

# St Mark's C of E Primary School

## Inspection report

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<b>Unique reference number</b>	116389
<b>Local authority</b>	Hampshire
<b>Inspection number</b>	379249
<b>Inspection dates</b>	11–12 July 2012
<b>Lead inspector</b>	Janet Sinclair

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

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<b>Type of school</b>	Primary
<b>School category</b>	Voluntary aided
<b>Age range of pupils</b>	4–11
<b>Gender of pupils</b>	Mixed
<b>Number of pupils on the school roll</b>	105
<b>Appropriate authority</b>	The governing body
<b>Chair</b>	Mark Bonnett
<b>Headteacher</b>	Fiona Hodgson
<b>Date of previous school inspection</b>	5–6 October 2006
<b>School address</b>	Queen's Road Farnborough GU14 6DU
<b>Telephone number</b>	01252 544155
<b>Fax number</b>	01252 544155
<b>Email address</b>	head@st-marks.hants.sch.uk

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<b>Age group</b>	4–11
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<b>Inspection number</b>	379249



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## Introduction

Inspection team

Janet Sinclair

Additional inspector

This inspection was carried out with two days' notice. The inspector spent five hours observing teaching and learning in 10 lessons or part lessons. She observed five teachers and several teaching assistants. The inspector took account of the responses to the online questionnaire (Parent View) in planning the inspection, observed the school's work, listened to a sample of pupils read and looked at examples of pupils' work. She considered a wide range of documentation, including: school policies, particularly for safeguarding; the school development plan; and records of pupils' progress. The inspector held meetings with members of the governing body, senior staff and two groups of pupils. The inspector considered the 35 responses from questionnaires returned by parents and carers. She also considered the responses from questionnaires returned by staff and pupils.

## Information about the school

St Mark's is smaller than the average-sized primary school. There is a below average proportion of pupils of minority ethnic heritage. The proportion of disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, including those supported by school action plus or with a statement of special educational needs, is average. These are mainly speech and language or specific learning difficulties. The proportion of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is below average. The children in the Early Years Foundation Stage are in a single-age class; all other pupils are in mixed-age classes. The school meets current government floor standards, which set the minimum expectations for pupils' attainment and progress.

**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

<b>Overall effectiveness</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Achievement of pupils</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Quality of teaching</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Behaviour and safety of pupils</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Leadership and management</b>	<b>1</b>

## Key findings

- This is an outstanding school where all pupils flourish both academically and personally due to a strong caring ethos, high expectations and a stimulating and challenging learning environment.
- Achievement is outstanding. Pupils, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs, achieve exceptionally well from starting points that are below expectations, so that by the end of Key Stage 2 attainment is above average in English, mathematics and science. Excellent tracking of pupils' progress and swift interventions for any pupils falling behind ensure that all pupils make rapid and sustained progress year on year.
- Outstanding teaching ensures that pupils achieve exceptionally well and thoroughly enjoy their learning. Teachers' excellent subject knowledge, challenging questioning and effective match of work are hallmarks of all lessons. The strong focus on independent and interdependent learning ensures pupils have high levels of resilience and the confidence to tackle challenging activities.
- Pupils' exemplary behaviour and excellent attitudes to their learning reflect a climate of mutual respect and a strong sense of a community with shared values. Pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is promoted exceptionally well. Although many aspects of their cultural development are strong, their knowledge of Britain as a multicultural society is less well developed. Pupils say there is no bullying in school, only occasional friendship issues that are quickly resolved. They say that they feel extremely safe in school and confident of adult support should they need it.
- The headteacher is passionate about providing the best possible education for the pupils in her care. She is extremely well supported in this by an excellent staff team whose effectiveness is underpinned by a constant drive to improve their skills through effective professional development and rigorous self-evaluation. The monitoring of teaching and performance are excellent. An exciting, innovative curriculum provides memorable experiences for pupils and promotes their basic skills exceptionally well.

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## What does the school need to do to improve further?

- Increase pupils' awareness of Britain as a multicultural society.

## Main report

### Achievement of pupils

Children start school with skills and abilities below the levels expected for their age. They make good and, sometimes, outstanding progress across the areas of learning so that many meet and some exceed expectations on entry to Year 1. Very careful monitoring of children's progress, coupled with excellent relationships and activities that provide opportunities for exploration and challenge, for example making their own salt dough or working on subtraction, ensures strong progress.

