

St Michael's CofE Primary School

Bodenham, Hereford HR1 3JU

Inspection dates 28–29 June 2016

Overall effectiveness **Good**

Effectiveness of leadership and management	Good
Quality of teaching, learning and assessment	Good
Personal development, behaviour and welfare	Good
Outcomes for pupils	Good
Overall effectiveness at previous inspection	Good

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school

- Leaders have overseen significant improvements in outcomes for pupils over the last three years by successfully tackling previous weak teaching.
- Outcomes for pupils in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of key stage 2 have improved strongly from well below average in 2013 to well above average in 2015.
- Leaders have improved provision and outcomes for children in early years which were previously low. Children's learning gets off to a good start.
- The large majority of pupils in all year groups are making good progress as a result of consistently good teaching. Well-planned activities enable most pupils to succeed from their different starting points. Most-able pupils do particularly well.
- Pupils' behaviour is of a high standard. The very rare reported incidents are dealt with well.
- Pupils reported overwhelmingly that they feel safe and happy in school. All parents and carers who expressed a view confirmed this. The friendly ethos of the school ensures that pupils are well cared for and looked after.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes towards their learning and towards each other. They show respect for others with different views, lifestyles and beliefs.
- There is very wide range of extra-curricular activities available to the pupils before, during and after school.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- Governors have not checked rigorously enough on the current progress of pupils and groups of pupils. They do not know sufficiently whether funding for the very small number of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is used effectively.
- Leaders do not ensure that teachers are consistent enough in checking that the additional challenges they have set for the very small number of pupils who need to catch up have been completed and are accurate.

Full report

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Leaders should ensure that teachers and additional adults consistently challenge pupils who need to catch up to do as well as they can by:
 - regularly checking these pupils' work in their books to evaluate whether extension tasks, corrections and comments for development set by teachers are routinely followed through by pupils and teachers
 - holding individual teachers more closely to account for the progress of these pupils
 - evaluating more rigorously the impact of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and pupils on the special needs register to ensure that it is leading to rapid progress for these pupils.
- Governors should ensure that they consistently challenge leaders by:
 - asking searching questions on the impact of additional funding for disadvantaged pupils and pupils on the special needs register
 - asking for more up-to-date information on the current progress of pupils in school
 - evaluating outcomes for different groups of pupils more closely.

Inspection judgements

Effectiveness of leadership and management is good

- The headteacher, supported by other senior leaders, has ensured that the school has improved following a sharp dip in outcomes for pupils at key stage 2 very soon after the last inspection in 2012. The headteacher recognised that there were weaknesses in teaching that needed to be tackled. Consequently, action was taken, including staff training and performance management, which ultimately led to staff changes. Teaching is now good throughout the school and outcomes at the end of key stage 2 over the last three years have improved swiftly, so that they are now well above the national average.
- Leaders have ensured that the large majority of pupils, including the high proportion of most-able pupils, have made rapid progress and have done well in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6. Pupils, including the most able, are well prepared for the next phase in their education when they move on to secondary school.
- Other leaders and members of staff share the headteacher's vision for the school. This is supported very strongly by pupils spoken to and parents who responded to Parent View and made free-text responses, or who spoke to the inspector. The overwhelming majority of respondents to Parent View said that they would recommend the school to another parent. Communication with parents is good through regular information meetings, for example on the new assessment arrangements, and the informal contact with staff at the start and end of each day.
- There is a friendly, safe and secure ethos built on pupils' readiness to work and respect for others. The school's values 'to enable high-quality learning in a safe and caring Christian environment' are in evidence in every aspect of school life.
- Leaders have an accurate view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The school has the capacity to improve further as a result of strengthened leadership at all levels in the school, including subject leadership.
- Subject coordinators and other middle leaders are involved in checking the quality of teaching through lesson observations, learning walks and book scrutinies. Meetings between leaders and teachers to discuss pupils' progress are held regularly, although individual teachers are not held to account rigorously enough for the progress of the very small number of pupils in their class who need to catch up.
- The primary school physical education (PE) and sports funding is used effectively to promote sport in school. In part, this has been spent towards the use of a cricket coordinator, which has led to the girls' cricket team reaching a local schools' final. Despite the small size of the school, a number of team competitions with other schools have been established.
- Pupils enjoy a wide-ranging and balanced curriculum, backed up by an exhaustive list of extra-curricular activities, including music, arts and sport. Topics selected, for example the Mayans, enable pupils to experience a broad range of other subjects including geography, history, technology and art. French is taught in key stage 2 but is limited in scope.
- The school promotes British values well. Pupils have learned about democracy through the recent school council elections and have been learning about the role of the sovereign through their celebrations of the Queen's 90th birthday.
- Leaders are outward looking in order to improve. The school commissioned an external review in 2014 and has acted upon all of the key recommendations.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is too small to report specifically on their outcomes. The school analyses their outcomes and attendance closely. The small nature of the school means that leaders know individual pupils well. It reports in general terms on how the small amount of pupil premium is spent and how eligible pupils are doing, but there is not enough evaluation of the impact of specific activities that it funds.
- Leaders set high expectations for all pupils to do well and the large majority of pupils do so. Regular scrutinies of pupils' work confirm this. However, leaders have not picked up sufficiently individual instances where teachers have not followed up additional challenges they have set for pupils who need to catch up. Either pupils have not responded or teachers have not checked consistently where they have responded.

