learning	2
Effective assessment and academic guidance	1
An appropriate curriculum which meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, provision through partnership with other organisations	2
Support, guidance and care	1

How effective are leadership and management?

Since the previous inspection in 2005, the school leaders have steered the progress of the school with genuine ambition and rigour. There have been continued improvements: a well planned development of the premises, a refurbished base for the EYFS and, crucially, a clear focus on rigorous tracking and monitoring of the pupils' progress, with effective support provided where needed. The school routinely sets itself challenging targets and routinely achieves them. When change is required, it is implemented quickly and effectively. This is driven by the outstanding organisation of the headteacher with the support of a strong team who share responsibilities well.

The contribution of other teachers is also good, although there is a tendency to restrict this to individual curriculum leadership rather than overarching strategic leadership. For example, the school development plan was written by the headteacher alone in the main. Governors are fully supportive of the school and work hard but the imminent arrival of a new headteacher means the time is opportune to make a more strategic contribution.

These are the grades for leadership and management

Monitoring, evaluating and planning for improvement to outcomes for pupils	1
Promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination	2
Ensuring that safeguarding procedures are effective	1
Ensuring that the governing body provides effective challenge and support so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities are met	3
Promoting the school's relationship with parents and carers, including their involvement in decision-making about matters relating to learning and well-being	1
Developing partnerships with other providers, organisations and services	1
Ensuring the school contributes to community cohesion	2
Deploying resources to achieve value for money	1

Early Years Foundation Stage

The school has developed a new '4+' base since the last inspection in new and welcoming premises. The outdoor provision is particularly good and used well to allow children safe outdoor experiences. The curriculum is also good and has a full range of well balanced activities which allow for some adult-led sessions but also some that encourage children to make their own choices. A strong emphasis on phonics and basic number skills is helping to secure good progress for all children in literacy and numeracy. It is a well resourced and stimulating environment for children to learn in.

The attainment of pupils when they start school is slightly above average. It is higher than the local authority average in all areas, especially for creative development.

Levels of knowledge and understanding in literacy and numeracy, however, are similar to those generally found in pupils of this age. The emphasis on basic skills in the current curriculum is thus very appropriate and ensures children are well placed for the next stage of education. The school is aware that pupils do not always use extended speech and vocabulary at times during lessons to help develop their speaking and literacy skills. The unit is currently managed well.

How effective is the provision in meeting the needs of children in the EYFS?*	2
How well do children in the EYFS achieve?	2
How good are the overall personal development and well-being of the children in the EYFS?	2
How effectively are children in the EYFS helped to learn and develop?*	2
How effectively is the welfare of the children in the EYFS promoted?*	1
How effectively is the provision in the EYFS led and managed?*	2

* Common judgements made across all inspections of the EYFS

Views of parents and carers

Parents are overwhelmingly supportive and appreciative of the work of the school. They especially value the care and attention given to their children and recognise that the values and ethos in school manage to strike a balance between care and support alongside achieving academic success. A few parents felt that the homework currently on offer could either be developed further for some pupils or the time allowed be extended to a longer period to allow busy pupils and parents to support their children more. A typical view was the following quotation, 'My child loves it here.'

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. In 2006-7, 14% of schools were judged to be outstanding.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well. In 2006-7, 46% of schools were judged good.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing for its pupils suitably. In 2006-7, 34% of schools were judged satisfactory.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves. In 2006-7, 6% of schools were judged inadequate.

Common terminology used by inspectors

- Attainment:** the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
- Progress:** the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.
- Achievement:** an overall measure of the pupils' success in their academic learning. The term combines attainment and progress. Pupils might make good progress, for example, but if their attainment remains low, inspectors may judge that their achievement is only satisfactory.
- Capacity to improve:** the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
- Leadership and management:** the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.

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13 November 2008

Dear Children

Inspection of St Michaels and All Angels Primary School, Rearsby, LE7 4YB

Thank you for welcoming me to your school recently. I am writing to let you know the findings of my inspection.

You are fortunate to attend an outstanding school which has many strengths. The caring and helpful approach taken by your teachers and other adults helps each of you to make impressive progress. As a result you usually reach high standards in your education and enjoy your time in the school as well. However, much of this is also down to you. I was especially impressed by the politeness you showed to each other and your enthusiasm for work. Some of this is down to the good teaching, but much is also down to the way you all want to do your best in lessons. Behaviour is excellent and you are all keen to learn as much as you can.

I have asked the school to consider two things for the future. The way the teachers organise lessons, although good, could include more chances to make links with the skills you learn in literacy and in other subjects. The second thing is that all of the teachers might take a bigger role in planning how the school needs to continue developing.

I would like to wish you all well in your future education and, once again, many thanks for your help and contribution to the inspection and the success of the school.

Kind regards

Ceri Morgan
Her Majesty's Inspector