

St Michael's Church of England Primary School

88 Camden Street, London, NW1 0JA

Inspection dates 5–6 November 2014

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

Summary of key findings for parents and pupils

This is a school that requires improvement.

- Pupils' progress is not consistently good across all the year groups.
- The gap between the achievement of disadvantaged pupils and their classmates is not closing quickly enough, especially in mathematics.
- The most able pupils are not always challenged sufficiently in lessons to work at a higher level.
- Pupils are not regularly given the time to respond to any teachers' comments in marking to help them strengthen their understanding.
- Pupils do not routinely use their literacy and numeracy targets in lessons so that they can check their own progress towards achieving their levels.
- In some classes, teachers do not have high enough expectations of the quantity and quality of work that pupils are required to produce. Their work is not always completed and presented neatly.
- The middle leaders are not involved fully in checking the quality of teaching so as to hold teachers responsible for the progress their pupils make.
- Leaders, including governors, do not focus sharply enough on the impact support provided has on improving the quality of teaching and accelerating pupils' progress, particularly for the disadvantaged pupils.

The school has the following strengths

- The early years is highly effective and provision is at least good. Children make good and often better progress from their various starting points.
- Pupils' behaviour is good, and they have positive attitudes to learning. They are well cared for and kept safe.
- Staff are very supportive of the school's leadership, and the morale in the school is high.
- The school's work on promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is highly effective.
- The teaching of phonics (the link between letters and the sounds they make) has improved.
- Standards attained by pupils in reading, writing and English grammar, punctuation and spelling are improving at the end of Year 6.

Information about this inspection

- The inspectors observed 14 lessons, of which four were joint observations with the headteacher. Inspectors also observed pupils at breaks and lunchtimes and attended an assembly.
- Meetings were held with different groups of pupils. The inspectors listened to pupils read in Years 1 and 2 and discussed their reading with them.
- Inspectors held discussions with the headteacher, senior and middle leaders, the Chair and Vice Chair of the Governing Body. A discussion was also held with a local authority representative and a representative of the diocese.
- The inspectors observed the school's work and examined a range of documentation, including the school's information on pupils' performance, improvement plans and checks on the quality of teaching. They also looked at records relating to behaviour, safety, safeguarding and attendance.
- Inspectors looked at pupils' written work to see what progress they make and to judge the quality of marking and feedback.
- There were insufficient responses received from parents to the online questionnaire (Parent View) to produce a report. Inspectors spoke to parents in the playground at the start of the school day.
- The inspectors also considered 24 questionnaires completed by staff.

Inspection team

Avtar Sherri, Lead inspector

Additional Inspector

Sibani Raychaudhuri

Additional Inspector

Full report

Information about this school

- St Michael's Church of England Primary School is an average-sized primary school.
- Early years consists of a Nursery and a Reception class. Children attend part time in the Nursery and full time in Reception.
- Pupils come from a wide range of ethnic groups with the largest group being from a Bangladeshi background.
- The proportion of pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is well above average.
- The proportion of pupils supported by the pupil premium funding is well above average. This is additional government funding provided to give extra support to those pupils known to be eligible for free school meals and to children who are looked after by the local authority.
- The proportion of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs supported by school action is below average at one in 20. However, the proportion supported at school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs is above average, at one in 13.
- The school meets the government's current floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Improve the quality of teaching so that it is consistently good or better in every year group by ensuring that:
 - the more able pupils are always challenged in lessons to help them work at and achieve higher levels
 - pupils are given sufficient time to respond to teachers' comments in marking to deepen their understanding and improve their work
 - pupils use their targets in literacy and numeracy in lessons to check their own progress towards them
 - teachers always have high expectations of the quantity and quality of the work that all pupils are required to produce.
- Raise pupils' attainment in mathematics, particularly for the disadvantaged pupils, by:
 - giving pupils more opportunities to use their mathematical skills across subjects and topics
 - providing all pupils with work that is always challenging, and with opportunities to solve everyday practical problems and apply their mathematical knowledge and skills
 - increasing pupils' mathematical vocabulary and fluency to promote their mathematical knowledge and understanding.
- Improve leadership and management by:
 - enhancing the role of middle leaders so that they are fully involved in monitoring the quality of teaching and in holding teachers responsible for the progress their pupils make
 - checking the progress of disadvantaged pupils more closely and frequently, both in lessons and outside of the classroom when providing small group support
 - ensuring that the support available for the disadvantaged pupils is always of high quality
 - assessing the impact of the support available for the disadvantaged pupils more closely to ensure they make rapid progress.