■ The governance of the school

- Governors have a strategic vision for the future direction of the school and have consulted widely with parents on their next steps. They know the strengths of the school very well and have ensured that they get an external view of the school's leaders through its performance management arrangements. They have provided effective support to the headteacher in taking steps to bring about improvements in teaching, outcomes for pupils and the provision in the early years.
- Governors know how additional funding is spent but have not been sufficiently probing in evaluating the impact of pupil premium and special educational needs funding and checking the progress of pupils and groups of pupils currently in the school.
- The arrangements for safeguarding are effective. Designated leaders have ensured that they are up to date with the latest policy and guidance. Those with designated lead responsibility have received up-to-date and appropriate training, including training to prevent radicalisation and extremism. Potential safeguarding incidents are extremely rare, but any that occur are followed up with rigour. Liaison with other appropriate agencies to ensure the safety and well-being of pupils is thorough.

Quality of teaching, learning and assessment is good

- Leaders have been successful in tackling the previous weak teaching identified to ensure that it is now consistently good.
- Teachers plan work that is challenging for pupils. Consequently, outcomes, especially for most-able pupils, are very high. Work is also set appropriately for the very small number who have special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Tasks set by teachers are effective in encouraging pupils to work on their own or in small groups to conduct their own research. Consequently, pupils work on a variety of tasks around the same topic, for example telling the time in mathematics in key stage 1, depending on their starting points, age and ability.
- Teachers manage classrooms well and have high expectations of behaviour and conduct. They respond very well to the very small number of pupils who find it difficult to work on their own or with others without over-reliance on additional adults. Teachers ensure that these pupils stay focused on their work without disrupting others.
- Teachers use questioning effectively to establish which pupils have understood concepts and are ready to move on to the next stage in their learning and those who need further reinforcement.
- Teachers ensure that there are opportunities for extended writing for all ages of pupils, from retelling the story of 'Greedy Mister Fox' in key stage 1 to writing using a wide range of tenses in key stage 2. Work is purposeful and relevant to engage pupils' interest for an extended period of time.
- Key stage 2 topics such as the Mayans and the origins of chocolate are used well by teachers to extend pupils' experience of geography, history, art and technology.
- Teachers check consistently how well pupils are doing and they routinely set and review targets for them to improve further. Pupils know how they are doing through regular half-termly assessments which summarise what they have achieved. Teachers ensure that writing assessment is accurate through internal and external moderation.
- Teaching of phonics is effective to ensure that by the time pupils leave Year 2, the very large majority of are ready for key stage 2.
- Almost all parents who responded to Parent View and pupils who spoke to the inspector agreed that homework was appropriately challenging. The very large majority of parents spoken to also agreed that pupils are taught well in the school.
- Additional adults work well with teachers and pupils to enable a wider range of activities to take place in mixed-age classrooms. Teachers and other adults often set further extension tasks or provide comments for development for the very small number of pupils who find learning difficult and need to catch up rapidly. However, the extent to which teachers ensure that this work is completed accurately is inconsistent.