Attainment is above average in reading and writing at Key Stage 1 and above average overall at Key Stage 2, including in reading by the end of Year 2 and Year 6. Attainment at the end of Year 6 has been above average over a sustained period of time. Pupils' work in books, data provided by the school and lessons seen provide clear evidence that progress across Key Stages 1 and 2 is outstanding. Regular sounds and letters work (phonics) and guided reading sessions contribute to the extremely good teaching of basic skills. Additionally, Year 5/6 reading buddies support younger pupils to develop their confidence and skills. The use of a structured programme to provide regular opportunities for extended writing, alongside a strong focus on punctuation and spelling, ensures writing is of a high standard.

Enriched and extended support for reading, writing and mathematics is ensured through the school's excellent use of topics. For example, pupils have opportunities to read extensively to research their topics, use extended writing in their science work, such as when writing about how plants grow, and in mathematics when making graphs to show their favourite foods. Pupils develop their language and communication skills extremely well through many varied opportunities to work together. For example, in the Year 1/2 class, pupils worked together in groups to explore how many ways they could make 45p and were delighted when they opened the sealed envelope to find results that matched their own. Additionally, in the Year 5/6 class, pupils worked together to investigate the different types of triangles and lines of symmetry in Olympic flags. They worked conscientiously in their groups and their discussions were very focused on the mathematical activity they were undertaking. Disabled pupils and those with special educational needs receive very well-targeted support that ensures excellent progress. The school provides extremely well for its very able pupils. For example, some pupils in Year 6 work at the level expected of 15-year-olds in English and mathematics.

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire believe that their children make excellent progress and this matches inspection evidence.

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## Quality of teaching

Teaching over time is outstanding because it ensures pupils achieve extremely well, enthuses and engages them fully in their learning and promotes strong independent skills that enable them to think and work things out for themselves. The consistently high quality of teaching is characterised by high expectations, excellent relationships, good match of work and effective questioning. Well-trained teaching assistants are deployed effectively to support small groups, including disabled pupils and those with special educational needs. This was seen in the Year 1/2 class where the teaching assistant worked very effectively to engage and support a child with specific learning difficulties.

A strong element of teaching is the way teachers work together to provide stimulating and challenging learning experiences for pupils. For example, they sometimes use integrated mathematics topics to teach a particular aspect of mathematics. This involves teachers in planning together, looking at progression in skills, providing opportunities to use and apply these skills and agreeing key vocabulary. This was clearly seen in their work on measurement linked to the Olympics. As part of this, reception children measured how far they could jump using non-standard measures, pupils in the Year 1/2 class used metre sticks, Year 3/4 pupils studied Olympic timetables and Year 5/6 pupils worked out the volume of water in an Olympic swimming pool.

Excellent use of specific learning objectives, clearly identified steps to success and specific targets, as well as a strong focus on pupils' involvement in assessing how well they are doing, promote pupils' learning exceptionally well.

Teaching supports pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. For example, there are social events, for example a 'Rainforest Café' and 'Dances of the Decade' that are the culmination of their topics or opportunities to study famous artists, such as Lowry and Kandinsky. Homework is challenging and there is always a home learning aspect to every topic.

The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire consider that their children are taught extremely well and this view is supported by inspection evidence. Pupils say that lessons are great fun and their teachers are kind and supportive.

## Behaviour and safety of pupils

Staff work extremely hard to ensure high standards of safety for the pupils in their care. Pupils say that they feel very safe in school and all the parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire fully agree. Staff ensure pupils learn about safety through, for example, visits from the fire service and involvement of the community police officer in school activities, such as helping to cordon off a simulated crime scene in the Year 3/4 class. Pupils have an acute awareness of

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safety measures, such as fire drills and their importance.

Excellent relationships and a clear set of agreed values promote successfully a safe and happy learning environment. Behaviour is excellent in lessons and around the school and has been over time. There are effective whole-school strategies in place to manage behaviour, ensuring that all lessons proceed smoothly and without disruption. The overwhelming majority of parents and carers who responded to the inspection questionnaire agree that behaviour is good. Pupils are extremely kind and friendly to each other and polite and courteous to all adults. They are fully aware of the school's core values and fully respect them. Pupils say that school is like being in a great big happy family. They say that there is no bullying, only occasional friendship issues. They have been taught anti-bullying strategies and are fully aware of different types of bullying. The school has clear policies and procedures in place should any bullying occur. Effective use of peer mentors, who are appropriately trained, ensures that any disagreements are dealt with swiftly.

