

St Michael's CofE Voluntary Aided Primary School

North Road, Highgate, London, N6 4BG

Inspection dates 5–6 March 2015

Overall effectiveness	Previous inspection:	Outstanding	1
	This inspection:	Good	2
Leadership and management		Good	2
Behaviour and safety of pupils		Good	2
Quality of teaching		Good	2
Achievement of pupils		Good	2
Early years provision		Good	2

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a good school.

- Teaching is good and ensures pupils achieve well from their starting points. Standards are well above the national average in reading, writing and mathematics by the end of Year 6.
- Leaders have an exceptionally effective system for supporting teachers to improve their performance.
- Pupils behave well, they are courteous and polite. Relationships between adults and pupils are very positive.
- Early years provision is good, so children get a positive start to their education.
- Leaders, including governors, are continually improving elements of the school's work. This ensures that the quality of teaching remains good and that outcomes for pupils remain high.
- Pupils feel safe and have an in-depth understanding of how to stay safe because the school's work in this area is outstanding.
- The school promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development exceptionally well.
- Partnerships with the local authority and the diocese are strong and have contributed to the improvements made.

It is not yet an outstanding school because

- All pupils do not make equally rapid progress across year groups.
- Occasionally, tasks are not carefully matched to pupils' starting points, particularly the most able.
- Some pupils do not always know what they need to do next to improve their work.
- Although the progress of disadvantaged pupils is improving, it is still not always as rapid as other groups in school.

Information about this inspection

- The inspection team observed 21 lessons or parts of lessons, including the teaching of phonics (the sounds that letters make), reading and mathematics. Eight of these lessons were observed jointly with senior members of staff.
- Inspectors attended assemblies, heard pupils read and looked at pupils' work in lessons as well as work they have completed over time in their books.
- Inspectors held meetings with staff, pupils and representatives from the diocese and the local authority. They also met the Chair of the Governing Body and other governors.
- Inspectors took account of the 66 responses to the online Parent View survey as well as the views of parents they met during the inspection. They also looked at the 21 questionnaires completed by staff.
- The inspection team scrutinised a range of documents including those relating to behaviour, safeguarding and child protection. They also looked at the school's evaluation of its own effectiveness, development planning, attendance figures and information about pupils' academic performance.

Inspection team

Jeanie Jovanova, Lead inspector	Additional Inspector
Lucy Rodgers	Additional Inspector
Raminder Arora	Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- This is larger than the average-sized primary school.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is slightly lower than the national average.
- The proportion of disadvantaged pupils (those for whom the school receives the pupil premium, which is additional funding for pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and those in care) is well below average.
- Approximately two thirds of pupils are from White British backgrounds. Fifteen different minority ethnic groups are also represented in smaller numbers.
- About one in four pupils speaks English as an additional language, with some of these pupils at a very early stage of acquiring English.
- The early years provision comprises a Nursery class that children attend part time, either in the morning or afternoon, and two Reception classes that children attend full time.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress in reading, writing and mathematics.
- There have been significant staff changes since the previous inspection. The current headteacher took up post in April 2013. A new leadership structure of two assistant headteachers and a leader of Years 3 and 4 came into effect in September 2014.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve teaching further so that more pupils make rapid and sustained progress across year groups, especially in writing, by ensuring that:
 - all tasks are matched more carefully to pupils' starting points, particularly the most able
 - all pupils know what to do next to improve their work
 - disadvantaged pupils continue to make accelerated progress.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management are good