Personal development, behaviour and welfare

is good

Personal development and welfare

- The school's work to promote pupils' personal development and welfare is good.
- Pupils are encouraged to show respect for each other. One comment, reflecting the views of other parents, commended the way that older pupils look after the welfare of younger ones around school and in the mixed-aged classes.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. Pupils are encouraged to learn about different cultures and countries, such as Tanzania, and are knowledgeable about faiths other than their own, such as Islam. They show respect for those with different beliefs.
- During assembly, pupils listened well as a pupil demonstrated her skill in sign language and spontaneously applauded afterwards. Pupils have been commemorating the recent centenary of the Battle of the Somme through their displayed work on poppies. Pupils are aware of the importance of protecting the environment through their 'Eco-Awesome' project.
- Pupils spoken to are highly positive about the school and enjoy their lessons, including in English and mathematics and topic work on Greece, Rome and Egypt. Pupils were adept at using technology to conduct their own research on the origins of chocolate.
- Pupils are able to put forward their ideas and suggestions through the school council whose members are elected through a ballot to give them an understanding of democracy. There is little, pupils said, that they would change about the school other than some maintenance to the building.
- Pupils spoken to said overwhelmingly that they feel safe in school. They said that there is occasional name-calling and teasing, but they were adamant that there is no racism or bullying. Any incidents that occur are dealt with firmly. Pupils look out for each other on the playground and know what to do in potentially risky situations out of school.
- All parents who responded to Parent View said that their children were happy in school and felt safe.
- Some parents spoken to said that there had been a few isolated incidents of bullying previously, but almost all said that these had been dealt with well and that the bullying had stopped. All parents expressing an opinion on Parent View said bullying was dealt with well.

Behaviour

- The behaviour of pupils is good.
- Pupils move around the school and into assembly in an orderly fashion. They are friendly and welcoming to visitors. They conduct themselves well on the playground.
- Any very rare serious incidents are dealt with effectively. There were no fixed-term or permanent exclusions in school in the two previous years, although there has been an instance of fixed-term exclusion this year.
- In lessons, pupils are fully committed to their work and are resilient. On rare occasions, a very small number of pupils lose focus if an adult is no longer working with them or become restless if they have been sitting on the carpet for too long. However, pupils either settle themselves back to work quickly or an adult intervenes promptly.
- Attendance has significantly improved over the last three years. Information provided by the school on current attendance indicates that this trend is continuing. The recruitment of a part-time attendance officer has had a beneficial effect on reducing absence. Current attendance is now in line with the national average. The rate of persistent absence has fallen sharply and is now close to the national average. There remains a very small number of persistently absent pupils, but the small size of the school means that it has a disproportionate impact on persistent absence rates.
- Almost all parents spoken to or surveyed agreed that the school makes sure that its pupils are well behaved. All pupils spoken to agree that behaviour is good apart from 'one or two individuals' whom they thought were dealt with well by leaders and teachers.

Outcomes for pupils

are good

- Pupils currently in the school are making good progress. Work in pupils' books indicates that the large majority of pupils have made rapid progress in their learning since the start of the academic year in a range of subjects, including English and mathematics.

- The proportion of pupils who reach the expected standard in phonics in Years 1 and 2 has been consistently in line with national expectations in recent years.
- The proportion of pupils who have made expected or more than expected progress in reading, writing and mathematics from the end of key stage 1 to the end of key stage 2 has continued to rise over the last three years. In 2015, an above-average proportion of pupils made the expected rate of progress in reading, writing and mathematics. Furthermore, an above-average proportion of pupils did better than this.
- By the time pupils leave at the end of Year 6, they achieve standards well above the national average. Most-able pupils do particularly well. Pupils have made particularly improved progress in writing, which has been a significant priority for the school.
- Pupils are able to develop their writing skills well in lessons because of the well-planned opportunities for extended writing set by teachers. These activities enable the very large majority of pupils to work without reliance on additional adults.
- The proportion of pupils achieving the highest possible levels in reading, writing and mathematics in the most recent tests and assessments was well above average. Pupils are well prepared for Year 7 when they join secondary school.
- The large majority of pupils, including those who are most able, have made rapid progress, especially in Year 6, as a result of consistently good teaching and effective additional support, such as mathematics and literacy booster sessions.
- The very large majority of parents spoken to or who responded to parental surveys said that their children were making good progress.
- A very small minority of pupils who need to catch up rapidly are given additional challenges, but these are not followed up consistently enough by teachers and other adults to ensure that these pupils are making very rapid progress. The numbers of disadvantaged pupils and pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities are too small to comment on the progress they are making.