An external review of the school's use of the pupil premium should be undertaken in order to assess how this aspect of leadership and management may be improved.

Inspection judgements

The leadership and management

require improvement

- Leadership and management require improvement because teaching and pupils' achievement over time are not consistently good.
- The role of the middle leaders in checking and improving the quality of teaching in their subject areas, and in holding teachers accountable for the progress their pupils make, is not fully developed. As a result, they are not always secure on the progress that different groups of pupils make across the different year groups.
- Leaders have identified the right priorities for development, with the appropriate focus on improving the quality of teaching and raising achievement. However, the timescales for actions are not sharp enough, and the role of governors in evaluating the impact of these actions and holding senior leaders accountable for the work they do is not always identified.
- Leaders and managers have not been successful in using the pupil premium funding effectively to eliminate the attainment gaps for the disadvantaged pupils. This is because the impact of the support provided for the disadvantaged pupils is not always assessed closely and frequently enough to ensure that it is bringing about rapid progress.
- The headteacher, senior leaders, middle managers and governors are ambitious for pupils and are working well as a team to improve the quality of teaching and raise pupils' achievement.
- Teachers are supported well in improving the quality of teaching through the management of performance process and training. Leaders ensure that there is a good link between the performance of teachers and their salary progression.
- Leadership of the provision for children in the early years is strong and effective. As a result, children, including different groups of children, make good progress and achieve well.
- Subjects are planned well to ensure pupils are engaged in their learning and use their thinking skills to extend their understanding. They learn about respect for diversity and have a good understanding and appreciation of the different cultures and religions represented in Britain. British values are effectively promoted and pupils learn about citizenship, democracy and the law to prepare them for a life in modern Britain. School leaders ensure all pupils and staff are treated equally and discrimination of any sort is not tolerated.
- The promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is highly effective. There are a range of school visits, sporting activities and after-school clubs to support their learning and develop their physical development. Pupils enjoy learning French and the school makes good use of external expertise to support pupils' learning in this subject. The school is very positive about the new curriculum for primary schools and leaders, managers and staff are working effectively to implement it.
- There were a few responses to the Parent View questionnaire. The school has done its own survey of parents' views in January 2014, which shows that almost all parents were positive about all aspects of the school. However, a few parents who spoke to inspectors at the beginning of the school day said that they would welcome greater contact with staff to discuss their children's progress.
- Safeguarding procedures meet current requirements.
- The local authority regards the school as 'light touch' in relation to the support it provides. The work of the local authority's school improvement service has helped in improving the quality of teaching. However, the local authority's view that pupils' performance is good at Key Stages 1 and 2 does not match the evidence gained from this inspection.
- **The governance of the school:**
 - The governors share the high ambitions of the headteacher for the pupils and are deeply committed to bringing about improvements. Through the information they receive from the headteacher, visits to the school and training they attend, they know about the quality of teaching, pupils' achievement and how well the school is doing in relation to other schools. They are well informed about the arrangements for setting targets for teachers and their link to pupils' progress. They also know how good teaching is rewarded and what is being done to tackle underperformance. They ensure the efficient management of financial resources, and know how the pupil premium is spent on raising achievement for the disadvantaged pupils. However, their work with senior leaders has not been successful in eliminating the attainment gap between the disadvantaged pupils and their classmates. They know how the additional sports funding is used and its impact on improving the quality of teaching in physical education and increasing pupils' participation in sports. They are trained on safeguarding issues, including safer recruitment of staff. As a result, they, together with senior managers, meet all their statutory requirements for safeguarding.