- Leaders at all levels set high expectations of what pupils can achieve. This is helping further improve the quality of teaching.
- The headteacher has introduced an exceptionally effective system for supporting teachers to improve their practice. Training is carefully tailored to individual teachers' needs and staff are fully involved in the process at every step. Teachers at the early stage of their careers are particularly well supported.
- The school is very clear about its strengths and what it needs to improve. Leaders are quick to respond to identified issues. For example, results in the Year 1 and 2 phonics checks dipped in 2014. Swift action has resulted in a dramatic improvement in how systematically phonics is now taught and the school predicts that results will be back to well above average this year.
- Middle leaders devolve their responsibilities well. They help to improve the quality of teaching by evaluating teachers' performance, giving valuable advice and following it up to make sure it has had the desired effect.
- Even though there are relatively few disadvantaged pupils in school, leaders make careful checks on their progress. This has meant that progress has improved year on year. Although gaps are closing, some disadvantaged pupils in school are still not achieving as well as other pupils nationally or in school. Leadership and management are therefore not outstanding in this respect.
- The school is fully committed to promoting equality of opportunity. Leaders check the achievement of different groups to ensure that all make equally good progress. The school's strong moral stance and clear values mean there is no place for discrimination. Diversity is celebrated and pupils are very clear that prejudice is completely unacceptable. Relationships among pupils, and between pupils and teachers, are very good.
- The curriculum engages pupils and ensures they enjoy learning. Links across subjects are thoroughly planned so that pupils get to practise a range of different skills. Projects such as the enterprise initiative in Year 6 prepare pupils well for secondary school and life in modern Britain. Strong provision for music, science and sports ensures pupils receive a well-rounded education.
- Leaders ensure that there are a multitude of opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Carefully selected visitors add an extra dimension and help to develop strong empathy. For example, interviewing someone who lived through the Second World War supports pupils' understanding of what life was like in Britain then. There is a strong focus on British values and learning about democracy and the rule of law. Pupils visit the Houses of Parliament and key British saints days are celebrated.
- Leaders and governors ensure that the primary sports funding is used highly effectively. The range of sports offered has increased with a subsequent rise in pupil participation. Teachers are now far more confident teaching all aspects of physical education, which has improved pupils' outcomes. School teams are doing increasingly well in local tournaments. This all contributes to enhancing pupils' physical well-being.
- Safeguarding arrangements fully meet statutory requirements. They are extremely robust and contribute to ensuring pupils feel exceptionally safe.
- The local authority and the diocese both have strong and effective working relationships with this school that they correctly judge to be good.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - Governance is effective. Governors work well with the school's leaders to promote improvement in the quality of teaching and pupil outcomes. They analyse information, especially about pupils' academic achievement, in order to challenge staff with robust and well-informed questions. Governors use a range of sources to make sure they know how well the school is doing and what could be improved. Governors understand and support the performance management process. They set the headteacher's targets based on school development priorities and know that she follows suit when setting targets for teachers. There is a clear understanding that any teachers who fail to meet their targets will not receive a pay rise. Governors fully support the headteacher in tackling any underperformance because they are committed to every child receiving a high-quality educational experience. Equally, governors encourage rewards for exceptional performance, for example by creating opportunities for career advancement.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They are polite and charming in their dealings with each other and the adults around them. For example, they regularly say 'please' and 'thank you' when asking for a ruler or their lunch.
- Playtimes are increasingly harmonious since new resources arrived that encourage pupils to use their imagination. Older pupils look after younger ones and pupils from all backgrounds get on extremely well.
- Attendance is consistently above average. It improved at a faster rate than nationally last year because leaders put effective measures in place to ensure it remains high.
- Leaders ensure that pupils with particular behavioural needs learn to manage their behaviour effectively. Due to this successful work, exclusions are very rare.
- Pupils are keen to learn and enjoy being given a challenge in lessons. They follow teachers' instructions well and their good punctuality means lessons start on time.
- Behaviour is not outstanding because a few pupils occasionally lose focus when activities do not match their starting points.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is outstanding. Procedures for checking on staff and visitors are robust. Leaders use innovative measures to keep the complex site secure.
- Staff have a very good understanding of child protection. They receive regular training and know what to do if they spot anything that concerns them.
- Pupils have an exceptionally good understanding of bullying. They know that it can take many forms and that spreading rumours or excluding someone can be equally hurtful as more overt actions. They understand that leaders' work to eliminate bullying has been highly effective because they say there is currently none.
- Parents speak favourably about safety and this is reflected in the positive figures in the online survey. Pupils overwhelmingly say they feel safe. They appreciate that the school teaches them about staying safe in many ways, including on the roads, from strangers and on the internet.

