

St Michael's Church of England Primary School

Ashford Road, Tenterden, Kent, TN30 6PU

Inspection dates 17–18 July 2013

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Satisfactory	3
	This inspection:	Requires improvement	3
Achievement of pupils		Requires improvement	3
Quality of teaching		Requires improvement	3
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Leadership and management		Requires improvement	3

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement. It is not good because:

- Pupils do not achieve as well in mathematics as they do in reading and writing.
- The marking of pupils' work is not consistent across the school. As a result, pupils are unsure about how to improve their work.
- In some lessons, the pace is too slow; pupils and teachers are not clear about the learning which is to take place. The most able pupils are not moved quickly enough onto appropriately challenging work and, as a consequence, do not make the progress of which they are able.
- Policies and new initiatives are not applied consistently across the school and, as a result, staff and pupils are unclear about next steps.
- School improvement plans lack explicit timescales and measureable targets. The impact of actions planned is not evaluated; consequently, leaders, including governors, do not always have a clear focus about the next steps for improvement.
- Teachers do not always use the assessment information they have to ensure that activities are well matched to the needs of pupils. As a result, pupils do not make rapid and sustained progress, particularly in mathematics.

The school has the following strengths

- The relationships within the school are positive. Behaviour is good and pupils are polite, courteous and articulate.
- Families of the younger children value the good communication with the teachers.
- The school provides a range of enrichment activities which support the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils.
- The school is well supported by the wider community. There is a strong community ethos evident within the school.
- Good outdoor facilities allow pupils to have opportunities for outdoor learning.
- There are good links with the local secondary school and, as a result, transition arrangements are strong.

Information about this inspection

- Inspectors observed 12 lessons, of which seven were joint observations with either the headteacher or deputy headteacher.
- Inspectors looked at the school's documents, including those relating to school improvement, school self-evaluation, the progress pupils make, governor minutes and information relating to the management of the teachers' performance. Inspectors also scrutinised policies and procedures relating to behaviour, safeguarding and attendance. They looked at the school website.
- They listened to pupils reading.
- Inspectors held meetings with a group of pupils, three members of the governing body, the senior and middle leaders of the school and the special educational needs coordinator. A further meeting was held with a representative of the local authority to establish the nature and impact of the support the school has received.
- Inspectors took account of the 17 responses to the staff questionnaire, the one letter received from a group of parents and a telephone call between a parent and the lead inspector. They also took into account the 46 responses to Parent View, Ofsted's on-line questionnaire.

Inspection team

Jill Thewlis, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Carol Vant

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Michael's is a smaller-than-average primary school. The school roll is declining by small numbers.
- All pupils are taught in single age classes, including children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- The majority of pupils are from a White British background.
- The proportion of pupils supported at school action is above the national average. Those supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs are below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who are eligible for pupil premium, which is additional funding provided to support pupils in receipt of free school meals, in the care of the local authority or from a service family, is below the national average.
- The school meets the government's floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in English and mathematics.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching by July 2014 so that it is consistently good or better by ensuring that:
 - the marking policy is applied consistently across the school so that pupils understand how to improve their work.
 - lessons move at a brisk pace and both pupils and teachers are clear about the learning which is to take place in the lesson.
- Accelerate the progress of pupils, especially in mathematics, by ensuring that:
 - teachers use assessment information effectively so that all pupils are appropriately challenged, enabling all pupils to make rapid and sustained progress
 - the more able pupils are moved more quickly onto challenging work, so allowing them to achieve the higher levels of which they are capable.
- Strengthen leadership and management, including that of the governing body, by ensuring that:
 - by July 2014, school improvement documents have clear actions, with timescales for completion, and effectively evaluate and record the impact of the action
 - leaders rigorously check that initiatives are implemented consistently across the school.