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

- The behaviour of pupils is good. They have positive attitudes to their work and are courteous, friendly and respectful. They were keen to talk to inspectors about their work and their school. Their good behaviour contributes positively to their learning, and ensures that lunchtimes and breaks are calm and orderly.
- Pupils say that bullying, racism and homophobic comments are rare. They know how the school's behaviour management policy works, and say that any incidents of poor behaviour are dealt with effectively. Pupils from all backgrounds get on well with each other, and there have been no incidents of extremism. This is confirmed by the school's own records of monitoring behaviour, which show that there are very few incidents of unacceptable behaviour. There have been no exclusions over the last year.
- Behaviour is not outstanding because occasionally a few pupils become unsettled and lose concentration when the work set lacks the appropriate level of challenge. Some pupils do not always ensure that they present their work well in their books.
- Attendance has improved through celebrating good attendance and more effective work with parents. As a result, attendance is now broadly in line with the national figures for primary schools. Pupils' punctuality is good overall.
- Pupils, staff and parents responding to the school's survey say that behaviour is good. A very small minority of parents that inspectors spoke to before the beginning of the school day said that the school's management of behaviour is not always good. The inspectors did not find evidence to support these concerns.

Safety

- The school's work to keep pupils safe and secure is good. Almost all parents who spoke to inspectors and those who responded to the school's survey agree that their children feel safe at school.
- Pupils are taught how to keep themselves safe. For example, pupils know about road and fire safety and how to use the internet safely. They know about different types of bullying, including cyber-bullying.
- Pupils say that they can easily approach a member of staff if they have any concerns about their safety. The school's work on the social and emotional aspects of pupils' learning provides pupils with further opportunities to discuss and learn about safety issues.

The quality of teaching requires improvement

- Teaching requires improvement. This is because it has not been good enough over time to ensure pupils make consistently good progress across the year groups.
- The most able pupils are not always challenged to enable them to work at and achieve higher levels. In some lessons, the most able pupils do the same tasks as other pupils and are not moved on quickly enough to harder tasks when they complete their work.
- Teachers' marking of pupils' work has improved since the previous inspection, and pupils are often given guidance on how they can improve their work. However, pupils are not always given time to respond to these comments to help them correct their work, deepen their understanding and improve their work.
- The presentation of some pupils' work is poor. However, this is not always picked up by teachers and some pupils' work in their books continues to be untidy.
- Sometimes, teachers do not have high enough expectations of the quantity of work that pupils are capable of producing. As a result, a few pupils continue to produce insufficient work and do not make the progress of which they are capable. Those who speak English as an additional language do not always have consistent support to make good progress and achieve well.
- Pupils have their targets in English and mathematics, but they do not routinely make any reference to them in lessons to check for themselves the progress they are making towards achieving them. This slows down their progress.
- Pupils do not always have opportunities to use their mathematical skills in different subject to improve their mathematics. Sometimes, opportunities are missed to solve everyday practical problems, and for pupils to apply their mathematical knowledge fluently.
- Pupils' writing is improving, particularly in Year 6. Teachers are giving pupils more opportunities to write at length to improve their writing skills.

- The teaching of the link between letters and the sounds they make is improving rapidly and is giving pupils the confidence to read unfamiliar and difficult words.
- There are positive relationships in the classroom, and pupils are encouraged to think and talk about their learning. Teachers and teaching assistants work together well as a team, and use questioning effectively to engage pupils in their learning and test their understanding.