The quality of teaching is good

- Pupils learn well in all subjects because topics engage and enthuse them. Practising skills in a range of subjects helps reinforce learning.
- In mathematics, pupils make good progress because they have opportunities to apply their mathematical knowledge to real-life problems, such as those related to money or measuring in litres and millilitres.
- The school promotes a love of reading well. Pupils read regularly at home and take every chance they get to read in school too. They understand how important being a fluent reader is to success in later life.
- Pupils learn about, and practise, many different forms of writing. The support they receive in class ensures they understand what the specific features of each different form are. They are particularly inspired when links to other subjects make the content interesting and relevant. For example, writing about what it was like to be an evacuee elicited some excellent work. Pupils' poetry shows not only that they know how to write in verse but that they understand that poetry is a medium that can convey great depth of feeling.
- Teaching for disabled pupils and those with special educational needs is effective because teaching assistants are trained to meet a range of needs.
- Progress is not equally rapid in all year groups because, on occasions, tasks are not carefully matched to pupils' starting points.
- Pupils are very articulate and can explain what they are learning. However, not all are equally clear about what they have to do to improve their work.

The achievement of pupils is good

- Pupils achieve well to reach standards in reading, writing and mathematics that are significantly above average by the end of Year 2 and Year 6.
- The most able do exceptionally well in mathematics. More than double the national proportion make rapid progress to reach the very highest Level 6 by the end of Key Stage 2. A very high number of pupils reach

above average levels in reading in Key Stage 1. Achievement in writing is not as strong because some tasks do not always have an appropriate level of challenge.

- Due to concerted efforts by leaders, the achievement of disadvantaged pupils is improving. Disadvantaged pupils are very few in number in most cohorts, which makes comparisons difficult. In 2014, at the end of Year 6, disadvantaged pupils were four terms behind other pupils in their class in mathematics, five terms behind in writing, but only two and a half terms behind in reading. Compared to other pupils nationally, the gaps were narrower at just under two terms in mathematics, three and a half in writing and just over half a term in reading. The amount of progress made has risen year on year, particularly in mathematics, and gaps are closing fast in other year groups.
- Pupils from different ethnic groups all do similarly well. The strong focus on vocabulary, the highly effective teaching of grammar and the opportunities to discuss learning mean that pupils who speak English as an additional language quickly develop the English they need to learn well.
- Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs achieve well because they are given good quality support and specialist teaching where necessary.

The early years provision

is good

- Provision in the early years is vibrant and engaging so children quickly learn to concentrate for long periods of time. For example, during the inspection, children in Nursery were enthralled by an old laptop that they were using screwdrivers to dismantle.
- There are ample opportunities for children to talk about what they are learning, which helps them make rapid progress in their language skills.
- Children are more than ready to start Year 1 because they achieve well in the early years provision and develop the skills needed to tackle the Key Stage 1 curriculum.
- Teaching is good, but early years provision is not outstanding because, although all the most-able children make at least the progress that is expected of them, fewer make the rapid progress that children from other starting points do.
- Behaviour is good in the early years provision. Children are exceptionally polite to each other, using 'please', 'thank you' and 'may I?' quite liberally.
- There is good leadership of early years provision. Leaders know where the strengths in the provision are. Strong teamwork across the early years maintains the quality of teaching because staff share good practice.
- Relationships with parents are very positive. Parents are involved in contributing to children's learning records, providing staff with valuable information which they take into account when planning activities.
- Children are kept very safe by thorough and robust safeguarding practices. Children are encouraged to take sensible, calculated risks. For example, they climb safely on the equipment available and know when to jump off and when it is safer to lower themselves down.

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	102135
Local authority	Haringey
Inspection number	453292

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

Type of school	Primary
School category	Voluntary aided
Age range of pupils	3–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	463
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Karen Revel-Chion
Headteacher	Geraldine Gallagher
Date of previous school inspection	26–27 April 2007
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