An external review of governance should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- Achievement requires improvement because pupils do not make rapid and sustained progress in mathematics. This has been recognised by the school. Although recent actions have secured some improvement, this has not yet been accelerated to ensure that all pupils attain the levels, and make the progress, of which they are capable.
- The school is working with a local group of schools on a new mathematical calculation policy to ensure a consistency of approach across the primary schools in the area. This policy is not yet in place.
- Children enter the Reception class with skills and abilities at broadly expected levels. They make satisfactory progress, and enter Year 1 at expected levels. Teaching in Year 1 is good, and pupils make good progress as a result.
- Pupils in Year 2 have not, in the past, made accelerated progress or attained the higher Level 3 in any area at the end of Key Stage 1. However, this has not been the case this year, where attainment has shown improvement, particularly in the numbers attaining the higher Level 3 in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In the phonic screening check, pupils this year scored highly, with 95% reaching the expected standard. This is an improvement on 2012 and reflects the good teaching in Year 1. Pupils are able to use their phonic knowledge, the links between sounds and letters, effectively in both their reading and writing.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make variable progress. In the past, additional group work and support have not been well targeted which resulted in a lack of progress. However, as a consequence of the recent appointment of a new special educational needs coordinator, these pupils now receive appropriate help and support. As a result, some pupils are now making better progress.
- At the end of Year 6 the small numbers of pupils who are eligible for pupil premium are two terms behind in English and one term ahead in mathematics when compared to their peers in the school. The progress of these pupils across other year groups is variable.
- The Year 6 outcomes for this year in mathematics show some improvement at both Level 4 and Level 5. In English, the number of pupils attaining Level 4 has increased, but those attaining Level 5 has decreased slightly. As yet there is no national benchmark for comparison.
- The school has introduced a marking policy but this is not consistently applied in all classes. Consequently, pupils do not know how to improve their work and this inhibits the progress they make, especially in mathematics. The marking policy is particularly well used in Year 5 and this is reflected in the better progress made by pupils in this class.
- Assessment is not used effectively by all teachers to ensure that work is pitched at the right level for pupils to make good progress, especially in mathematics.

The quality of teaching

requires improvement

- The attainment and progress of pupils in mathematics are slower than that in reading and writing due to weaker teaching. Teaching is not consistently good or better across the school and over time. Teaching, consequently, requires improvement.
- Pupils sometimes become disengaged because the pace of lessons is too slow. For example, they are often kept sitting on the carpet for long periods of time listening to the teacher and not being actively engaged in their learning.
- Teachers do not always appropriately challenge pupils in mathematics lessons. Sometimes, all pupils are given the same task, irrespective of ability. More able pupils have to work through these tasks before they are given anything more challenging. As a result, they do not make good progress because they are not spending sufficient time in furthering their learning.

- There is good teaching in Year 1, Year 3 and Year 5. Pupils demonstrated an ability to calculate effectively, for example when using a formal written method in Year 3. Adding three two-digit numbers together, one pupil said, 'Eight and three are eleven, five and six are eleven and eleven and eleven are twenty two. I put two in the units and carry two into the tens column.' In these year groups, pupils make better progress. Teaching is less strong in other year groups. No outstanding teaching was observed.
- In the best lessons, teaching is brisk, activities are well matched to need and teachers use assessment well to move learning forward rapidly. One pupil said about teaching in Year 5, 'The teacher tells us what to do to improve.' As a result, pupils make good progress in these lessons.
- Teaching assistants are well deployed in some classes and are able to interact with pupils to advance their learning positively. This is not the case in every class.
- The school has worked hard to improve the teaching of phonics and this has impacted positively in the improved numbers reaching the expected level in the phonics screening test in Year 1. The rigorous use of assessment information by the two English subject leaders identified a weakness in teaching phonics in Year 2. As a result of actions taken, outcomes in both reading and writing have improved, with an increased proportion attaining the higher Level 3 at the end of Key Stage 1 this year.

The behaviour and safety of pupils are good

- Behaviour is not outstanding, because in lessons where teaching is not good, pupils become disinterested and are not fully engaged in their learning.
- Around the school, pupils behave well, are polite and courteous to all members of staff.
- The school treats all pupils equally and ensures that there is no discrimination. All pupils play well together.
- Pupils are aware of all forms of bullying, including cyber bullying and name calling. They say that there is little bullying in the school and that poor behaviour is dealt with effectively. This is supported by the few recorded incidents in the school's behaviour logs. Pupils feel safe in school. One of the school governors is a community warden and takes an active role in helping pupils to understand how to keep safe in a range of situations.
- Attendance is good, as is punctuality.
- Pupils generally enjoy school. 'We like lunchtimes best!' They like the trips which enhance their learning, for example the residential trips as well as day trips to places of interest. Pupils say that 'good lessons are when you get to join in' and they 'get really bored when we have to sit on the carpet for a long time – when you get up your legs hurt.'

