

St Mark's Church of England Primary School

Inspection report

Unique Reference Number	101648
Local Authority	Bromley
Inspection number	363659
Inspection dates	25–26 May 2011
Reporting inspector	Margaret Coussins

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	4–11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	430
Appropriate authority	The governing body
Chair	Stephen Varney
Headteacher	Kate Owbridge
Date of previous school inspection	20 September 2007
School address	Aylesbury Road Bromley BR2 0QR
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Age group	4–11
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Introduction

This inspection was carried out by four additional inspectors. They observed 21 lessons and 15 teachers. Meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteachers, other staff with leadership and management responsibilities, pupils and the Chair of the Governing Body. Inspectors observed the school's work and looked at a range of documentation including the school improvement plan, the school's self-evaluation documents, pupils' progress records, monitoring records and safeguarding procedures. In total 132 parents' and carers' questionnaires were analysed along with staff and pupil questionnaires.

The inspection team reviewed many aspects of the school's work. It looked in detail at a number of key areas.

- How effectively the school is improving writing across the school.
- The consistency and quality of teaching in tailoring learning and the curriculum to meet individual needs.
- The impact of outdoor learning for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- How well the target-setting process is embedded across the school and leading to improvement.
- The effectiveness of the strategic work of the governing body in driving school improvement.

Information about the school

St Mark's is larger than the average-sized primary school. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is much lower than found nationally. The majority of pupils are of White British heritage. A larger-than-average proportion of pupils from a wide range of ethnic minority groups are represented in the school. The proportion of pupils who speak English as an additional language is below average as is the proportion with special educational needs and/or disabilities. Their needs relate mainly to moderate learning and speech, language and communication difficulties. Provision is made for the Early Years Foundation Stage in two Reception classes. The school has National Healthy Schools status and a Basic Skills Quality Mark award.

Inspection grades: 1 is outstanding, 2 is good, 3 is satisfactory, and 4 is inadequate

Please turn to the glossary for a description of the grades and inspection terms

Inspection judgements

Overall effectiveness: how good is the school?

2

The school's capacity for sustained improvement

2

Main findings

St Mark's is a good school. At the heart of the school's success is the commitment by all staff to meeting the personal as well as the academic needs of all pupils. As a result, pupils develop as well-rounded individuals who are happy, confident and excited by all their experiences at school, which is reflected in their high attendance rates. Many parents and carers agreed with one who wrote, 'The school really cares about each child as an individual and teaches basic understanding of decent behaviour and respect as strongly as the academic subjects.'

Pupils make good progress from their average starting points. They achieve well and by the time they leave, attainment is above average. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similarly good progress to others because their needs are identified at an early stage, effective support is provided and their progress is carefully monitored. Teaching is good and there are some examples of outstanding teaching where pupils make very good progress. Most lessons are planned well and effectively engage pupils and motivate them well. Notable features of all lessons are the excellent relationships between pupils and teachers and clear objectives so that pupils know exactly what they are learning. However, in some lessons there is an over reliance on published schemes and worksheets, which can limit the opportunities for creative, investigative and collaborative work.

An excellent range of extra activities and a wide range of clubs very effectively enrich the good curriculum. Art, dance and music in particular are given a high profile. One parent commented, 'St Mark's has a fantastic musical dimension which adds hugely to the children's education.' Senior leaders have correctly identified, however, that on occasion, the curriculum does not always afford pupils sufficient opportunities to work creatively or collaboratively through taking more ownership and responsibility for their learning. There are inconsistent opportunities for pupils to use their competent information and communication technology skills to support learning across the curriculum.

There is a good capacity for further improvement. The headteacher's highly effective leadership, supported well by her deputies, ensures high expectations for pupils and staff. Self-evaluation is rigorous, efficient and effective and clearly identifies strengths to build upon and areas for further improvement, and effective action is taken. For example, training for all staff on developing pupils' writing skills has prompted more links between learning across different subjects encouraging more opportunities for writing for real, meaningful purposes. This has motivated all pupils, and boys in particular, to become more enthusiastic writers and has led to improved skills for younger pupils, which was an improvement point noted in the last inspection.

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What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Ensure teaching consistently matches that of the best by:
 - building on and sharing the outstanding practice and expertise within the school
 - reducing the reliance on published schemes of work and worksheets.
- Ensure the curriculum fully meets the needs of all pupils by:
 - providing activities that promote pupils' creative, collaborative and investigative skills
 - providing pupils with more opportunities to use information and communication technology for learning across the curriculum.

Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils

2

Children start school with levels of skills that are as expected for their age. Pupils' work and the school's assessment data show that the current Year 6 pupils are on track to reach above average attainment by the time they leave. Positive attitudes and enthusiasm in lessons contribute well to pupils' good learning, progress and achievement. In lessons where there are opportunities to work collaboratively and learn through problem solving and investigative activities pupils often make good and sometimes better progress. For example, Year 6 pupils worked together very well to calculate time gaps and many made excellent progress in using a range of mathematical strategies. In a writing lesson, opportunities for pupils to read and comment on each other's writing helped develop very good skills in constructive criticism as well as reinforcing successful features of story writing. Year 1 pupils produced impressive artwork to illustrate a fairy story they had written showing a good sense of colour, design and creativity and demonstrated a good ability to organise themselves and work independently. Pupils usually behave well in lessons although when work is not precisely matched to their needs, some who find it harder to engage and concentrate get distracted. Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities make similar good progress to others. Additional needs are identified at an early stage and effective additional support in groups outside the class ensure that pupils make rapid progress and catch up with their learning. On occasion however, in class lessons, use of practical resources to support learning is limited and pupils sometimes find it difficult to stay focused, particularly when they have to listen to teachers for long periods.

Pupils enjoy the responsibilities they are given and take them seriously, for example as school council members and prefects. They take part in many fund raising events for a range of charities and causes and were proud of their work in organising the Charity Fair. Pupils have a good awareness of how to stay fit and healthy as recognised by the Healthy Schools award. There is a high take-up of a range of physical activities, which is appreciated by pupils and their parents and carers. Pupils value the celebration of their achievements for their academic and personal successes and understand the role of worship in their daily lives. These aspects make a significant contribution to their good spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Pupils know how to stay safe and are confident to talk to adults should any problems arise. Pupils are polite and friendly and treat each other with kindness and respect. The good progress made in developing basic

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skills, reflected in the Basic Skills Quality Mark and their good personal qualities, prepares pupils well for the next stage of their education and later life.

These are the grades for pupils' outcomes

Pupils' achievement and the extent to which they enjoy their learning	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attainment ¹	2
The quality of pupils' learning and their progress	2
The quality of learning for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities and their progress	2
The extent to which pupils feel safe	2
Pupils' behaviour	2
The extent to which pupils adopt healthy lifestyles	2
The extent to which pupils contribute to the school and wider community	2
The extent to which pupils develop workplace and other skills that will contribute to their future economic well-being	2
Taking into account:	
Pupils' attendance ¹	1
The extent of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

¹ The grades for attainment and attendance are: 1 is high; 2 is above average; 3 is broadly average; and 4 is low

How effective is the provision?

Themed and creative approaches to the curriculum are used well to stimulate pupils' interests and learning as seen in the 'Vive La France' project in Year 6. As a result, pupils make good progress and learning is challenging and memorable for them. The school is aware of the need to carefully monitor how effectively the revised curriculum is meeting the needs of all pupils to become creative and resourceful learners as it becomes embedded across all year groups. Skilled questioning by adults helps to extend pupils' thinking and learning. Pupils know their targets for learning and good marking and feedback inform them about how to improve their work. They are becoming increasingly competent in assessing their own progress. Home learning, well planned to develop work in the classroom, makes a good contribution to pupils' achievements.

In addition to the work of senior leaders and managers, the work of the family liaison officer makes a strong contribution to the care, guidance and support offered to pupils and their families and effectively supports the learning of those whose circumstances may make them vulnerable. There are good links with other agencies and well-targeted support ensures that pupils integrate well and make good progress relative to their starting points. Transition procedures into school, through the year groups and into Year 7

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are effective and ensure good levels of support for pupils and their families. Strong liaison between key staff and class teachers promotes a caring and supportive ethos across the school and the very large majority of pupils said they feel well cared for.

These are the grades for the quality of provision

The quality of teaching	2
Taking into account: The use of assessment to support learning	2
The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships	2
The effectiveness of care, guidance and support	2

How effective are leadership and management?

