

# St Michael's Church of England Voluntary Aided Junior School

Barnard Road, Galleywood, Chelmsford, CM2 8RR

**Inspection dates** 24–25 October 2012

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	<b>Good</b>	<b>2</b>
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2

## Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

### This is a good school.

- Pupils make good progress as they move through the school.
- Pupils are carefully assessed on entry to identify possible learning needs.
- Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs make good progress.
- Attainment has risen in reading and writing. Focused work is also leading to improvements in mathematics.
- The quality of teaching is good. Opportunities for teachers to refine their skills are increasing.
- Pupils develop as learners because they work well with each other and with adults.
- Pupils are encouraged to be independent learners.
- Pupils are well behaved and feel safe. Parents and carers agree.
- The school is led and managed well. The school is improving as a result of the recent focus by leaders, managers and governors on raising pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching.
- Governors have an increased role in the school, visit regularly and provide good support and challenge.
- The curriculum is enhanced by interesting topics and a range of clubs.
- Pupils' good spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strength of the school.

### It is not yet an outstanding school because

- The school does not always share the best examples of teaching with other staff.
- Assessment and other data are not always effectively used to match work as closely as possible to the individual needs of learners.
- Subject leaders have an increased role across the school but opportunities for them to monitor and improve progress in their subjects are not yet fully developed.

## Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 11 lessons taught by six teachers.
- Inspectors held meetings with members of the governing body, staff including the acting headteacher and acting deputy headteacher, a representative of the local authority and groups of pupils.
- Inspectors took account of the 38 responses to the on-line questionnaire (Parent View) in planning and carrying out the inspection and also spoke to parents and carers in the playgrounds.
- Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at the school's development plan, assessment data, monitoring and self-evaluation procedures including the self-evaluation summary, a range of policies and procedures and arrangements for safeguarding. They looked at pupils' books in lessons and during a joint work scrutiny with senior staff.
- An inspector listened to pupils read.

## Inspection team

Michael Sutherland-Harper, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Lynn Lowery	Additional Inspector

## Full report

### Information about this school

- The school is smaller than average.
- The very large majority of the pupils are White British.
- The proportions of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and of those who speak English as an additional language are below national averages.
- The proportion of pupils supported through school action is above the national average, as is the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs. The number of pupils supported through school action has almost doubled in recent years.
- The proportion of pupils who are known to be eligible for additional income provided to the school (the pupil premium) is below the national average.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.
- The school has been through a period of staffing turbulence. The headteacher is currently on sick leave following major surgery.

### What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Raise teaching and learning to the highest levels, and so improve pupils' achievement, by:
  - increasing opportunities for subject leaders to monitor and improve progress in their subjects across the school
  - developing the sharing of the best examples of teaching
  - using data more efficiently to ensure a closer match of work to the individual needs of learners.

## Inspection judgements

### The achievement of pupils is good

- Although attainment on entry to the school has been above average in the past, it varies from year to year. As measured by the school's own, accurate assessments at the start of Year 3, pupils' attainment is currently a little below average when they join the school. An increasing number of pupils arrive with special educational needs; the proportion of pupils on school action has risen markedly in the past year and is now well above national averages.
- Attainment at the end of Year 6 rose in 2012. School data show that the present Year 6 pupils are making good progress from their starting points. Projections for 2013 and beyond confirm this upward trend.
- Progress levels are rising across the school following whole-school work on reading and writing, after a dip in writing results in 2011. Year 6 pupils' books show that about a third of the year is in line to reach the top levels in writing. Achievement in reading is also above average. Pupils benefit from extra support in both subjects, such as detailed spelling sessions, work on letters and sounds and handwriting groups. Mathematics is a current whole-school focus. Computer mental mathematics programmes, visual prompts and boxes of mathematical aids in classrooms reinforce progress rates.
- Pupils feel they are learning well and the very large majority of their parents and carers agree, as measured by the online Parent View survey. Progress for all groups of pupils is good. Learning support assistants provide good pastoral and academic support with the additional funding received via the pupil premium. This funding ensures that pupils whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable, or disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs, make similar progress to their peers.
- Pupils know their targets and analyse their own achievement by underlining the learning intention in appropriate colours of red, yellow or green to show how far they feel they have progressed.
- Pupils enjoy reading, have frequent opportunities to do so and read confidently. One idea which encourages readers, and which was suggested by the school council, is the classroom reading box from which pupils share books they have enjoyed at home.
- Data are regularly collected and reviewed at meetings to monitor pupils' progress. The school is now working to collect data earlier to ensure progress rates continue to rise quickly. Leaders acknowledge that teachers do not always use these data to maximum effect in matching work to individual pupils' prior learning.

### The quality of teaching is good

- Teaching is good. Pupils feel they are taught well and the large majority of parents and carers replying on Parent View agree. Teaching observed during the inspection was good. A few lessons require improvement because activities are not always tightly matched to individual learning needs to ensure pupils can reach the highest levels. Use of agreed teaching styles is helping to ensure consistency across the school.
- Teachers make confident use of questioning and of new technologies to supplement their good subject knowledge and plan carefully to advance learning. In a good Year 3 and 4 lesson linking

information and communication technology (ICT) with literacy, pupils added text, imported pictures and changed font sizes to produce a high quality booklet on Greek myths.