Early years provision

is good

- Children currently in Reception have made good progress from their below-typical starting points, and all are on course to achieve a good level of development by the end of this academic year.
- In the two previous years, the numbers of children in Reception were very small. The proportion of children who achieved a good level of development by the time they joined Year 1 in 2014 and 2015 was below the national average.
- Leaders recognised that immediately after the last inspection, provision declined rapidly and needed to improve. This was confirmed by an external review in 2014. Changes in staffing and improvements to provision have now led to improved outcomes for children. Leadership and teaching in both the pre-school provision and Reception are good.
- The outdoor provision has been improved and links with the pre-school provision have been strengthened to ensure a smooth transition from Nursery to Reception. Children spend one session a week in Reception after Christmas to get used to the Reception environment before joining full time in September. This has also ensured that the school retains a higher proportion of its pre-school children than previously.
- The assessment system has been overhauled and is now more rigorous.
- There are good curriculum links. During the inspection, children were learning about different types of clouds and the weather. They are developing their skills in free writing well.
- Children's learning journeys are well maintained and provide a range of evidence to support the good progress children are making.
- The school has successfully got parents to engage with learning journeys in pre-school, but this is not yet as successful in Reception.
- There are no disadvantaged children currently in Reception.

School details

Unique reference number	116866
Local authority	Herefordshire
Inspection number	10001054

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	2–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	95
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Debbie Mould
Headteacher	Tim Wilson
Telephone number	01568 797241
Website	www.st-michaels.hereford.sch.uk
Email address	adminbodenham@st-michaels.hereford.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	2–3 February 2012

Information about this school

- St Michael's is much smaller than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of pupils who have special educational needs and/or disabilities is about one in 10, which is well below the national average. The proportion with a statement of special educational needs or an education, health and care plan is below the national average.
- The very large majority of pupils are White British. The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic groups is well below the national average. Very few pupils speak English as an additional language.
- The proportion of pupils supported by pupil premium funding (additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and for children looked after by the local authority) is well below the national average.
- The proportion of pupils who join or leave the school mid-way through a key stage is above the national average.
- The headteacher was in post at the time of the last inspection. The chair of the governing body was appointed in 2014. There has been a high turnover of teaching staff since the last inspection.
- Based on its 2015 results, the school meets the government's floor standards. These are the minimum standards expected for pupils' learning and progress in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- The school meets requirements on the publication of specified information on its website.
- There is a pre-school provision on site overseen by the governing body.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector observed five lessons or parts of lessons, all of which were jointly observed with the headteacher. In addition, the inspector made a number of other short visits to lessons and other activities, for example to look at pupils' books, or observe an assembly or additional support provided for pupils.
- The inspector heard pupils read during lessons.
- The inspector held meetings with the headteacher, other senior leaders, other members of staff and a group of pupils. He held meetings with the chair of the governing body. The inspector also spoke by telephone to a representative from the local authority and the chair of a local academy trust.
- The inspector took into account 25 responses to the online questionnaire, Parent View, and 21 Parent View free-text responses. He also spoke to nine parents around the school.
- The inspector observed the school's work and scrutinised a number of documents, including the school's own self-evaluation and improvement plan, and school information on pupils' recent attainment and progress. He also considered behaviour and attendance information, and policies and procedures, including those for special educational needs, pupil premium, sports premium, safeguarding, child protection and behaviour.
- The inspector reviewed the minutes of the recent governing body meetings.

Inspection team

Mark Sims, lead inspector

Her Majesty's Inspector

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18th July 2016

Mr Tim Wilson
St Michael's CofE Primary School
Bodenham
Hereford
Herefordshire
HR1 3JU

Dear Mr Tim Wilson

Final inspection report

Following your recent inspection, I am pleased to enclose the inspection report, in accordance with section 14(1) of the Education Act 2005. This is the final version of the report. It will be published within five working days from the date of this letter on the Ofsted website at <http://reports.ofsted.gov.uk>.

Under powers contained in section 14(4)(c) of the Act, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills in England (HMCI) requires that you¹ provide a copy of the report for all registered parents of all registered pupils. This includes pupils who do not currently attend school but are still on the school's roll, for example due to sick leave or temporary exclusion.

Regulation six of The Education (School Inspection) (England) Regulations 2005 states that the governing body² must take 'such steps as are reasonably practicable' to ensure that the registered parents receive the report within five working days. Please be aware that this includes any registered parent who may not be living with the child.

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¹Acting on behalf of the appropriate authority (which is normally the governing body).

²That is, the appropriate authority.

process.

Thank you for making our inspectors welcome during the inspection.

Yours sincerely

Sunita Jeer
Inspection Support Administrator