The school is a safe, stimulating and orderly place for pupils who thoroughly enjoy school and this is reflected in their high rates of attendance.

### **Leadership and management**

Strong leadership by the headteacher, an effective deputy headteacher and a fully committed whole-staff team (almost all of whom have a leadership role) ensure a strong commitment to continuous improvement. The school has maintained and built upon its high standards over a sustained period. Systems for monitoring the school's effectiveness are excellent and have ensured high quality provision. All staff undertake regular training to refine their skills and learn extremely well from each other by sharing best practice. Additionally, staff are always looking for ways to improve, for example, the recent and highly successful curriculum initiative. This demonstrates that the school has the capacity for continuous improvement.

Regular and rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning ensures that it is of a consistently high quality. Rigorous tracking of pupils' progress, supported by regular pupil progress meetings and swift intervention where needed, ensures no pupil falls behind in their learning. The school ensures more-able pupils are fully extended. This demonstrates an excellent commitment to promoting equality of opportunity and tackling discrimination.

The school has excellent links with parents and carers who are extremely positive about the school and what it provides. Comments such as, 'St Marks is a wonderful school and the staff are fantastic', are reflective of their high regard for the school. The development of the curriculum has ensured exciting and stimulating experiences for pupils. It supports their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development extremely well through its emphasis on core values, cultural experiences, links with the church and teamwork. However, pupils' knowledge of Britain as a multicultural society is less secure.

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There are effective policies and procedures in place to ensure the safety of pupils, including regular health and safety checks of the premises and risk assessments for trips. The governing body is highly supportive of the school and provides effective challenge that holds the school to account.



## 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	54	42	2	2
Primary schools	14	49	32	6
Secondary schools	20	39	34	7
Special schools	33	45	20	3
Pupil referral units	9	55	28	8
All schools	16	47	31	6

New school inspection arrangements have been introduced from 1 January 2012. This means that inspectors make judgements that were not made previously.

The data in the table above are for the period 1 September to 31 December 2011 and represent judgements that were made under the school inspection arrangements that were introduced on 1 September 2009. These data are consistent with the latest published official statistics about maintained school inspection outcomes (see [www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://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.

Primary schools include primary academy converters. Secondary schools include secondary academy converters, sponsor-led academies and city technology colleges. Special schools include special academy converters and non-maintained special schools.

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

## Common terminology used by inspectors

Achievement:	the progress and success of a pupil in their learning and development taking account of their attainment.
Attainment:	the standard of the pupils' work shown by test and examination results and in lessons.
Attendance:	the regular attendance of pupils at school and in lessons, taking into account the school's efforts to encourage good attendance.
Behaviour:	how well pupils behave in lessons, with emphasis on their attitude to learning. Pupils' punctuality to lessons and their conduct around the school.
Capacity to improve:	the proven ability of the school to continue improving based on its self-evaluation and what the school has accomplished so far and on the quality of its systems to maintain improvement.
Floor standards:	the national minimum expectation of attainment and progression measures.
Leadership and management:	the contribution of all the staff with responsibilities, not just the governors and 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:	inspectors form a judgement on a school's overall effectiveness based on the findings from their inspection of the school.
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.
Safety:	how safe pupils are in school, including in lessons; and their understanding of risks. Pupils' freedom from bullying and harassment. How well the school promotes safety, for example e-learning.

**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.**



13 July 2012

Dear Pupils

**Inspection of St Marks C of E Primary School, Farnborough GU14 6DU**

I am writing to tell you how much I enjoyed my visit to your school. You made me very welcome and were very polite and friendly. I was pleased to learn how much you enjoyed school, particularly how kind everyone is and how much fun you have. I was very impressed by your excellent behaviour, how kind and helpful you are to each other and how safe you feel in school. I enjoyed talking to you and watching all the work you did in lessons.

I judged that your school is an outstanding school. You have an excellent headteacher and she and the staff work extremely hard to take excellent care of you and help you to achieve extremely well. You benefit from excellent teaching and a stimulating and exciting curriculum that engages and enthuses you. I was particularly impressed by your lovely singing for your end-of-term performance and the excellent work in your science books.

To help make the school even better, we have asked school leaders to help you get a better understanding of Britain as a country with many different cultures.

You can help by keeping up all your good work and enthusiasm.

Yours sincerely

Janet Sinclair  
Lead inspector

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