The inclusive, caring and Christian ethos of the school and its clear detailed policies ensure that all pupils have equal opportunities to learn and develop without fear of discrimination. The quality of teaching and learning is monitored through formal observations and regular checks on pupils' work, and where weaknesses are observed, effective support is provided. Systems for tracking pupils' progress enable senior leaders to have a clear idea of where additional support is required to meet individual needs. The headteacher, senior leaders and managers, and members of the governing body, share a drive, vision and good ambition to improve and provide the best possible learning experience for pupils. Some leadership roles are relatively new and there has not been enough time to see the full impact of their work. The governing body has a clear view of strengths and weaknesses and holds the school to account effectively as well as reviewing and refining its structure and processes to increase the impact of its work. Along with staff, governors ensure that safeguarding procedures, which are well established, are effective. The school engages well with parents and carers. Communication is through a range of channels, both formally and informally and they are encouraged to be involved in the life of the school. Leaders have developed the school as a cohesive community in which pupils show respect, tolerance and understanding for others. Pupils learn about other cultures through the curriculum and through their study of other languages and there are good links with a school in France. Other aspects of community cohesion are less well developed but plans are under way to link with other schools in different circumstances. Good partnerships with other schools and organisations and the church enhance the curriculum well and provide pupils with opportunities that they would not otherwise experience, for example working with a secondary school on a music production.

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These are the grades for leadership and management

The effectiveness of leadership and management in embedding ambition and driving improvement	2
Taking into account: The leadership and management of teaching and learning	2
The effectiveness of the governing body in challenging and supporting the school so that weaknesses are tackled decisively and statutory responsibilities met	2
The effectiveness of the school's engagement with parents and carers	2
The effectiveness of partnerships in promoting learning and well-being	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes equality of opportunity and tackles discrimination	2
The effectiveness of safeguarding procedures	2
The effectiveness with which the school promotes community cohesion	2
The effectiveness with which the school deploys resources to achieve value for money	2

Early Years Foundation Stage

Children make good progress and reach, and many exceed, the expected goals for their learning by the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage. They do particularly well in communication, language and literacy and personal, social and emotional development. Children clearly enjoy learning and settle well in a happy, purposeful environment. One parent wrote, 'The reception team has created a warm, friendly home from home for the children and made learning great fun.' A good balance exists between activities directed by adults and those where children make their own choices, and they effectively develop independence as learners. They make a good contribution to the smooth running of the day and enjoy the responsibilities they are given, for example being the 'outside crew', special helpers, library and fruit monitors and taking the register to the office. These activities help them develop skills for the future. Excellent relationships between adults and children and good attention to their welfare mean children feel safe and secure. Behaviour is good and they play well on their own and with others. Children learn well in a well-equipped, bright and welcoming environment where activities are well matched to children's individual needs and interests. Good use is made of the outdoor area to successfully develop children's learning in all areas. Activities outside are organised very well to promote children's social and emotional development, for example using sand timers to help them share equipment and move happily from one activity to another. There is a strong sense of teamwork with all adults well focused and sharing the responsibility of assessing children's progress and planning the next steps in learning although it is harder to track children's development when the milestones in their learning are not dated or put in context.

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These are the grades for the Early Years Foundation Stage

Overall effectiveness of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
Taking into account:	
Outcomes for children in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The quality of provision in the Early Years Foundation Stage	2
The effectiveness of leadership and management of the Early Years Foundation Stage	2

Views of parents and carers

A slightly lower-than-average proportion of parents and carers responded to the questionnaire. Of these, most agree that their children enjoy school and that the school keeps children safe and healthy. A very large majority responded positively to most aspects of the school's work and inspection findings support these positive views. The main concerns from a few parents and carers were about how well the school takes account of their suggestions and concerns, whether their children are making enough progress and how well they are informed about pupils' progress. A few also wrote comments expressing concerns relating to the behaviour policy. Inspectors found that progress is good and that the school works very hard to listen to and engage parents and carers and keep them informed, for example acting on their views of what they would like to see in the newsletters. Inspection findings also show that behaviour is good and pupils understand and respond well to the behaviour policy although some occasionally need reminders. School leaders have correctly identified that they need to continue working with parents and carers to ensure that their views and concerns are addressed.

Responses from parents and carers to Ofsted's questionnaire

Ofsted invited all the registered parents and carers of pupils registered at St Mark's Church of England Primary School to complete a questionnaire about their views of the school.

In the questionnaire, parents and carers were asked to record how strongly they agreed with 13 statements about the school.

The inspection team received 132 completed questionnaires by the end of the on-site inspection. In total, there are 430 pupils registered at the school.