The leadership and management requires improvement

- Leadership and management are not good because they have not secured rapid and sustained progress in mathematics. Their actions have not yet impacted positively on the progress of pupils in this subject.
- School improvement plans are not sufficiently well focused on precise actions to bring about developments, with measureable targets which are then evaluated in terms of the impact. The school's leaders do not ensure that initiatives are consistently applied through thorough checks and, as a result, the progress of pupils is impeded, particularly in mathematics.
- Leaders have demonstrated that they have capacity to make improvements. Checks on the quality of teaching shows that some teachers, who were not previously delivering consistently good lessons, are now doing so as a result of the coaching provided by both the headteacher and deputy headteacher. However, there are still other teachers who would benefit from this coaching.
- The recent appointment of a special educational needs coordinator has resulted in greater rigour being applied to the development of systems for checking the progress of these pupils. It is ensuring that pupils receive the appropriate support that will enable them to make good

progress. Whilst some parents and carers expressed well-founded concerns about how the school managed classes where there were large numbers of pupils with special educational needs, this appointment has helped to allay many of these worries.

- Management of teachers' performance is in place and teachers are held to account. Leaders make sure there is a link between this and salary progression, but are not sufficiently rigorous in its application.
- The school meets safeguarding requirements.
- The school promotes the spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of its pupils well through a range of enrichment activities and charity fundraising. The school has good links with the local church, where the Reception class excitedly re-enacted the baptism service.
- The local authority provides useful support to the school.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governors understand the strengths and weaknesses of the school, including how well pupils achieve and regarding the quality of teaching. They currently lack sharper improvement plans, with measureable steps, in order to check the school's work in these areas more effectively. As a result of training received, they are more able to challenge the school appropriately, as evidenced through the improved assessment information they now receive from the school's leaders. The governors effectively ensure that the finances of the school are well managed and that the school is solvent. Management of teachers' performance is well defined, with a clear link between performance and salary progression. However, governors recognise that this has yet to be applied rigorously enough to secure good teaching across the school. The governors are clear about pupil premium and how it is spent. They have some evidence of the difference this funding is having on pupil outcomes.

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

Unique reference number	118670
Local authority	Kent
Inspection number	405805

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary controlled
Age range of pupils	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	188
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Paul Chapman
Headteacher	Moira Duncombe
Date of previous school inspection	3–4 November 2010
Telephone number	01580 763210
Fax number	01580 765186
Email address	headteacher@st-michaels-tenterden.kent.sch.uk

Any complaints about the inspection or the report should be made following the procedures set out in the guidance 'raising concerns and making complaints about Ofsted', which is available from Ofsted's website: www.ofsted.gov.uk. If you would like Ofsted to send you a copy of the guidance, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.



You can use Parent View to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school. Ofsted will use the information parents and carers provide when deciding which schools to inspect and when and as part of the inspection.

You can also use Parent View to find out what other parents and carers think about schools in England. You can visit www.parentview.ofsted.gov.uk, or look for the link on the main Ofsted website: www.ofsted.gov.uk

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. It regulates and inspects childcare and children's social care, and inspects the Children and Family Court Advisory Support Service (Cafcass), schools, colleges, initial teacher training, work-based learning and skills training, adult and community learning, and education and training in prisons and other secure establishments. It assesses council children's services, and inspects services for looked after children, safeguarding and child protection.

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.

If you would like a copy of this document in a different format, such as large print or Braille, please telephone 0300 123 4234, or email enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk.

You may copy all or parts of this document for non-commercial educational purposes, as long as you give details of the source and date of publication and do not alter the information in any way.

To receive regular email alerts about new publications, including survey reports and school inspection reports, please visit our website and go to 'Subscribe'.

Piccadilly Gate
Store St
Manchester
M1 2WD

T: 0300 123 4234
Textphone: 0161 618 8524
E: enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk
W: www.ofsted.gov.uk

© Crown copyright 2013