The achievement of pupils

requires improvement

- In 2013, pupils' attainment in reading, writing and mathematics declined to well below average in both Key Stages 1 and 2. Too few pupils attained the higher levels in reading, writing and mathematics.
- In 2014, the results improved in both Key Stages 1 and 2. However, in Key Stage 1 results in reading, writing and mathematics were still below average with too few pupils attaining the higher levels in these subjects.
- The results in Key Stage 2, in 2014, were broadly average. The results in writing and English grammar, punctuation and spelling were just above average, with more than an average proportion of pupils attaining the higher levels in these subjects. The results were average in reading and below average in mathematics. There were too few pupils attaining the higher levels in mathematics. Results in mathematics have been weaker than in reading and writing over the last three years.
- Although children in the early years make good and often better progress from their very low starting points, the proportion achieving the good level of development when they leave the Reception and enter Year 1 is below the average.
- The school's own information shows that pupils do not make consistently good progress across the different year groups in reading, writing and mathematics. Overall, the progress in mathematics is weaker than in other subjects. The end of Year 6 results in 2014 show that pupils made more than expected progress than pupils nationally in writing and reading, but not in mathematics.
- In 2014, the most able pupils did not do as well as their peers nationally in reading, writing and mathematics at Key Stage 1 and in mathematics and reading at Key Stage 2. The proportion of higher attaining pupils entering Key Stage 2 is well below the national average. However, the school's own data show that the progress made by the most able pupils is not consistently good across the school. Opportunities are missed to ensure the most able pupils are always challenged sufficiently in lessons to help them work at and achieve higher levels.
- In the 2014 national phonics (the sounds letters make) check at the end of Year 1, the proportion of pupils who reached the expected level improved, and was in line with the national average. This is helping pupils to improve their reading.
- The disabled pupils and those with special educational needs make similar progress overall to their classmates. These pupils receive good care and support from teachers, teaching assistants and external professionals to ensure that their needs are met.
- Most of the learners across the year groups speak English as an additional language, reflecting the diversity of those attending. Although there are good opportunities for speaking and listening and small group support to help them progress with the learning, their progress is variable across the year groups. Overall, they make less progress than their classmates in mathematics.
- The disadvantaged pupils do not make consistently good progress across the year groups. At the end of Year 6 in 2014, the disadvantaged pupils made good progress in reading and particularly in writing. However, their progress in mathematics is weaker. There have been gaps in attainment between the disadvantaged pupils and their classmates over the last three years in reading, writing and mathematics, with gaps in mathematics being the widest. At the end of Year 6 in 2014, the gaps in attainment between the disadvantaged pupils and their classmates increased in mathematics, reading and writing. In mathematics, the disadvantaged pupils were just over 16 months behind; in reading, about 15 months behind; and in writing, about seven months behind. Compared to similar pupils nationally, the disadvantaged pupils were about six months behind in mathematics, and the gap in reading was negligible. However, in writing the disadvantaged pupils were just over four months ahead compared to similar pupils nationally.

The early years provision**is good**

- Children enter the early years with skills that are well below those typical for their age. As a result of strong teaching and good care and support, children make good and often better progress from their starting points, particularly in communication and language, physical development and personal, social and emotional development. However, although the proportion of children achieving a good level of development in 2014 improved, it has been below that found nationally over the last two years. Progress is weaker in reading and writing because of the children's very low starting points in these areas of learning.
- Teaching activities are well planned by skilled staff, both indoor and outdoor, and are imaginative, engaging and of high quality. There is a good range of adult-led and child-initiated activities and children show confidence in making choices about their learning. There is a rich and stimulating environment for speaking and listening and adults modelling language for children. This helps all children to make strong progress with their learning, especially those who speak English as an additional language.
- Children enjoy their learning, and display good behaviour and attitudes. Children are kept safe by caring adults, and they are developing a good awareness of how to keep themselves safe. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is effectively promoted. Staff ensure that safeguarding requirements are met.
- The engagement with parents is strong, and this is confirmed by parents whom inspectors spoke to during the inspection. The strong relationship with parents keeps them fully informed about their children's progress and supports the smooth entry to the early years.
- The leadership of early years is strong and effective, and is at least good in all aspects. Assessment procedures are effective and children's progress is tracked carefully. There are rigorous and robust systems in place to drive improvements. This ensures that all groups of children, including disabled children and those with special educational needs and those who are disadvantaged make the same good progress.

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	100044
Local authority	Camden
Inspection number	444083

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	225
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Fr. Philip North
Headteacher	Mrs Lynn Trigg
Date of previous school inspection	1–2 December 2009
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Fax number	020 7485 0424
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