Statements	Strongly agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly disagree	
	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%	Total	%
My child enjoys school	78	59	49	37	4	3	1	1
The school keeps my child safe	72	55	54	41	4	3	0	0
My school informs me about my child's progress	40	30	68	52	19	14	3	2
My child is making enough progress at this school	50	38	55	42	23	17	3	2
The teaching is good at this school	57	43	63	48	5	4	2	2
The school helps me to support my child's learning	44	33	70	53	14	11	1	1
The school helps my child to have a healthy lifestyle	51	39	73	55	7	5	0	0
The school makes sure that my child is well prepared for the future (for example changing year group, changing school, and for children who are finishing school, entering further or higher education, or entering employment)	45	34	65	49	9	7	2	2
The school meets my child's particular needs	43	33	67	51	15	11	4	3
The school deals effectively with unacceptable behaviour	50	38	64	48	11	8	4	3
The school takes account of my suggestions and concerns	35	27	66	50	17	13	7	5
The school is led and managed effectively	43	33	71	54	9	7	5	4
Overall, I am happy with my child's experience at this school	61	46	58	44	9	7	3	2

The table above summarises the responses that parents and carers made to each statement. The percentages indicate the proportion of parents and carers giving that response out of the total number of completed questionnaires. Where one or more parents and carers chose not to answer a particular question, the percentages will not add up to 100%.

Glossary

What inspection judgements mean

Grade	Judgement	Description
Grade 1	Outstanding	These features are highly effective. An outstanding school provides exceptionally well for all its pupils' needs.
Grade 2	Good	These are very positive features of a school. A school that is good is serving its pupils well.
Grade 3	Satisfactory	These features are of reasonable quality. A satisfactory school is providing adequately for its pupils.
Grade 4	Inadequate	These features are not of an acceptable standard. An inadequate school needs to make significant improvement in order to meet the needs of its pupils. Ofsted inspectors will make further visits until it improves.

Overall effectiveness of schools

Type of school	Overall effectiveness judgement (percentage of schools)			
	Outstanding	Good	Satisfactory	Inadequate
Nursery schools	46	48	6	0
Primary schools	6	47	40	7
Secondary schools	12	39	38	11
Sixth forms	13	42	41	3
Special schools	28	49	19	4
Pupil referral units	14	45	31	10
All schools	10	46	37	7

New school inspection arrangements were introduced on 1 September 2009. This means that inspectors now make some additional judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September 2010 to 31 December 2010 and are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see www.ofsted.gov.uk).

The sample of schools inspected during 2010/11 was not representative of all schools nationally, as weaker schools are inspected more frequently than good or outstanding schools.

Percentages are rounded and do not always add exactly to 100.

Sixth form figures reflect the judgements made for the overall effectiveness of the sixth form in secondary schools, special schools and pupil referral units.

Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning, development or training.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving. Inspectors base this judgement on what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the headteacher, to identifying priorities, directing and motivating staff and running the school.
Learning:	how well pupils acquire knowledge, develop their understanding, learn and practise skills and are developing their competence as learners.
Overall effectiveness:	<p>inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school. The following judgements, in particular, influence what the overall effectiveness judgement will be.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ The school's capacity for sustained improvement.■ Outcomes for individuals and groups of pupils.■ The quality of teaching.■ The extent to which the curriculum meets pupils' needs, including, where relevant, through partnerships.■ The effectiveness of care, guidance and support.
Progress:	the rate at which pupils are learning in lessons and over longer periods of time. It is often measured by comparing the pupils' attainment at the end of a key stage with their attainment when they started.

This letter is provided for the school, parents and carers to share with their children. It describes Ofsted's main findings from the inspection of their school.



27 May 2011

Dear Pupils

Inspection of St Mark's Church of England Primary School, Bromley BR2 0QR

Thank you very much for the welcome you gave us when we visited your school and for talking to us about your work. You are polite and friendly and we appreciated the way you helped us find out about your school. You are right to enjoy coming to St Mark's because it is a good school. These are some of the things that really stood out.

- You do really well to come to school so regularly. Your attendance is high and this means you do not miss out on any important learning. Well done for this!
- By the time you leave in Year 6 your attainment in English and mathematics is above average and so you are well prepared to go to your next schools.
- The school provides you with an excellent range of clubs and extra activities, which you told us you enjoy and appreciate.
- Everyone in the school looks after you well and makes sure you are safe and happy.
- Your headteacher does a good job in running the school and she is helped well by all the other teachers with special responsibilities.

This is what will help make the school even better and ensure that you continue to make good progress in your learning.

- Your teachers teach you well but we want all of your lessons to be as good as the very best ones. We saw that you learn best when you have exciting, motivating activities where you solve problems, are creative, investigate and work things out for yourselves. You do this well and we have asked your teachers to make sure you have lots of opportunities to learn in this way. We also want your teachers to give you more opportunities to use your computer skills to support your learning in lots of different subjects.

You can help the school even further by continuing to work hard and doing your very best.

Yours sincerely

Margaret Coussins

Lead inspector

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