- Teachers know their pupils well and are quick to give them help whenever problems arise. Good relationships between staff and pupils, together with encouragement for pupils to work regularly with talk partners, ensure good progress. In a good Year 5 and 6 mathematics lesson on areas and perimeters, the teacher's challenge led pupils quickly to assess how they could investigate shapes by rearranging the objects in the classroom. Teaching assistants work well with teachers to help pupils learn.
- Joint planning of lessons across year groups ensures consistent approaches and equality of opportunity for all pupils, including disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs or whose circumstances might make them vulnerable.
- The best examples of teaching are not yet fully shared across the school but work to improve teaching through coaching sessions and observation of practice elsewhere is beginning to have an effect on learning.
- Work is regularly and carefully marked but comments are inconsistently used to show pupils the next steps towards targets. Teachers supplement marking with target cards to show parents and carers their children's strengths and areas for development.

### **The behaviour and safety of pupils are good**

- Pupils have positive attitudes. They are well disposed to learning because the school's approach to using your own brain, discussing with a partner and then asking the teacher encourages good working relationships.
  - Pupils are well behaved in lessons and around the school. Low-level disruption is uncommon and occurs only on the rare occasions when work does not fully engage pupils. Older pupils support younger pupils in a variety of ways, as mentors and buddies at lunchtime and breaks and in reading together each Friday.
  - Pastoral care and support are at the heart of the school's work. Expectations of good behaviour are carefully laid out in line with the school's core values of the three rights: to be safe, to learn, to respect. Pupils say that behaviour has improved during their time in the school.
  - Disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs are fully integrated into each class because they are well supported by learning support assistants.
  - Pupils say that they feel safe and know how to stay safe. Any issues are quickly sorted out because an adult is always available to speak to them. Parents and carers agree.
  - Incidents of racism or bullying are rare. They are taken seriously and are quickly dealt with when they do occur. Pupils understand the different types of bullying and know how to stay safe when they use the internet.
  - Attendance rates are high. Pupils are punctual to school and to lessons but a careful queuing system in the playground after break means a slight delay in the start of the next lesson. The themed curriculum, which has caught pupils' interest, and closer links with parents and carers
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are contributing to improved attendance.

### **The leadership and management** are good

- Following a period of staffing turbulence, school leaders are working effectively with staff and governors to drive forward improvement and realise their vision statement of 'a vibrant learning community for all where excellence is the norm.'
  - Subject leaders are working together to monitor and improve their subjects through better links with parents and carers, new marking and presentation policies and regular progress meetings but they are not yet equally effective.
  - The school development plan focuses accurately on raising attainment. Its impact is clear in the successful work to raise attainment in reading and writing, now carrying into mathematics. It links closely to a longer development plan about the school's shared vision for 2015.
  - Performance management procedures follow the latest recommendations and are rigorously implemented with reference to the teachers' standards. Staff know they are responsible for results and that movement up the salary scales is linked to pupils' progress.
  - The well-balanced curriculum covers a wide range of skills. Themes chosen by pupils, on areas like Greek myths and Harry Potter stories, have drawn them into learning, developed their imagination and improved results. Expanding use of ICT supports this work.
  - Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a school strength. Pupils develop social skills by working closely with each other. Assemblies encourage them to review their world and assess what is right and wrong. Recent strong bonds with a school in Kenya, including an exchange visit by the global coordinator and the Deputy Headteacher, and displays enrich and expand their view of the world. The school has close links with local and global church communities.
  - Safeguarding meets all current requirements. Staff are fully trained and all required policies and procedures are in place.
  - The local authority has a light touch approach to the school. Links with an advisor, who knows the school well, are close and effective. The school has good capacity for further improvement because governance is good, self-evaluation is accurate, progress rates are rising and any remaining gaps are closing quickly.
  - **The governance of the school:**
    - The governing body includes experienced governors who know the school well but also carefully inducts new governors into their roles. The governing body has a clear view of the quality of teaching and sees that pay increases are used to reward good teaching. Governors have a detailed understanding of the pupil premium and ensure it is used to enable the pupils to make good progress. For example, funds are used to provide extra pastoral support and for additional teaching sessions in writing and mathematics. Governors visit the school regularly to review progress, having been thoroughly briefed on the latest data, and support and challenge its initiatives effectively.
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## What inspection judgements mean

School		
Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	An outstanding school is highly effective in delivering outcomes that provide exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs. This ensures that pupils are very well equipped for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 2	Good	A good school is effective in delivering outcomes that provide well for all its pupils' needs. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education, training or employment.
Grade 3	Requires improvement	A school that requires improvement is not yet a good school, but it is not inadequate. This school will receive a full inspection within 24 months from the date of this inspection.
Grade 4	Inadequate	<p>A school that has serious weaknesses is inadequate overall and requires significant improvement but leadership and management are judged to be Grade 3 or better. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p> <p>A school that requires special measures is one where the school is failing to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and the school's leaders, managers or governors have not demonstrated that they have the capacity to secure the necessary improvement in the school. This school will receive regular monitoring by Ofsted inspectors.</p>

## School details

<b>Unique reference number</b>	115197
<b>Local authority</b>	Essex
<b>Inspection number</b>	401503

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

<b>Type of school</b>	Junior
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary Aided School
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	7–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	163
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Jane Cregan-Bird
<b>Headteacher</b>	Stuart Ellis
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	06 Novemeber 2011
<b>Telephone number</b>	01245 472682
<b>Fax number</b>	01245 474114
<b>Email address</b>	admin@st-michaels-jun.essex.sch.uk

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